Research summary

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

A baseline study

In 2018, Power to Change commissioned Kantar Public to conduct a hyperlocal version of the national Community Life Survey (CLS), an annual, nationally-representative survey conducted on behalf of the government. The CLS provides official statistics on issues key to encouraging social action and empowering communities.

Our hyperlocal CLS seeks to measure the impact of community businesses on their local community by running the survey in seven areas where community business is established and growing. These seven areas form the Power to Change Empowering Places programme. They are:

Area	Town/city	2011 Census population	MSOA mean IMD decile[1]
Devonport and Stonehouse	Plymouth	13,478	Most deprived
Braunstone	Leicester	15,585	Most deprived
Manningham	Bradford	19,983	Most deprived
Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park	Grimsby	11,769	Most deprived
Abram Ward	Wigan	12,664	Second most deprived
Dyke House	Hartlepool	4,952	Most deprived
Marsh Farm	Luton	17,331	Third most deprived

Appendix A of this summary provides a more detailed overview of these seven places.

Appendix B provides a summary of findings broken down by area.

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[1] An MSOA or Middle Layer Super Output Area is term used in statistical reporting. It is a small geographical area, with a minimum population of 5,000, made up of several Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs).

What the research tells us

This is a baseline survey. It therefore does not evaluate the current impact of community businesses on their local areas. As the Empowering Places programme launched in August 2017, we do not expect to see differences between the operational areas and the matched comparisons at this stage. It is intended that a follow-up survey using difference-in-difference analysis will be conducted in future years, to assess the impact of the community businesses within the Empowering Places programme on their local communities and a range of outcomes.

Overall, findings were mixed and with no clear pattern observed across most metrics. However, some more significant differences (positive or negative) between operational areas and their matched comparison sample were observed:

Social isolation

- Those living in Abram Ward, Devonport and Stonehouse, and Dyke House were more likely to report that they chat to their neighbours on most days compared with their matched comparison sample.

Health and wellbeing

- Those living in Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park were less likely to give a 'high' life satisfaction rating, less likely to give a 'high' rating for feeling their life is worthwhile, and more likely to rate their happiness as 'low'.

- Residents living and around Dyke House were less likely to give a 'high' life satisfaction rating, less likely to give a 'high' rating for feeling their life is worthwhile, and more likely to give a 'very high' rating for anxiety.

Employment

- In Abram Ward and Manningham individuals were less likely to be in employment than their matched comparison samples.

Local environment

- Devonport and Stonehouse report high satisfaction with the local area, whereas lower levels of satisfaction were reported in Abram War and Marsh Farm.

- Dissatisfaction with the provision of local services was more prevalent among residents living in Abram Ward, Dyke House, and Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park.

Community cohesion

- Those living in Manningham, Dyke House, and Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park had less ethnically diverse friendship groups, whereas those living in Marsh Farm had more ethnically diverse friendship groups.

- Those living in Manningham, and Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park also had less religiously diverse friendship groups.

Social Action

- Residents living in operational areas were just as likely as their matched comparison samples to be involved in social action in the last 12 months.

- Awareness of others being involved in local activities was lower in Manningham and Marsh Farm compared with their matched comparison samples.

Civic engagement

- Those living in the Dyke House and Devonport and Stonehouse were more likely to report involvement in civic consultation in the last 12 months.

- Those living in Devonport and Stonehouse were also more likely to report involvement in civic activism in the last 12 months.

Appendix B contains a summary table of significant differences between operational areas and their matched comparison samples across all measures.

Methodology

The seven catalyst organisations of the Empowering Places programme work in defined operational areas, sometimes as small as a square mile around their central asset, covering just one or two wards. To measure the success of the Empowering Places programme, Kantar Public conducted a 'hyperlocal' version of the Community Life Survey (CLS) in each of the seven catalysts' operational areas.

Many of the measures collected in the national CLS relate closely to the intended outcomes of the Empowering Places programme. Eight key metrics were assessed which included social isolation, health and wellbeing, employability, local environment, community cohesion, community pride and empowerment, social action, and volunteering. These key metrics were used as baseline measures with a view that, over time, the data will allow conclusions to be drawn about the impact of community businesses on their local area through a difference-in-difference analysis.

