Empowering Places?
Measuring the impact of community businesses at neighbourhood level

A difference-in-difference analysis

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December 2021

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Power to Change commissioned Kantar in 2020 to conduct a 'hyperlocal' version of the national Community Life Survey (CLS) in six operational areas centred around the 'catalyst organisations' that form its Empowering Places programme. Each area contains an average of just over 5,000 households. The 'hyperlocal' design builds on studies carried out in 2017, 2018 and 2019 which established a new way of measuring the social impact of such organisations on their local community (Willis et al., 2017; Crawshaw et al., 2019; Crawshaw et al., 2020). In summary, these studies found that working within the CLS framework provided a cost-effective approach to measuring relative community cohesion and levels of social action in each catalyst's operational area.

The six areas (and catalyst organisations) included in the 2020 research were: Devonport and Stonehouse in Plymouth (Real Ideas Organisation (RIO)), Braunstone in Leicester (B-inspired), Manningham in Bradford (Action for Business), Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park in Grimsby (Centre4), Wigan (Abram Ward Community Cooperative) and Hartlepool (The Wharton Trust).

In each of these areas, similar baseline surveys had previously been conducted in 2018. In each survey area, key outcome metrics were compared over time between 2018 and 2020 using a 'difference-in-difference' approach, a statistical technique which estimates the change over time in the operational areas minus the change over time in a set of matched comparison areas. This provides an indication of the relative impact of the Empowering Places programme in each area.

You can find more details on the six Empowering Places areas, including their economic and socio-demographic profiles, in the Appendix. Full details of the methodology are provided in the Technical Note, published alongside this report.

Approach

Empowering Places, Power to Change's programme of place-based investment, aims to demonstrate the role that concentrated clusters of community businesses can play in improving local areas and reducing inequality. The programme has funded so-called 'catalyst' organisations in six local areas, to conduct development work on the ground that grows community businesses in their local areas.

DCMS's national Community Life Survey (CLS) is an annual, nationally representative survey conducted on behalf of government. It provides official statistics on issues key to encouraging social action and empowering communities (DCMS, 2020).[1] Replicating the CLS method in the catalyst operational areas allows the generation of robust, comparable data about these areas, while the CLS itself can be used as a comparison sample. Although the research covered by this report replicated the method and measures of the CLS, this offshoot version of the survey was presented as the Neighbourhood Life Survey.[2]

The organisations selected for this study were classified as 'catalysts', funded by the targeted place-based programme Empowering Places.[3] Catalyst organisations are required to create development plans that identify local issues in the community that can be tackled by community businesses, and then engage in development work on the ground to grow community businesses in their local areas.

The operational area of each catalyst organisation was defined with reference to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census Output Area (OA) geography. The boundaries were agreed with each organisation in 2018 and replicated in 2020. Within each operational area, Kantar drew a systematic random sample of addresses from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File. At each address, we invited all adults aged 16 plus to complete the questionnaire, either online or on paper.

Kantar identified comparison samples for each operational area from respondents in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (April to September 2020) of the CLS 2020–21 survey. There was one exception – the Action for Business operational area in Bradford – which required its own bespoke comparison sample. This area has a majority Asian population and has few natural partners within a national sample. Consequently, Kantar identified the most similar 300 lower level super output areas (LSOAs) in England and drew a supplementary bespoke comparison sample of addresses.

The original plan was to use the 2019–20 CLS whole-year dataset to identify comparison samples. However, there was a concern that the COVID-19 pandemic would make data collected in 2020 (the operational areas) different from data collected in 2019 (the CLS) in a way that was unrelated to the Empowering Places programme. Consequently, we used data from the first half of the CLS 2020–21 survey year – contemporary with the data collected in the operational areas – to source comparison samples.

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1   Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2020), Community Life Survey 2019–20. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-20192

2   The second survey contained the same measures as the CLS plus a further five questions on COVID-19.

3   More information on the Empowering Places programme is available at: https://www.powertochange. org.uk/get-support/programmes/empowering-places/

Fieldwork took place between 13 July and 28 August 2020. We compared findings with equivalent surveys conducted in 2018, which took place between 16 May and 5 August 2018.

Key findings

We used eight metrics as measures to compare community business operational areas and their matched comparison samples, in the context of the 'difference-in-difference' design (see Section 3.1).

These metrics were:

social isolation: a range of measures designed to measure the strength of people's social networks

health and wellbeing: including measures of self-reported health and subjective wellbeing (for example, happiness and life satisfaction)

employability: a measure of people's current economic status

local environment: a measure of people's satisfaction with the local area as a place to live

community cohesion: measures around feelings of belonging, trust, neighbourliness and the extent to which people from different backgrounds get on with each other and have diverse friendship groups

community pride and empowerment: the extent to which people perceive their area as one in which people pull together to improve their neighbourhood and whether people feel that they, as individuals and communities, can have an influence on local decision-making

social action: this includes measures such as the extent to which local people get involved in local activities and the level of civic engagement in the community, for example, through civic participation or civic consultation

volunteering: the proportion of people who have been involved in volunteering in their community, either formally or informally.

Comparing areas over time using difference-in-difference

All six operational areas have been revisited from the 2018 study. This section summaries the changes over time. You can find a full analysis in Chapter 3.

Using 'difference-in-difference' analysis (see Section 3.1), we can assess whether the direction and scale of change between these two time-points is the same for the operational area and its comparison group. If the direction and scale of change is the same in both areas, then we assume there has been no impact. Where there are differences in the direction and/or scale of change between the operational and comparison areas, we refer to these as 'relative effects'. If the evidence shows a different pattern of results – whether positive or negative – then we may hypothesise that the intervention is making a difference (either **positive** or **negative**) relative to its comparison group.

General findings

Overall, relative impacts varied by operational area and these are detailed in Sections 1.4.2–1.4.7.

However, there were some findings that were common across three or more operational areas compared with their relative matched comparison samples, which is indicative of a more general trend.

After taking into account differences over time in the matched comparison samples, we found wider evidence of **positive impacts** of the Empowering Places programme between 2018 and 2020 on overall ratings of life satisfaction, observing positive impacts in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, Dyke House and Manningham.

We also saw wider evidence of **negative impacts** of the Empowering Places programmes. There were some more granular shifts in Manningham, Devonport and Stonehouse and Abram Ward that indicated a negative impact on whether the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Similarly, residents reported lower levels of neighbourhood trust in Braunstone, Dyke House and Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, compared with their relative matched comparison samples.

Abram Ward Community Cooperative in Abram Ward

After taking into account differences over time in the comparison sample, there was evidence of a **negative relative impact** between 2018 and 2020 in relation to social isolation, community cohesion and community empowerment. The findings suggest that in Abram Ward, there has been a negative relative impact on having people available to listen, how often people chat to neighbours, whether people from different backgrounds get on well together and whether people pull together to improve the neighbourhood.

