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Rotherham's *Controlling Migration Fund* (Phase 1) Programme

Evaluation

Dr Stephen Connelly

Acknowledgements

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I learned an enormous amount during the course of the evaluation, and everything helped me understand the complex, difficult and largely successful work that was carried out under the CMF. I am very conscious that only a fraction of what I was told has found its way *explicitly* into this document. While I regret this, the document had to be kept within reasonable bounds if it was to be of any use, and I hope in the process of synthesising and summarising I have not done too great a disservice to the work that was done.

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List of acronyms

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
ACE	Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate (RMBC)
BSC	Building Stronger Communities
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CYPS	Children and Young People's Services (RMBC)
CLP.....	Clifton Learning Partnership
CMF	Controlling Migration Fund
ESB	English Speaking Board
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
HHSRS.....	Housing Health and Safety Rating System
ICE	Immigration Compliance and Enforcement
KPCP	Kimberworth Park Community Partnership
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
OISC	Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
PL.....	Premier Learning
RBSC	Rotherham - Building Stronger Communities
R&E.....	Regeneration and Environment (RMBC)
RMBC	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
REMA.....	Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance
RUCST	Rotherham United Community Sports Trust
SAP	Social Action Project
SL	Selective Licensing
ToC	Theory of Change
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VAR.....	Voluntary Action Rotherham

Evaluation of Rotherham's *Controlling Migration Fund* (Phase 1) programme Summary

The CMF programme

This report presents the evaluation of the community cohesion programme in Rotherham, funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government with £1.3 million from the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF). This programme has supported Rotherham Together Partnership's broader community cohesion strategy, which addresses a major policy priority for the borough. Although the ethnic minority population is well below the national average it is rising rapidly, with recent growth largely through migration from Eastern Europe. Rapid migration has placed demands on statutory and voluntary sector service provision, and there are ongoing tensions between the migrants and established White British and Pakistani/Kashmiri communities.

The programme was led by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC), and delivered by three departments within RMBC and six principal partners from the voluntary and community sector. Its broad goals were:

- positive effects on host communities/reduced pressure on services
- improved relationships within communities (i.e. community cohesion)
- improved relationships between communities and the local authority
- improved wellbeing (environmental, economic, social/family) for deprived communities

with a subsidiary objective of improving governance and inter-organisational relationships in relation to cohesion.

The programme comprised 25 projects, involving nine distinct approaches to community cohesion: Working with key individuals; Providing advice; Training/education; Getting individuals together across communities; Financial support for community groups; Environmental projects; Increasing housing and environmental enforcement activity; Targeted state support to families and young people; Working with governance organisations (state and VCS).

The evaluation

This evaluation was carried out by staff from the Department of Urban Studies & Planning at the University of Sheffield, and was funded from Rotherham's CMF. Its principal aim is to support learning about *what works?* as well as demonstrating the impact of the Fund, and it therefore adopts a 'Theory of Change' approach, organised around the causal links between activities, effects on individuals and organisations, and broader social impacts. Given the short and complex nature of the programme, and the largely unfavourable external environment (in which Brexit, austerity and local activities of the Far Right play a part) there was little chance of evaluable impacts on community cohesion at borough level. Visible change, especially in such an environment, will take more time and resources to achieve. The process-based approach to evaluation is thus particularly important for planning future projects. The report combines quantitative measures of immediate outputs and impacts (drawn principally from the delivery organisations' quarterly reports) with qualitative analysis of the mechanisms by which these plausibly contribute to the programme's broader goals (derived from interviews with project staff).

Key achievements

- There is clear evidence of a large number of valuable impacts, even in the short timeframe of the programme, on individuals, organisations and communities in Rotherham
- Almost all the programme outputs were delivered, or will be by the time the projects close; many targets were exceeded
- The services delivered were clearly meeting very real needs, in the context of demand probably far exceeding what could be provided using the CMF resources

- The funds were used very creatively, supporting an impressively varied range of activities and a great deal of innovation, diversification and new capacity both in the local authority and in the voluntary and community organisations.
- The programme also enabled a great deal of learning, within organisations and at programme level, demonstrating what can be achieved and how to deliver effective and innovative approaches to cohesion in the future
- The few exceptions to successful delivery were principally where problems of recruitment or procurement delayed the start of activities, or where an innovative activity proved inappropriate or unworkable. RMBC's appropriate response was to allow flexibility and support organisations to find alternative approaches.

Programme goal 1: Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

Several of the projects delivered **services directly to host communities**: e.g. housing advice, opportunities for young people to participate in social action projects, opportunities for participation in sport, enviro-crime enforcement. Others provided services to recently arrived migrants which **reduced pressure on statutory services**: e.g. ESOL, community navigators, housing advice; others supported recently arrived people in ways which will reduce sources of inter-community tension e.g. housing advice, enviro-crime enforcement, ESOL). Early interventions in supporting families and vulnerable individuals (e.g. through advice, family and young person support) were shown to have **cost savings, through reducing more complex and expensive later involvement** by statutory services.

Programme goal 2: Community cohesion

Many of the projects gave people experiences which should encourage community cohesion, particularly when a) inter-community contact was over an extended period and b) it involved activities such as sport, or carefully facilitated 'difficult conversations' about identity and migration. To sustain and broaden the impact of this work within communities will require ongoing support for people who have been involved.

Programme goal 3: Relationships between community and the local authority

Activities such as housing and enviro-crime enforcement work, providing housing advice in community centres, and Early Help and youth outreach work all gave members of the public experiences of direct, immediate help or evidence of local authority responsiveness. It seems very likely (though with little direct evidence) that many people's positive interactions through the programme will have made them more favourably disposed towards RMBC.