The 'hyperlocal' survey used the CLS national model. The 'hyperlocal' design builds on a pilot study conducted in 2017 to test a new way of measuring the social impact of community businesses on their local community. For the purposes of the survey, each organisation's operational area was defined with reference to the Office for National Statistics Operational Area geography. Within each operational area, a systematic random sample of addresses was drawn from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File, aiming for 300 completed questionnaires and maximal geographical dispersion. At each address, all adults aged 16 plus were invited to complete the questionnaire.

About the research

The report was researched and written by Kantar Public. It is based on a hyperlocal version of the national Community Life Survey (CLS), an annual nationally-representative survey that provides official statistics on issues key to encouraging social action and empowering communities. For this research, Kantar undertook surveys in the seven areas identified as having an established and growing community business sector by the Power to Change Empowering Places programme.

Appendix A: About the Empowering Places programme

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 within those areas. To achieve this aim, the Empowering Places 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. The programme has funded catalyst organisations in seven local areas. Power to Change is working through a delivery partnership led by Co-operatives UK with the New Economic Foundation (NEF) and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES).

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. In addition, these organisations also have a charitable objective to address key issues in the local area, which include financial hardship, poverty and disadvantage; exclusion or isolation due to youth or old age; ill-health or disability.

The seven areas in the programme are: Abram Ward, Wigan; Manningham, Bradford; Braunstone, Leicester; Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, Grimsby; Marsh Farm, Luton; Devonport and Stonehouse, Plymouth.

## Power to Change's Empowering Places

Abram Ward, Wigan

Abram Ward is made up of five villages on the outskirts of Wigan Town Centre. Abram Ward Community Cooperative (AWCC) is working in this area as part of the Empowering Places programme, to build an understanding of how community businesses could address the needs of Abram Ward. Launched in 2013, AWCC is a collaboration of social enterprises, charities and community groups that work together to create sustainable and innovative communities.
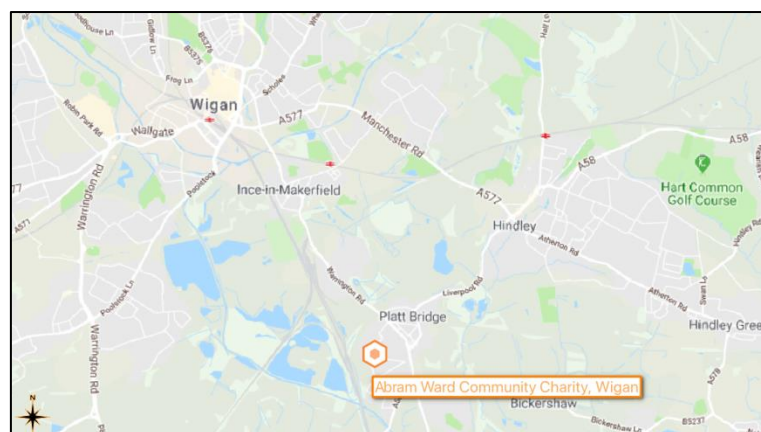
The focus of AWCC's Empowering Places five-year plan is to show how open spaces and community assets can support the growth of economic activity in the area. The plan established policies and procedures to ensure the growth of community businesses. AWCC aims to use the Neighbourhood Plan to influence planning and other infrastructure policies for the development of community businesses across the area, leading into the development of a local wealth building model.

Manningham, Bradford
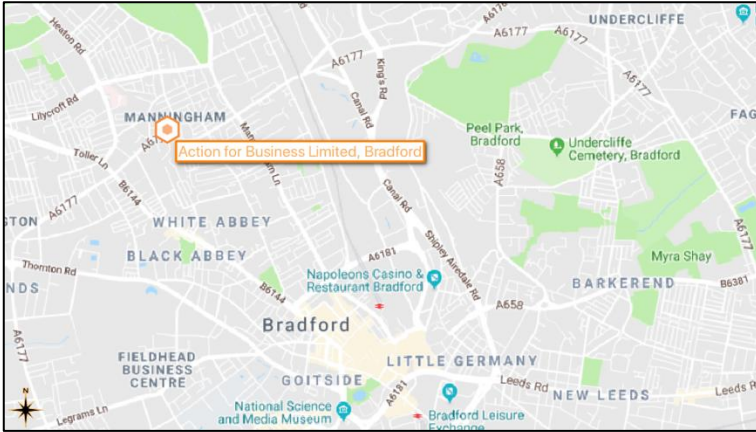
Manningham is a suburb less than a mile from the centre of Bradford and is characterised by its industrial history, with Victorian mill buildings and 'back to back' terraced houses. Action for Business Ltd (ABL) was established in 1992 by local people to support entrepreneurs in Manningham to set up businesses for private profit and community benefit.