On a more positive note, once changes in the comparison sample had been accounted for, residents were less likely to have friends from the same age group, which indicates a widening of diversity of friendship groups.

Action for Business in Manningham

The impact evaluation in Manningham presents a mixed picture.

Between 2018 and 2020, there were **positive relative impacts** on life satisfaction, employability, social action and informal volunteering. After accounting for differences over time in the comparison sample, the findings suggest that Action for Business has had a positive relative impact on life satisfaction, awareness of getting people involved in local activities, participation in informal volunteering both in the last month and in the last 12 months, and the proportion who stated that they were unemployed.

On the other hand, between 2018 and 2020, there was a **negative relative impact** on wellbeing, social isolation and community cohesion, with evidence of a negative impact on levels of anxiety, having people to call on for company or to socialise, loneliness, whether people from different backgrounds get on well together and generalised trust.

Manningham was also associated with increased diversity of friendship groups across ethnic, religious and educational backgrounds.
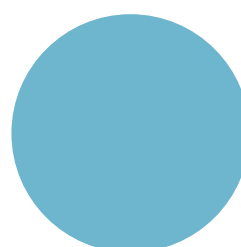
B-inspired (The Braunstone Foundation) in Braunstone

In general, most differences between 2018 and 2020 in Braunstone were also reflected in the matched comparison sample. Where there was evidence of impact, this tended to be negative.

There were some **negative relative impacts** on community cohesion and social action. After accounting for differences over time in the comparison sample, the findings suggest that B-inspired had a negative relative impact on having a sense of belonging to Great Britain, neighbourhood trust and involvement in local activities.

However, there was a relative increase in the proportion of residents in Braunstone who had friends from different educational backgrounds, indicating increased diversity of friendship groups.

Centre4 in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park

The impact evaluation in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park presents a more mixed picture, although the relative impacts were on balance more positive than negative.

Between 2018 and 2020, there were **positive relative impacts** on wellbeing and the local environment. After accounting for differences over time in the comparison sample, the findings suggest that Centre4 has had a positive impact on life satisfaction and satisfaction with local services and amenities.

Findings relating to community cohesion were mixed. There were **positive relative impacts** on perceptions of whether people from different backgrounds get on well together and on having a sense of belonging to Great Britain. On the other hand, there was a **negative relative impact** on neighbourhood trust. There was also evidence of a negative relative impact on self-reported health.

People in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park were more likely to have friends from the same age group as themselves.

Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) in Devonport and Stonehouse

In general, the impact evaluation between 2018 and 2020 in Devonport and Stonehouse is more positive than negative.

After accounting for differences over time in the comparison sample, the findings suggest that RIO had a **positive relative impact** on civic pride and empowerment and civic participation, with evidence of a positive relative impact on feeling it is important to be able to influence local decision-making.

Findings relating to community cohesion were mixed. There were **positive relative impacts** on neighbourhood trust, generalised trust and neighbourliness. However, there was one **negative relative impact** on feeling that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

There were other **negative relative impacts** related to the local environment, with evidence of negative relative impacts on whether the area had got better or worse and on satisfaction with local services and amenities.

The Wharton Trust in Dyke House

The impact evaluation in Dyke House presents a mixed picture.

Between 2018 and 2020, there were several **positive relative impacts** on wellbeing. After accounting for differences over time in the comparison sample, the findings suggest that the Wharton Trust has had a positive relative impact on life satisfaction, happiness and feeling that life is worthwhile.

Conversely, there were **negative relative impacts** on community cohesion and social action, with evidence of a negative relative impact on having a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, neighbourhood trust and involvement in local activities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Empowering Places, Power to Change's programme of place-based investment, aims to demonstrate the role that concentrated clusters of community businesses can play in improving local areas and reducing inequality.

To achieve this, the programme helps community-based organisations — also known as catalyst organisations — to create new networks of community businesses through a mixture of grants, support and practical tools. It has funded catalyst organisations in six local areas. Power to Change is working through a delivery partnership led by Co-operatives UK with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES).

Catalyst organisations are required to create development plans that identify local issues in the community that can be tackled by community businesses, and then engage in development work on the ground to grow community businesses in their local areas. This report focusses on the impact of these community businesses and not the catalyst organisations.

Community businesses — owned and run by local communities themselves — aspire to transform their local areas through engaging local people as co-creators in delivering goods or services. As such, community businesses have the potential to save or regenerate businesses or assets that may otherwise fail. They build high levels of community buy-in and support for ventures, and develop innovative and often low-cost business models. Community businesses help strengthen local communities by involving local people in decision-making and enhancing social capital by, for example, providing vital meeting spaces and developing links between staff, volunteers and customers (Percy et al., 2016).

Table 1: Empowering Places catalyst organisations and the local area they work in

Organisation	Local area	Town/city
Abram Ward Community Cooperative	Abram Ward	Wigan
Action for Business	Manningham	Bradford
B-inspired (The Braunstone Foundation)	Braunstone	Leicester
Centre4	Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park	Grimsby
Real Ideas Organisation (RIO)	Devonport and Stonehouse	Plymouth
The Wharton Trust	Dyke House	Hartlepool

The catalyst organisations work in defined operational areas, sometimes as small as a square mile around their central asset, covering just one or two wards. They have all developed five-year plans to address the specific needs of their communities in a way that promotes community business as part of the solution to the problems faced in their area.

Within each local area, the catalyst organisation aims to achieve one or more of the following outcomes over a five-year period through the creation of community businesses:

Reduce social isolation **Improve health and wellbeing** **Increase employability** **Improve access to basic services**

Increase community pride and empowerment **Improve the local environment** **Create greater community cohesion.**

The catalyst organisations also have a charitable objective to address key issues in the local area such as:

● financial hardship, poverty and disadvantage

● exclusion or isolation due to youth or old age

● ill-health or disability.

1.1.1 Research background

To measure the success (or otherwise) of the Empowering Places programme, Power to Change commissioned Kantar to conduct a 'hyperlocal' version of the Community Life Survey (CLS) in each of the six operational areas (see Sections 2.2 and 2.3 for further details of the CLS). For each area, a comparison sample was drawn from the national CLS, with one exception (Action for Business operational area in Bradford, see Section 2.6). The operational areas were surveyed in 2018 and 2020, with the accompanying comparison sample area surveyed in 2017–18 and 2020. This meant that difference-in-difference analysis could be conducted, to assess the impact the Empowering Places programme has had on a range of metrics (see Section 3).

As per the CLS, we sent invites to randomly selected households in the selected areas and not specifically to a sample of community business users.

1.1.2 Background to the Community Life Survey (CLS)

Since 2012–13, the CLS has been carried out annually by Kantar on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to provide official statistics on issues that are key to encouraging social action and empowering communities – including volunteering, giving, community engagement and wellbeing (DCMS, 2020).[4]

The key objectives of the survey are to:

● Provide robust, nationally representative data on behaviours and attitudes within communities to inform and direct policy and action in these areas

● Provide data of value to all users, including public bodies, external stakeholders and the public

● Underpin further research and debate on building stronger communities.

You can find more information on the CLS website.[5]

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4   For more information on official statistics see: UK Statistics Authority. Available at: https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/types-of-official-statistics/

5   For more information on the Community Life Survey see: Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey--2

1.3 Summary of survey approach

The 'hyperlocal' survey used the CLS national model, which acted as a sample boost targeted towards operational areas of the selected catalyst organisations. This survey, branded as the Neighbourhood Life Survey, contained the same measures and used identical methods to the CLS for the purposes of difference-in-difference analysis. A further five questions were added in the hyperlocal survey on COVID-19.

Within each operational area, Kantar drew a systematic random sample of addresses from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File and sent letters inviting all adults aged 16 plus at each address to complete the questionnaire, either online or on paper. Up to two reminder letters were sent, with two paper questionnaires included for a targeted subset of addresses in the second reminder.

Kantar identified comparison samples for each operational area from respondents in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (April to September 2020) of the CLS 2020–21 survey. There was one exception – the Action for Business operational area in Bradford – which required its own bespoke comparison sample (see Section 2.6). The original plan was to use the 2019–20 CLS whole-year dataset to identify comparison samples. However, there was a concern that the COVID-19 pandemic would make data collected in 2020 (the operational areas) different from data collected in 2019 (the CLS) in a way that was unrelated to the Empowering Places programme. Consequently, data was used from the first half of the CLS 2020–21 survey year – contemporary with the data collected in the operational areas – to source comparison samples.

The 'hyperlocal' design builds on studies carried out in 2017, 2018 and 2019 which established a new way of measuring the social impact of such organisations on their local community (Willis et al., 2017; Crawshaw et al., 2019; Crawshaw et al., 2020). In summary, these studies found that working within the CLS framework provided a cost-effective approach to measuring relative community cohesion and levels of social action in each catalyst's operational area.
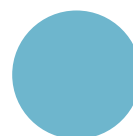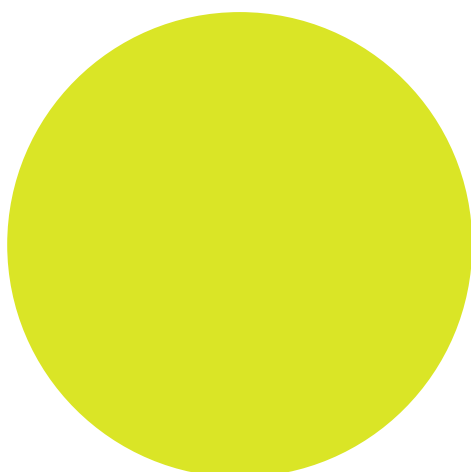
The 2017 report outlined several methodological recommendations for use in future. As a result, the following adaptations were implemented for this study:

● Each operational area was defined with reference to Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census Output Area (OA) geography rather than postcodes. While postcodes are tailored, it means no direct population statistics are available to use as a test of the weighting method's ability to work as a calibration mechanism.

● Comparison areas were set out in advance (i.e. the 10 per cent most similar LSOAs to each catalyst operational areas). This allowed the comparison samples to be pre-identified and assessed for sufficiency. It also ensured a clear definition for future research purposes.

1.4 Sampling

For the purposes of the survey, each organisation's operational area was defined with reference to ONS OA geography and was formed of a contiguous combination of whole OAs (the smallest unit in the ONS hierarchy). Maps of these operational areas were produced by Power to Change in conjunction with Kantar and agreed with the individual catalyst organisations.

Within each operational area, Kantar drew a systematic random sample of addresses from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File, aiming for 300 completed questionnaires and maximal geographical dispersion. The number of addresses sampled in each operational area was calculated via a statistical model of response probability, using data from the 2018–20 CLS. Table 2 shows how many addresses were sampled in each area.

Table 2: Address samples in each operational area

Operational area	Total sample of addresses
Abram Ward Community Charity	1,075
Action for Business, Bradford	1,598
B-inspired	1,151
Centre4	1,314
RIO, Plymouth	924
Wharton Trust	1,202
Comparison sample for Action for Business	1,101

At each address, we invited all adults aged 16 plus to complete the questionnaire, either online or on paper.

1.5 Fieldwork and response

Fieldwork took place between the 13 July and 28 August 2020.

The standard model for the CLS is to send two reminders, each a fortnight apart, but with a third reminder in reserve. In the second reminder, two paper questionnaires are included for a targeted subset of addresses.[6]

All respondents who completed the survey received a £10 voucher to thank them for their contribution.

The estimated individual response rate achieved in each operational area ranged from 12.6 to 25.8 per cent as shown in Table 3.[7] As a benchmark comparison, the response rate in CLS 2019–20 was 18.7 per cent.

Table 3: Response by area

Operational area	Online completions (% of completions)	Paper completions (% of completions)	Total completions	Estimated individual response rate
Abram Ward Community Charity	193 (76%)	62 (24%)	255	14.1%
Action for Business, Bradford	341 (78%)	96 (22%)	437	15.6%
B-inspired	183 (72%)	70 (28%)	253	12.6%
Centre4	229 (64%)	128 (36%)	357	17.1%
RIO, Plymouth	206 (70%)	90 (30%)	296	25.8%
Wharton Trust	230 (65%)	122 (35%)	352	18.4%
Comparison sample for Action for Business	253 (81%)	59 (19%)	312	14.1%

6   Respondents were not asked about community businesses as part of the Community Life Survey.
7   This is estimated by dividing the number of respondents by the expected number of residents aged 16+ in the address sample. The expected number of residents is a Kantar estimate based on a model that relates neighbourhood-level statistics to household size (as recorded by interviewers in the Crime Survey for England and Wales).

1.6 Identification of comparison samples

The comparison sample for each operational area was a subset of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (April to September 2020) CLS 2020–21 survey respondents who lived in the 10 per cent of English neighbourhoods that are most similar to the operational area.

Kantar used lower-level super output areas (LSOAs) as a proxy for neighbourhoods. There are 32,844 LSOAs in England and each contains an average of six OAs. They are smaller than the operational areas (which ranged in size from 19 to 50 OAs) and somewhat more homogeneous. However, the use of LSOAs as proxy neighbourhoods — rather than larger aggregations — ensures that the 10 per cent most similar neighbourhoods to each operational area are genuinely similar in absolute and not just relative terms. A similarity score was computed for each LSOA in England with reference to each operational area.