ABL's Empowering Places five-year plan aims to support and develop the local economy, through the provision of serviced office space, enterprise support, business support and employment and placements. It is focusing on a local brand, 'Made in Manningham'. Its vision is to create a destination location with opportunities for work and leisure for local people, by establishing give flagship businesses and making Carlisle Business Centre an exemplar community business itself.

Braunstone, Leicester

Braunstone is a small town to the west of Leicester. The area has a wide range of public facilities including a leisure centre, library and health centre, however, there is no main high street and no supermarket, greengrocers, butchers or pub in the area.

B-Inspired is a community business that trades for the benefit of Braunstone and its residents. It has been resident-led since its creation in 1998. B-Inspired is working in the area as part of Empowering Places to develop a Neighbourhood Action Plan, to inform and gather and insights into the needs of the local community. A consultation occurs every two years and determines the area's priorities.
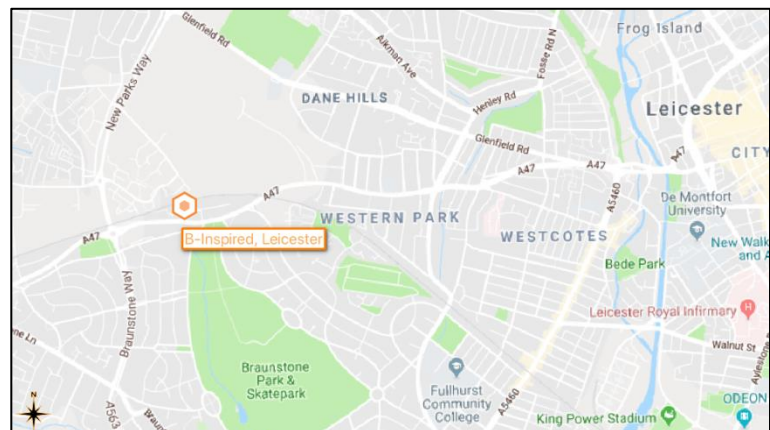
Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park, Grimsby

Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park are estates to the west of Grimsby. The estates were developed in the 1940s and have few shops and no secondary school, though there are other services including a doctor's surgery.

Centre4 is a community hub working to support the economy and social regeneration of the area. Its Empowering Places five-year plan focusses on bringing green and empty spaces back into use and providing job opportunities for local people, placing Centre4 at the key convener and incubator in a network of community businesses. Its flagship community business has been identified as an Ethical Recruitment Agency that will also provide training opportunities through social action.

Marsh Farm, Luton

Marsh Farm is a suburban estate north of Luton. The has transport links into Luton and good road and rail inks to London and Luton airport, it also has a number of schools and a leisure centre.