The profile of each LSOA was represented by a set of six Census-derived 'principal component' scores, each reflecting a different aspect of that LSOA. One of these principal components is strongly correlated with the neighbourhood's index of multiple deprivation, one is correlated with the proportion of accommodation units that are flats, one with the presence of students, one with the share of the population aged 65+, and two are correlated with different aspects of the ethnic mix.[8]

These 'principal component' scores were also computed for each operational area as a population-weighted combination of the relevant LSOA scores. Kantar then calculated — for each LSOA in England — a Euclidean distance score relative to each operational area.[9] The lower this score is, the more similar that LSOA is to the particular operational area.

From this, a rank order of similarity was constructed, and the 10 per cent most similar LSOAs for each operational area were identified and acted as the comparison sample

8   A statistical technique called principal component analysis (PCA) was used to form uncorrelated linear combinations ('principal components') of 42 LSOA-level Census proportions (e.g. % of 16–24s with degree-level qualifications). The first principal component accounts for as much variance as possible across the 42 input variables. Successive components explain the — progressively smaller — residual variance and are all (by design) uncorrelated with each other. These principal components were then 'rotated' using the varimax algorithm which seeks to minimise the number of input variables that have high correlations with each of the first f factors (f is user-specified but should explain a high percentage of the total variance; f = 6 in this case, explaining 77% of the total variance). The varimax rotation method simplifies interpretation compared to other rotation methods and compared to the initial (un-rotated) principal components.

9   Euclidean distance score = $\sqrt{[(PC1x-PC1t)2 + (PC2x-PC2t)2 + (PC3x-PC3t)2 + (PC4x-PC4t)2 + (PC5x-PC5t)2 + (PC6x-PC6t)2]}$ … where PC1x is the principal component score 1 for LSOA x and PC1t is the principal component score 1 for operational area t (etc.).

The one exception is the Action for Business operational area in Bradford. This area is majority Asian (77 per cent in the 2011 Census) — predominantly of Pakistani ethnic heritage — and has few natural partners within a national sample. Consequently, Kantar identified the most similar 300 LSOAs in England (approximately 1 per cent of the total, instead of 10 per cent) and drew a supplementary bespoke comparison sample of 1,101 addresses from across these LSOAs, treating them in the same way as the addresses drawn from the six operational areas.

1.7 Limitations

As with any research, there are limitations.

To detect impact, the Empowering Places catalyst organisation needs to have a reasonably large effect on its operational area and a relatively close comparison sample has to be identified from within the Community Life Survey national sample. This comparison sample should be large enough to ensure that there is sufficient statistical power to detect unusual effects within the operational area, but not so large that the comparison sample's similarity to the operational area is lost.

The analysis assumes that controlling for differences in key census statistics and indices of deprivation is enough to eradicate systematic differences between sampled operational areas on the one hand and comparison sample areas on the other. What is left is then assumed to be the impact of the catalyst organisations. In isolation, the strength of evidence is weaker than might be obtained from a randomised controlled trial (RCT), but difference-in-difference analysis is possible where data from at least two time-points are available (as here).[10]

The next section provides further information about the analysis methods we employed.

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10   Difference-in-difference analysis is a statistical technique that allows us to estimate the effect of a treatment on an outcome by comparing the change over time in the average outcome of a treatment group, with the change over the same period for a control group.

2. Difference-in-difference analysis

2.1 Summary of difference-in-difference approach

In this chapter we provide data from the six operational areas included in both the 2018 and 2020 analysis and their comparison groups at the two time-points.

Consequently, we can assess whether the direction and scale of change between these two time-points is the same for the operational area (which we refer to here for simplicity as [area x]) as for its comparison group. The principal assumption is that both the direction and scale of change will be the same. However, if the evidence shows a different pattern of results – whether positive or negative – then we may hypothesise that the Empowering Places programme operating in [area x] is making a difference relative to its comparison group. The data is insufficient to prove this – differences in the direction and scale of change may be due to other unique factors in [area x] – but it is at least suggestive of impact.

This type of analysis is called 'difference-in-difference' and, when combined with sample matching (as here), is one of the most robust impact evaluation methods outside of the randomised controlled trial. To our knowledge, this method has not been successfully implemented elsewhere in the third sector and therefore represents a step forward for evaluating localised interventions.

Throughout this section, we refer to differences in the direction and/or scale of change as 'relative effects'. For example, in Section 3.3.2 we estimate that the share of the adult population of Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park that gives a 'high' rating of life satisfaction has increased by 5 percentage points between 2018 and 2020 but we also estimate that the share of the comparison group that gives a 'high' rating of life satisfaction has decreased by 7 percentage points over the same timeframe. Therefore, the relative effect for Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park over its comparison group would be +5+7 = +12 percentage points (denoted in this chapter as +12pp).

In other words, if we take the comparison sample as a reference point, we would expect to see a small decrease in self-reported life satisfaction, but in fact there has been an increase in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park. This provides an indication that Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park has had a positive impact on self-reported life satisfaction.

Because the samples from both the two operational areas and their respective comparison groups are imperfect, we urge caution in the interpretation of relative effects.[11]

11   The samples for all operational areas are subject to standard limitations of random probability surveying. The matched comparison samples are based on the 10% most similar neighbourhoods.

Changes in these survey measures between 2018 and 2020 for both the operational areas and the matched comparison samples are provided as Excel tables.[12] References throughout this report refer to the table number used in these accompanying tables.

2.2
Social isolation

The local environment can have a significant impact on whether a person feels socially isolated. Research by Public Health England (2015) has highlighted that local services and initiatives can impact on social isolation by bringing individuals together, even if this is not their primary aim. Many community businesses act as a hub for local people to come together, helping to foster social connections. This is why most community businesses (85%) aim to tackle social isolation (Harries and Miller, 2021).

Over the longer-term, we might expect to see an increase in social support networks and a decrease in loneliness in areas with strong community businesses.

The Community Life Survey (CLS) includes measures that capture strength of social support networks, including:

● having people to call on for help

● having people to socialise with

● having people available to listen

● how often people chat to their neighbours

● loneliness.
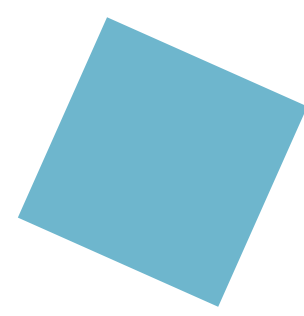
There were relatively few observed impacts between 2018 and 2020 in terms of people's feelings of social isolation, although where they did occur in Manningham and Abram Ward they tended to be in the negative direction.

The difference-in-difference analysis indicates a negative impact on social isolation in Manningham. In this area, there was a +5pp relative increase in the proportion of respondents who tended to disagree that, if they wanted company or to socialise, there are people they can call on, offset against a -8pp decrease in those who 'definitely agree'. There was also a +11pp relative increase in those who said they felt lonely 'occasionally', offset against a -17pp relative decrease in those who said they 'never' or 'hardly ever' felt lonely.

In Abram Ward, there was a -6pp relative decrease in the proportion of respondents who tended to disagree that, if they wanted company or to socialise, there are people they can call on.[13] There was, however, also evidence of negative impacts in Abram Ward. The area saw a +7pp relative increase in the proportion of respondents who felt they had no one they can count on to listen when they need to talk, and a -15pp relative decrease in the proportion of respondents who chat to their neighbours 'most days' offset against a +9pp relative increase in the proportion who chat to their neighbours 'less than once a month'.

In Dyke House there was a -10pp relative decrease in those who said they felt lonely 'occasionally'.[14]

There were no significant relative effects observed in the Braunstone, Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park and Devonport and Stonehouse areas after accounting for changes over time in the matched comparison sample.

See Tables A1 to A5.

2.3
Health and wellbeing

2.3.1 Self-reported health

The CLS measures self-reported health by asking two questions:

● self-reported rating of general health
● whether have a limiting long-term illness.

The difference-in-difference analysis indicates that between 2018 and 2020 there has been a small negative impact on self-reported health in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, where there has been a +6pp relative increase in the proportion who rate their health as 'very bad'.

In the remaining areas, there were no significant relative effects on this measure after accounting for changes over time in the matched comparison samples. There were also no significant relative effects on the prevalence of limiting long-standing illness. See Tables B1 and B2.

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13   The impact here is more neutral as the change occurs at a midpoint and there is not a clear direction of change.
14   The impact here is more neutral as the change occurs at a midpoint and there is not a clear direction of change.

2.3.2 Personal wellbeing

Subjective wellbeing is based on the four harmonised measures developed by the Office for National Statistics:[15]

- Rating of life satisfaction: scale 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied)
- Rating of happiness yesterday: scale 0 (not at all happy) to 10 (completely happy)
- Rating of anxious yesterday: scale 0 (not at all anxious) to 10 (completely anxious)
- Rating of worthwhile yesterday: scale 0 (not at all worthwhile) to 10 (completely worthwhile).

These questions allow people to assess their life overall, as well as providing an indication of their day-to-day feelings.

The difference-in-difference analysis mainly indicates **positive trends in terms of changes in ratings of** aspects of wellbeing between 2018 and 2020. Relative positive impacts on some wellbeing measures were observed in three areas: Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, Dyke House and Manningham.

- In Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, there was indicative evidence of a **positive impact on ratings of overall life satisfaction**: +12pp in the proportion who give a 'high' rating for overall life satisfaction against -12pp who gave a low or medium rating.

- The analysis also indicates a **positive impact on life satisfaction, happiness and feeling that life is worthwhile** for Dyke House residents: +15pp for high ratings of overall life satisfaction, -11pp for low ratings of happiness and -9pp for low ratings of feeling that life is worthwhile.

- In Manningham, the findings are more mixed. There was an overall positive relative impact of +11pp in the proportion who gave a very high score for life satisfaction against -13pp giving a high score, which indicates a strengthening of positive wellbeing. However, there was a **negative impact** of -13pp in the proportion who gave a low rating for anxiety in 2020 with an associated rise in levels of high anxiety (+12pp).

The positive changes in wellbeing in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park could be linked to various community businesses which have a focus on health and wellbeing and social interaction, including a community gym, a community singing group and a farm. In Dyke House the positive changes in wellbeing could be linked to 'Stags', a community business focussed on providing mental health support services for men, which supported a large number of people during the COVID-19 period of restrictions.

There were no significant changes between 2018 and 2020 in any other areas, once changes in the matched comparison samples had been taken into account.

See Tables B3 to B6.

2.4
Employability

The Empowering Places programme aims to boost opportunities for employment, either directly or indirectly, by accelerating the growth of community business. Some community businesses offer opportunities to work for the business directly, while others offer practical help by building transferable skills which young people can take into education, training and employment. Volunteering as part of a community business can also help build transferable skills and improve employability.

In Manningham, there was a **net positive** effect of -7pp in the proportion of unemployed respondents. In the remaining five areas, there was no difference in the proportion that were employed, unemployed or economically active between 2018 and 2020 once changes in the comparison samples had been controlled for. Therefore, there is little indication of any impact of the Empowering Places programme on employability (Table C1).
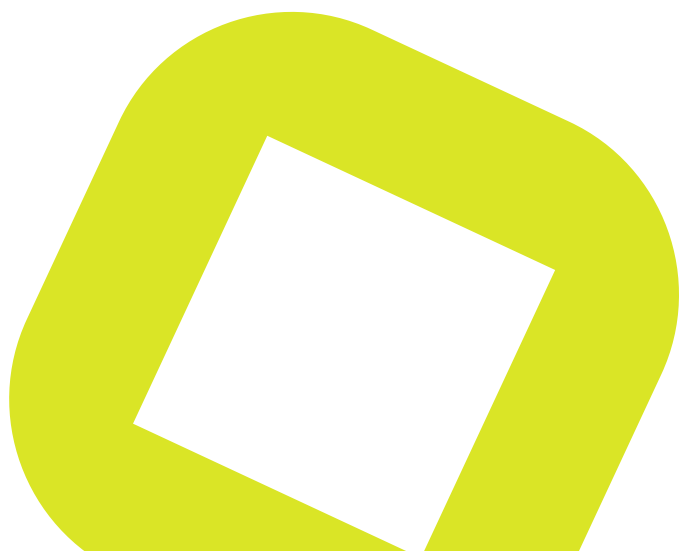
2.5
Local environment

2.5.1 Satisfaction with local area

The CLS captures several measures relating to satisfaction with the local area, including:

● satisfaction with the local area as a place to live

● whether the area has got better or worse to live in over the last two years.

When looking at the difference-in-difference analysis of these measures, Devonport and Stonehouse saw a **net negative effect** of -13pp in the proportion of respondents stating that their area had got better to live in while Dyke House saw a +13pp relative increase in the proportion of respondents stating they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live.[16]

There was no indication of any impact of the programme on satisfaction with the local area in any of other the areas.

See Tables D1 and D2.

2.5.2 Access to services

The area people live in and the availability of local services such as shops, schools, community centres, pubs and amenities can influence life satisfaction and wellbeing. A lack of access to basic services can lead to poorer quality of life and social isolation, especially for older people and those dependent on public transport to access services. At application, 19 per cent of Power to Change grantees stated that their primary impact of focus is to provide 'better access to service' (n=205, January 2015–August 2020).