Marsh Farm Futures (MFF) is the legacy organisation from a £48 million New Deal for Communities programme. It is committed to improving the economic, social and health wellbeing of residents and seeks to offer a community hub for enterprise and youth to run life-changing interventions. As part of the Empowering Places Plan, MFF has focused on building local relationships and communication the idea of community business to local people.
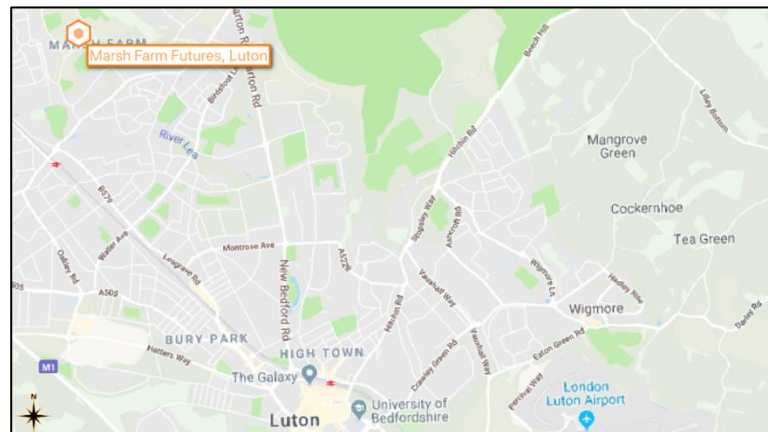
Devonport and Stonehouse, Plymouth
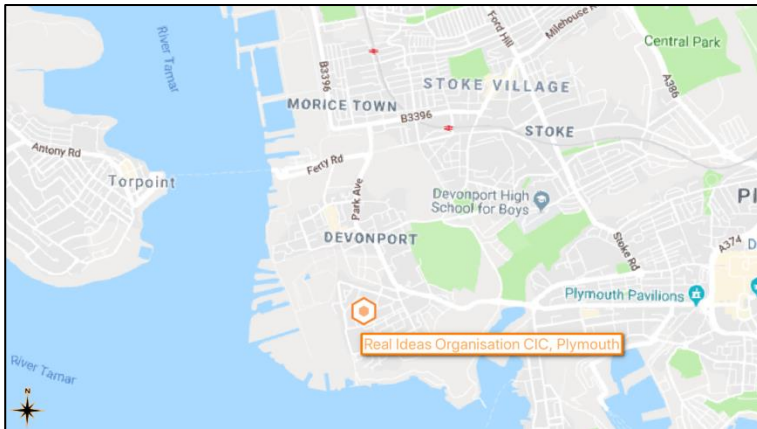
The Devonport and Stonehouse areas lie to the west of Plymouth. Devonport has a shipping centre, train station and sports ground. Stonehouse hosts an international ferry port, a yacht-building works and a college.

Real Ideas Organisation CIC (RIO) was set up to catalyse and support social enterprise and develop innovative projects in Plymouth and beyond. As part of the Empowering Places programme, RIO set up a peer connector network that has led to the establishment of a number of community businesses. It is working in the areas to drive regeneration by providing affordable and flexible office space for SMEs to develop and grow from the space.

Dyke House, Hartlepool

Dyke House is square mile-sized estate in north Hartlepool. It has very little open space but has a primary school, college and several shops.

The Wharton Trust operates from the Annexe, a community and resource centre, to tackle the effects of worklessness and poverty by supporting people to access employment and training, promoting healthier lifestyles, engaging young people, improving literacy and developing information technology skills. Wharton Trust's Empowering Places five-year plan is to place community businesses at the heart of future transformation of the place. It had taken a strategic approach that increase is long-term sustainability, while helping to support the establishment of up to eight community businesses. It will also work with key stakeholders and other anchor organisations to make the case for community business.
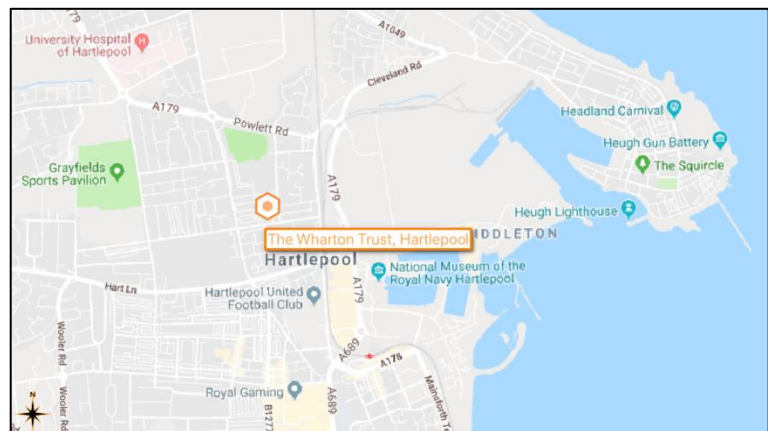
Appendix B: Summary of statistical differences

The figures in the box represents how many percentage points higher or lower than expected the answer was compared to the matched comparison sample value. Values have only been given where the difference is statistically significant.