A common ambition of community businesses is the delivery of positive social, economic and environmental benefits for the whole community, helping to regenerate communities and, in many cases, provide vital services and amenities required locally.

The CLS measures levels of satisfaction with local services and amenities.

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16   This was balanced against decreases in the proportion who felt satisfied and in the proportion who felt dissatisfied so the finding can be regarded as neutral.

There was indicative evidence of a **positive impact on levels of satisfaction with local services and amenities** in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, where there was a relative decrease of -10pp in the proportion of respondents saying they were dissatisfied with their local services and amenities.

In Devonport and Stonehouse, there was a **negative impact on levels of satisfaction with local services and amenities**: a relative decrease of -12pp in the proportion of respondents who said they were 'very satisfied' against a relative increase of +11pp in the proportion who said they were 'fairly satisfied'. Although there was no impact at the overall level in this area, this indicates a weakening of satisfaction levels.

See Table D3.

2.6
Community cohesion

Many community businesses strive to provide a space in which local people come together, regardless of religious, ethnic and social backgrounds. Community businesses aim to promote community integration and a sense of shared identity and purpose.

The CLS carries a broad range of community cohesion measures, including:

- extent to which people feel that people from different backgrounds get on well in their local area
- strength of feelings of belonging in their neighbourhood
- levels of trust in their neighbourhood
- diversity of friendship groups
- level of neighbourliness.

In the CLS, 'local area' is defined as a '15–20-minute walking distance from your home', while 'neighbourhood' is defined as 'within a few minutes walking distance from your home'.

2.6.1 Perceptions of community cohesion

The key community cohesion measure in the CLS captures the extent to which people agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

In all six areas the proportion who agree or disagree with this statement at an overall level remained very similar between 2018 and 2020 in both the comparison and operational areas, and therefore there is no overall indication of any impact of the Empowering Places programme on perceptions of community cohesion (Table E1).

However, there were some shifts at the more granular level which indicate a more **negative impact**:

- In Manningham, there was a +17pp relative increase in the proportion who 'tend to agree' that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, offset against a -12pp decrease in the proportion who 'definitely agree'.

- In Devonport and Stonehouse there was a -12pp relative decrease in the proportion who 'definitely agree' with this statement against a +11pp increase in those who 'tend to agree'.

- In Abram Ward there was a -9pp relative decrease in the proportion who 'definitely agree' with this statement against a +10pp increase in those who 'tend to agree'.

This suggests that, even though there has been no impact at an overall level, in these three areas there has been a weakening of agreement among residents that they live in a cohesive area.

In Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park there was an indication of a small **positive impact**: a +13pp relative increase in the proportion who 'tend to agree' with this statement against a -8pp decrease in the proportion who disagree.

2.6.2 Feeling of belonging to local area and Britain

These measures capture how strongly residents feel that they belong to their local neighbourhood and more widely to Britain. In all six areas, and on both these measures, there was no indication of any impact of the programme at an overall level, once changes over time in the comparison samples had been taken into account (Tables E2 and E3).

Although there were no significant changes at an overall level, there were some **negative shifts** at a more granular level:

● In Dyke House, there was a -10pp relative decrease in the proportion who felt a 'very strong' sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood offset against an equivalent decrease in the proportion who felt a 'fairly strong' sense of belonging.

● In Braunstone there was a +16pp relative increase in the proportion who say they have a 'fairly strong' sense of belonging to Great Britain offset against a relative -11pp decrease in the proportion who say they have a 'very strong' sense of belonging.

This indicates that, although there has been no impact at an overall level, in these two areas there has been a weakening of the sense of belonging between the two time-points.

Additionally, in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park there was a +14pp relative increase in the proportion who say they have a 'fairly strong' sense of belonging to Great Britain.[17]

2.6.3 Levels of trust

The CLS includes two measures of trust:

● the extent to which they can trust people in their neighbourhood

● the extent to which they feel that people in general can be trusted.

The difference-in-difference analysis indicates a **negative impact in perceptions of neighbourhood trust** between 2018 and 2020 in three areas:

● In the Braunstone area, a -17pp relative decrease in the proportion who considered that some people could be trusted against a +11pp increase in the proportion who felt that no one could be trusted.

● In Dyke House, a +9pp increase in the proportion who considered that some people in their neighbourhood could be trusted against a -16pp increase in the proportion who considered that some or many people could be trusted.

● In Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, a +7pp rise in the proportion who thought no one in their neighbourhood could be trusted against a -11pp decline in the proportion who thought that a few or some people could be trusted.

On the other hand, the difference-in-difference analysis indicates a **positive impact in perceptions of neighbourhood trust** between 2018 and 2020 in Devonport and Stonehouse, where there was a -12pp relative decrease in the proportion who considered that some people could be trusted against a +8pp increase in the proportion who thought that many people could be trusted.

17   In this case, the direction of change is more difficult to interpret as this represents a midpoint category in the scale and there were corresponding increases in categories both above and below the midpoint.

In relation to generalised trust, that is the extent to which residents feel that people can be trusted in general, there were only a few difference-in-difference impacts and these were mixed:

● There was a **negative impact in perceptions of generalised trust** in Manningham, where there was a +14pp increase in 'medium' ratings offset against a -11pp decrease in the proportion who gave a 'high' rating on this measure.

● There was a **positive impact in relation to generalised trust** in Devonport and Stonehouse, where there was a net positive effect of -11pp in the proportion who gave a 'low' rating on this measure.

See Tables E4 and E5.

2.6.4 Diversity of friendship groups

Diversity of friendship groups can also have an impact on community cohesion. The CLS covers a range of measures on friendship diversity, including the extent to which people have diverse friendship networks in terms of ethnicity, faith, age and education.

Manningham was associated with increased diversity of friendship groups across various metrics. Compared with the population average, Manningham has a very high proportion of residents from the British Asian community, with the majority from a Pakistani background, but also a large Bangladeshi community and a growing number of residents from Eastern Europe. Improving connections of diverse communities is one of the visions of the Empowering Places programme.

● There was a relative increase of +18pp in the proportion who said that not all of their friends were from the same ethnic group as themselves, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion who said that their friends were all from the same ethnic background.

● There was a relative increase of +20pp in the proportion who said that not all of their friends were from the same religious group as themselves, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion who said that their friends were all from the same religious background.

● There was a relative increase of +14pp in the proportion who said that not all of their friends were from the same educational group as themselves, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion who said that their friends were all from the same educational background.

In other areas, there were changes which again indicated a widening of diversity of friendship groups:

● In Braunstone there was a +14pp increase in the proportion who say that not all of their friends are from the same educational group as themselves.

● In Abram Ward, there was a -11pp relative decrease in the proportion who said that 'less than half' of their friends were from the same age group as themselves, offset a +14pp increase in the proportion who said 'about half' were.

● In Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park there was a -15pp decrease in the proportion who say that 'more than half' of their friends are from the same age group as themselves.[18]

See Tables E6 to E10.

2.6.5 Neighbourliness

Neighbourliness is measured in the CLS by the extent to which people agree or disagree that they 'often borrow and exchange favours with neighbours'.

The difference-in-difference analysis indicates that between 2018 and 2020 there has been a **positive impact on perceptions of neighbourliness** after controlling for changes in the matched comparison samples in only one area, Devonport and Stonehouse: a +15pp increase in the proportion who agree that they borrow things and exchange favours with neighbours. This was driven by a +11pp relative increase in the proportion who 'tend to agree'.

18   In this case, the direction of change is more difficult to interpret as this represents a midpoint category in the scale and there were corresponding increases in categories both above and below the midpoint.

2.7
Community pride and empowerment

Helping to foster greater community pride and empowerment through community business is a key focus of the Empowering Places programme. Research suggests that empowerment can help people exert some control in their local area, which in turn can improve local wellbeing (Harries and Miller, 2021). The CLS captures measures relating to community pride and empowerment, including:

● whether local people pull together to improve the neighbourhood

● influence on decisions affecting the area

● importance of being able to influence decisions in the local area

● whether involvement in the local community leads to changes in decision-making

● whether local people would like to be more involved in the council decisions in the local area.

Between 2018 and 2020, there was indicative evidence of a **positive impact on aspects of community pride and empowerment** in one area:

● In Devonport and Stonehouse, there was a +14pp relative increase in the proportion who felt it was important to feel enabled to influence local decision-making. This was driven by a +12pp relative increase in the proportion who felt it was 'quite important'.

Other trend findings were either **negative** or neutral:[19]

● In Abram Ward, there was a -11pp relative decrease in the proportion who said they 'definitely agree' that people pull together to improve their neighbourhood.

● In Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, there was a -16pp relative decrease in the proportion who agreed that when people get involved they can change the way their local area is run (offset against a +17pp increase in the proportion of respondents who said 'neither agree nor disagree').

● Similarly, in Dyke House there was a -13pp relative decrease in the proportion who agreed that when people get involved they can change the way their local area is run (offset against a +14pp increase in the proportion of respondents who said 'neither agree nor disagree').

● In Braunstone, there was a +5pp relative increase in the proportion who said it would 'depend on the issue' as to whether they would get more involved in decisions made by their local council.

See Tables F1 to F5.

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19   Neutral findings refer to cases where changes are based on midpoints in a scale and there was no clear direction of change.

2.8
Social action

In the CLS, social action is defined as a community project, event or activity in which local people proactively get together to initiate or support on an unpaid basis. It is distinct from other forms of giving time in that it is driven and led by local people rather than through an existing group (as in formal volunteering) and tends to focus on a community need rather than the needs of an individual (as in informal volunteering). Examples can include:

● setting up a new service/amenity

● stopping the closure of a service/amenity

● stopping something happening in the local area

● running a local service on a voluntary basis

● helping to organise a street party or community even.

● Social action is measure in two ways:

● involvement in local activities

● awareness of others being involved in local activities.

The Empowering Places programme seeks to foster greater community cohesion through community business bringing people together to improve the local area and to tackle problems collectively.

The difference-in-difference analysis indicates that between 2018 and 2020 there has been a **negative impact on involvement in local activities** in two areas after controlling for changes in the matched comparison samples:

● In Braunstone, there was a -10pp relative decrease in the proportion personally involved in local activities.

● In Dyke House, the pattern was similar: a -8pp relative decrease in the proportion personally involved in local activities.

In the remaining areas, there were no significant relative effects on the involvement in local activities after accounting for changes over time in the matched comparison samples. See Table G1.

In most areas there was no indication of any impact of the programme on the awareness of others being involved in local activities between 2018 and 2020. However, in Manningham there was indicative evidence of a **positive impact on the awareness of others being involved in local activities**: +18pp in the proportion who were more aware.

See Table G2.

2.8.1 Civic engagement

The CLS also includes three measures of civic engagement:

● **civic participation:** engagement in democratic processes, both in person and online, including signing a petition or attending a public meeting or rally (does not include voting)

● **civic consultation:** taking part in consultations about local services both in person and online

● **civic activism:** involvement in decision-making about local services or in the provision of these services (for example, being a school governor or a magistrate), both in person and online.

There was generally no indication of any impact of the Empowering Places programme on civic engagement between 2018 and 2020, with the sole exception of Devonport and Stonehouse. In this area, there was indicative evidence of a **positive impact on civic participation**: +18pp in the proportion who engaged in civic participation.

See Tables G3 to G5.

2.9
Volunteering

The CLS measures both formal and informal volunteering:

● Formal volunteering is defined as unpaid help given as part of a group, club or organisation to benefit others or the environment. Two measures are used: (i) formal volunteering at least once a month; (ii) formal volunteering at least once in the last twelve months.

● Informal volunteering is defined as giving unpaid help as an individual to someone who is not a relative. Two measures are used: (i) informal volunteering at least once a month; (ii) informal volunteering at least once in the last twelve months.

Across all six operational areas, informal volunteering was more prevalent than formal volunteering, which follows the national trend (DCMS, 2020).

There is no indication of any impact on levels of formal volunteering between 2018 and 2020 in any of the community business areas.

The difference-in-difference analysis does, however, indicate a **positive impact in levels of informal volunteering** in Manningham. This area saw a net positive effect of +20pp in the proportion of respondents who took part in informal volunteering at least once a month and a net positive effect of +15pp in the proportion of respondents who took part in informal volunteering in the last twelve months.

In the remaining areas, there were no significant relative effects on the informal volunteering measures after changes over time in the matched comparison samples were taken into account.

See Tables H1 to H4.

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Appendix: Description of the six Empowering Places areas

Abram Ward, Wigan

Abram Ward is made up of five villages on the outskirts of Wigan town centre. The area's proximity to Wigan, Manchester, Liverpool and Preston provides residents with access to jobs, services and opportunities.

Abram Ward Community Cooperative (AWCC), launched in 2013, is a collaboration of social enterprises, charities and community groups that work together to create sustainable and innovative communities. AWCC's approach focuses on creating environments that enable people to feel empowered to start their own community businesses and supporting existing businesses to increase trade and work alongside the community.

The Empowering Places programme has helped AWCC to develop its local wealth-building and social enterprise offer, and AWCC is now supporting 11 community businesses.