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
Social isolation	If I needed help, there are people who would be there for me (FrndSat1/ZfrdnSat1)	Definitely agree							
		Tend to agree							
		Tend to disagree			5pp higher than expected			4pp higher than expected	
		Definitely disagree							
		Agree			5pp lower than expected				
		Disagree			5pp higher than expected				
	If I want to socialise, there are people I can call (FrndSat2/Zfrdnsat2)	Definitely agree			9pp lower than expected				
		Tend to agree			8pp higher than expected				
		Tend to disagree		5pp lower than expected					
		Definitely disagree							

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
		Agree		7pp higher than expected				6pp lower than expected	
		Disagree		-6 pp lower than expected				6pp higher than expected	
	Is there anyone who you can really count on to listen to you? (Counton1)	Yes, one person	11pp higher than expected						
		Yes, more than one person	8pp lower than expected						
		No one					3pp lower than expected		
	How often do you chat to your neighbours, more than to just say hello? (SchatN)	On most days	13pp higher than expected					8pp higher than expected	7pp higher than expected
		Once or twice a week							8pp lower than expected
		Once or twice a month	5pp lower than expected	7pp lower than expected					

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
		Less than once a month	6pp lower than expected						
		Never							
	How often do you feel lonely? (Lonoft)	Often/always							6pp higher than expected
		Some of the time							
		Occasionally							
		Hardly ever			7pp lower than expected				
		Never							
Health and wellbeing	How is your health in general? (Ghealth)	Very good	8pp lower than expected				11pp lower than expected		
		Good							
		Fair							
		Bad						5pp higher than expected	
		Very bad							
	How satisfied are you with life nowadays? (ZWellB1)	Very high					7pp lower than expected		

Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
	High			8pp lower than expected	10pp lower than expected			13pp lower than expected
	Medium							
	Low				7pp higher than expected			7pp higher than expected
How happy did you feel yesterday? (ZWellB2)	Very high							
	High							
	Medium							
	Low				7pp higher than expected			
	High		8pp lower than expected					7pp higher than expected
How anxious did you feel yesterday? (ZWellB3)	Medium							
	Low							7pp lower than expected
	Very low							
To what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? (ZWellB4)	Very high							
	High				9pp lower			8pp lower than expected

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
						than expected			
		Medium							
		Low				6pp higher than expected			
Employability	Respondent economic status 3 categories (DVILO3a)	In employment	16pp lower than expected	13pp lower than expected					
		Unemployed							
		Economically inactive	14pp higher than expected						
Local environment	Satisfaction with local area as a place to live (Slocsat/Zslocsat)	Very satisfied	5pp lower than expected					7pp higher than expected	
		Fairly satisfied							
		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied					6pp higher than expected		
		Fairly dissatisfied	6pp higher than expected						

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
		Very dissatisfied	4pp higher than expected						
		Satisfied	12pp lower than expected				9pp lower than expected	7pp higher than expected	
		Dissatisfied	10pp higher than expected						
	How area has changed over past two years (BetWors)	Area has got better						22pp higher than expected	
		Area has got worse		15pp lower than expected				12pp lower than expected	
		Area has not changed much						10pp lower than expected	9pp lower than expected
	Generally how satisfied are Satisfaction with local services and amenities? (SatAsset/ZSatAsset)	Very satisfied	6pp lower than expected					11pp higher than expected	
		Fairly satisfied						8pp lower	

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
								than expected	
		Fairly dissatisfied	5pp higher than expected		3pp lower than expected				5pp higher than expected
		Very dissatisfied				4pp higher than expected			
		Satisfied	12pp lower than expected						
		Dissatisfied	6pp higher than expected			6pp higher than expected			7pp higher than expected
Community cohesion	Agreement that people from different backgrounds get on well together in your area (Stogeth/Zstogeth)	Definitely agree							
		Tend to agree	8pp lower than expected						
		Tend to disagree							
		Definitely disagree	6pp higher than expected						
		Agree	8pp lower than expected						

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
		Disagree	8pp higher than expected						
	How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood? (SBeNeigh)	Very strongly							7pp higher than expected
		Fairly strongly							
		Not very strongly							
		Not at all							
	People in neighbourhood can be trusted (Strust)	Many can be trusted			7pp lower than expected		8pp lower than expected		
		Some can be trusted			13pp higher than expected			9pp higher than expected	
		A few can be trusted							
		None can be trusted	3pp lower than expected		5pp lower than expected				
	Trust in people in general (ZStrustgen2)	Very high					4pp lower than expected		
		High				9pp lower			

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
						than expected			
		Medium					9pp higher than expected		
		Low				8pp higher than expected			
	Proportion of friends that are the same ethnic group as you (Srace/Zsrace)	All the same		11pp higher than expected	13pp lower than expected	13pp higher than expected	11pp lower than expected		11pp higher than expected
		More than a half	7pp lower than expected			14pp lower than expected			15pp lower than expected
		About a half			7pp higher than expected				
		Less than a half							
		All the same		11pp higher than expected	13pp lower than expected	13pp higher than expected	11pp lower than expected		11pp higher than expected
		Not all the same		11pp lower than expected	13pp higher than expected	13pp lower than expected	11pp higher than expected		11pp lower than expected

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
	Proportion of friends that are the same faith group as you (Sfaith/Zsfaith)	All the same		13pp higher than expected		14pp higher than expected			
		More than a half	13pp higher than expected						
		About a half							
		Less than a half			14pp higher than expected				
		All the same		13pp higher than expected		14pp higher than expected			
		Not all the same		13pp lower than expected		14pp lower than expected			
	Proportion of your friends that are the same educational level? (Seduc/Zseduc)	All the same	10pp higher than expected						
		More than a half	17pp lower than expected				13pp lower than expected		
		About a half							

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
		Less than a half							
		All the same	10pp higher than expected						
		Not all the same	10pp lower than expected						
	I tend to borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours (sFavN/ZSFavN)	Definitely agree							
		Tend to agree							
		Tend to disagree							
		Definitely disagree		12pp lower than expected			9pp higher than expected		
		Agree					7pp lower than expected		
		Disagree					7pp higher than expected		
	Agreement that people in this neighbourhood pull together (Spull/Zspull)	Definitely agree	6pp higher than expected			4pp lower than expected	5pp lower than expected	6pp higher than expected	
		Tend to agree							

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
		Tend to disagree					10pp higher than expected		
		Definitely disagree							
		Agree					9pp lower than expected	11pp higher than expected	
		Disagree					9pp higher than expected	11pp lower than expected	
	Agreement that you can influence decisions affecting your local area (PAffLoc/ZPAffLoc)	Definitely agree							
		Tend to agree			8pp higher than expected				
		Tend to disagree				8pp lower than expected			
		Definitely disagree							
		Agree			9pp higher than expected				
		Disagree			9pp lower than expected				
		Very important							

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
	Importance of being able to influence decisions affecting your area? (Pinfl)	Quite important							
		Not very important							
		Not at all important							10pp higher than expected
Social action	Awareness of local people getting involved in a local issue/activity (ZLocPeop1)	Yes		12pp lower than expected			9pp lower than expected		
		No		12pp higher than expected			9pp higher than expected		
	Any civic participation in the past 12 months (Zcivpar1)	Yes					8pp lower than expected		
		No					8pp higher than expected		
	Any civic consultation in the past 12 months (Zpconsul1)	Yes						6pp higher than expected	6pp higher than expected
		No						6pp lower than expected	6pp lower than expected

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
	Any civic activism in the past 12 months (Zcivren)	Yes						4pp higher than expected	
		No						4pp lower than expected	
Volunteering	Do you formally volunteer at least once a month? (Zformon)	Yes					5pp lower than expected		
		No					5pp higher than expected		
	Have you formally volunteered in the past 12 months? (Zforvol)	Yes					9pp lower than expected		
		No					9pp higher than expected		
	Do you provide informal help at least once a month? (Zhelpmon)	Yes		15pp lower than expected					7pp higher than expected

	Question label (variable)	Response categories	Wigan	Bradford	Leicester	Grimsby	Luton	Plymouth	Hartlepool
		No		15pp higher than expected					7pp lower than expected