Economic and socio-demographic profile of the operational area

The key operational area of AWCC was defined and referenced to ONS Census Output Area geography. Around 1,000 households were randomly selected within the operational area to take part in the survey.

If the operational area was listed alongside all MSOAs in England, it would rank in the top 17 per cent for multiple deprivation, in the bottom 10–15 per cent for levels of educational attainment (level 2 and level 4)[20] and in the bottom 22 per cent for employment rate.

The majority (95%) of people living in the area are White British, 5 per cent are White (Other), 1 per cent are Asian and 1 per cent identify as being from a Black ethnic background, and there are relatively few residents aged 65 or older (13%).

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20   Level 2 qualifications are A*–C GCSEs or equivalent. Level 4 qualifications are certificates of higher education or equivalent.

Manningham, Bradford

Manningham is a densely populated suburb less than a mile from the centre of Bradford. The area serves as a main route into the city centre and hosts Valley Parade, Bradford City's football ground. Manningham is characterised by its industrial history, featuring Victorian mill buildings and 'back-to-back' terraced houses.

Action for Business was set up by local residents in 1992 to support the development of local businesses and incubated the 'Made in Manningham' initiative until September 2020. Made in Manningham has a number of aims, including connecting diverse communities, getting more people into employment and bettering their skills, and encouraging families to be fitter and healthier.

The community businesses supported by Made in Manningham have developed in different ways: some are entirely new initiatives set up by local residents, while others are new initiatives developed by an existing organisation or group. Examples of community businesses supported by Made in Manningham include markets with stalls and events, reuse and recycle activities, and childcare provision.

Economic and socio-demographic profile of the operational area

The key operational area of Action for Business was defined and referenced to ONS Census Output Area geography. Around 1,500 households were randomly selected within the operational area to take part in the survey.

If the operational area was listed alongside all MSOAs in England, it would rank in the top 1 per cent for multiple deprivation, the bottom 1–9 per cent for educational attainment (level 2 and level 4) and the bottom 1 per cent for employment rate.

The area has a large Asian population (77%), with few people aged 65 or older (7%).

Braunstone, Leicester

Braunstone is a small town to the west of Leicester. The area has a large amount of green space and facilities including a library, health centre and leisure centre. However, the area lacks a formal high street and has few shops.

In five years' time, B-inspired aims for Braunstone to build a community business-led economy, where local people create their own solutions to tackle issues facing their community. B-inspired has specific focuses on health and reducing health inequalities, increasing community pride and empowerment, and reducing social isolation.

As part of the Empowering Places programme, B-inspired supports a variety of community businesses including a community hub, grassroots football club and local personal trainers in fitness and nutrition.

Economic and socio-demographic profile of the operational area

The key operational area of B-inspired was defined and referenced to ONS Census Output Area geography. Around 1,100 households were randomly selected within the operational area to take part in the survey.

If the operational area was listed alongside all MSOAs in England, it would rank in the top 3 per cent for multiple deprivation, the bottom 2–6 per cent for educational attainment (level 2 and level 4), and the bottom 9 per cent for employment rate.

The area is relatively ethnically diverse, with a higher-than-average proportion of the population identifying as Black (7%) or Asian (6%). There are relatively few people aged 65 or over (11%) in the area.

Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, Grimsby

Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park are estates to the west of Grimsby. Local residents have been actively involved in setting up and running local shops, community centres and youth centres, restoring parks and open spaces, and addressing antisocial behaviour. The area has few shops, but good transport links to Grimsby town centre and Cleethorpes.

Centre4, established in 1995, exists as a community hub to support the regeneration of the area. Centre4 offers services and activities to the local community and acts as an incubator space for small businesses and social enterprises. Centre4's approach focuses on creating change, raising the area's profile and supporting business development by encouraging and supporting local people to turn ideas into action.

The community businesses supported by Centre4 through the Empowering Places programme include an ethical recruitment agency, a community orchard, health and wellbeing activities, and a tool library.

Economic and socio-demographic profile of the operational area

The key operational area of Centre4 was defined and referenced to ONS Census Output Area geography. Around 1,300 households were randomly selected within the operational area to take part in the survey.

If the operational area was listed alongside all MSOAs in England, it would rank in the top 3 per cent for multiple deprivation, bottom 1 per cent for educational attainment (level 2 and level 4), and the bottom 3 per cent for employment rate.

Most people (96%) in the area are White British, while 1 per cent are Asian and fewer than 1 per cent are Black, and 14 per cent of the population are aged 65 or older.

Devonport and Stonehouse, Plymouth

The Devonport and Stonehouse areas lie to the west of Plymouth, within close reach of the city centre. Devonport has a shipping centre, train station and sports ground, while Stonehouse hosts an international ferry port, a yacht-building works and a college.

Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) was set up in 2007. Its five-year plan sets out its ambitions that entrepreneurialism be encouraged, and wealth be generated sustainably to improve the quality of life for all residents. RIO aims for everyone to have access to meaningful work and that community businesses and wider social entrepreneurial approaches are seen as commonplace careers for all.

RIO supports a variety of community businesses, including a community theatre, community news publication and a bike repair space.

Economic and socio-demographic profile of the operational area

The key operational area of RIO was defined and referenced to ONS Census Output Area geography. Around 900 households were randomly selected within the operational area to take part in the survey.

If the operational area was listed alongside all MSOAs in England, it would rank in the top 4 per cent for multiple deprivation, the bottom 33–38 per cent for educational attainment (level 2 and level 4), and the bottom 11 per cent for employment rate.

The majority (87%) of people in the area are White British, 2 per cent are Asian and 1 per cent are Black. Only 14 per cent of the people living in the area are aged 65 or older.

Dyke House, Hartlepool

Dyke House is a square mile-sized estate in north Hartlepool, a short distance from Hartlepool town centre and the marina. It has a primary school, college and several small shops.

The Wharton Trust aims to use the Empowering Places programme to become more commercially minded, capable of generating and operating new income sources to aid its own sustainability. Its ambition is for the community to be inspired and empowered to apply their own solutions to local problems or gaps in provision using the community business model.

Through the Empowering Places programme, the Wharton Trust is looking strategically at ways to enable the establishment and growth of up to eight sustainable community businesses.

Economic and socio-demographic breakdown of the operational area

The key operational area of Wharton Trust was defined and referenced to ONS Census Output Area geography. Around 1,200 households were randomly selected within the operational area to take part in the survey.

If the operational area was listed alongside all MSOAs in England, it would rank in the top 4 per cent for multiple deprivation, the bottom 1–5 per cent for educational attainment (level 2 and level 4), and the bottom 1 per cent for employment rate.

Most people (97%) living in the operational area are White British, 1 per cent are Asian and less than 1 per cent are Black. Only 14 per cent of the population are aged 65 or older.

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