Programme goal 4: Improved wellbeing

There were some striking impacts on individuals – at the extreme transformative and even life-saving, in the case of advice and crisis fund provision. Although not visible at community scale, the effects of early help with family problems (including child abuse), access to services, language classes and opportunities to volunteer (amongst others) all have enormous positive implications for the individuals and families concerned, and for those with whom they come into contact (either within communities or service providers.) The programme also led to perceptible environmental and housing quality improvements in some locations.

Programme goal 5: Governance relationships

The programme led to increased cooperation over delivery, sharing of knowledge and information between VCS organisations and with RMBC, reinforcing some existing relationships and creating some new ones.

Factors supporting success

While each project was different, three key factors are identifiable which underpinned the success of the programme as a whole:

✓ **wider cohesion objectives:** across the programme projects were explicitly focusing on contributing to broader, shared community cohesion goals, alongside achieving their own specific outputs. This shaped their delivery, helped build links and develop synergies between projects, and gave a very diverse and potentially piecemeal programme a central focus.

✓ **staff:** staff across the local authority and VCS were impressively dedicated and committed to the objectives and the programme, and the work as a whole was characterised by professionalism and cooperation

✓ **structure and management:** the partnership of experienced VCS and statutory organisations, meeting regularly as a team of equals, enabled effective delivery and mutual confidence building on a firm foundation of existing skills, experience and relationships. This was coupled with flexibility in management, from both MHCLG and RMBC, allowing projects to adapt to emerging circumstances and needs and pick up ideas coming from the community.

Constraining factors and risks

While almost all the project outputs were delivered, there were some factors which reduced the overall effectiveness of the programme, most of which were outside the control of the partners but need to be taken into consideration for future work.

x several projects started slowly, with consequences for delivery given the very short timescale of the programme funding. This resulted from a mix of administrative factors, the need to train staff and community members, the inherent slowness of community development work, and structural labour market constraints

x resources were inevitably inadequate to meet the demand for services; there was a specific problem with some of the community development work that resources were not available to support new initiatives coming from the community.

Looking forward: recommendations

The following are the main recommendations for those planning and delivering future work at the local level; they also have implications for policy and support from MHCLG and other central government departments.

The portfolio of activities: Overall there is value in supporting a broad portfolio of activities and a diversity of providers, which builds in resilience and promotes unplanned synergies between projects. However, given the inevitable resourcing constraints, I suggest prioritising:

- Focused work with individuals/small groups drawn from across communities
- Training of community development workers
- Providing sustained support for participants in both these.
- Advice/support work for individuals and families.

Lower priority should be given to one-off events, which have unknown and perhaps marginal impact.

Strategic approach: The existing community cohesion strategy should be revised and deepened, so that it sets out in a systematic way its goals and the approaches to be adopted to achieve them, over a relatively long timescale (several years) and with integration between activities.

The strategy should include activities targeted towards economic development and link to the local authority's neighbourhood working approach.

An evaluation framework based on an explicit theory of change, with proper resourcing and allocation of responsibilities, should be built into the strategy from the outset. Resources could usefully be put into base line surveys in project intervention and control neighbourhoods.

Reach: The portfolio of projects should extend further support to the White British working class communities (e.g. advice services for people in the private rented housing sector; opportunities to participate in sport and cultural activities.)

All projects should have an explicit cohesion aspect, so that provision to more recent communities also benefits host communities (e.g. ESOL providers should cover integration in their teaching.)

More attention could be given to reaching individuals within communities who are most in need, or whose communities could benefit most from their participation, but are often less likely to access the activities/services on offer.

Sustainability: A strategic approach should consider where Rotherham Building Stronger Communities can influence, support or supplement funds accessed by other organisations.

Future support should not necessarily be tied to innovation:

- projects should be supported to continue as they are, where they clearly deliver cohesion objectives
- some should be supported to innovate, for instance where community development workers have been trained
- some activities/approaches can be mainstreamed and may not require further resourcing, particularly where it involves a new approach to existing activities rather than additional staff
- resources should be put into supporting individuals who have been involved in community cohesion activities to reinforce behaviour change and their potential as change agents.

Timescale: Strategic planning should be carried out over a medium timescale (e.g. 5 years) so that development and learning (by projects, organisations, and individuals) can be planned for, and outcomes evaluated, without being tied to single funding regimes.

Whilst problems for individual recent migrants may be of short duration (as reflected in the short timescale of the CMF), community level need is likely to be longer term, especially in 'reception areas' for waves of migrants. Also, integration and cohesion issues are deeply engrained and require long term solutions. Longer term funding is needed.

Transparency and trust: Actively sustaining and nurturing a programme culture of trust and mutual respect is crucial for longer term partnership working.

Section 1 Introduction to the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) and the evaluation

This is an evaluation of the programme of activities carried out in Rotherham during 2017-19 which were funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government¹ under the Controlling Migration Fund² (CMF). The programme was led by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC), and comprised 25 projects, delivered by three departments within RMBC and six principal partners from the voluntary and community sector. The evaluation was carried out by the University of Sheffield.

The projects were grouped within four of the MHCLG themes (*Service Integration, Rogue Landlords Initiative, Cohesion, English Language Support*), although there were substantial linkages between projects, and in practice many spanned two or more themes. Box 1 lists the partner organisations; a full list of projects and themes is given in Appendix 1.

The overall aim of the Fund was to help local authorities respond to the impact of recent migration on their communities and service provision. The emphasis was on achieving benefits for established resident communities, but it also supported wider community cohesion initiatives and activities to promote the integration of recent migrants, where this could be shown to have positive impacts for

established communities. Because it focused on the problems caused by migration, the Fund was of short duration and was not envisaged as a general community cohesion programme.

In addition to direct impacts, MHCLG's aspiration is that the CMF, along with the more recent Integrated Communities Innovation Fund³, will lead to better "understanding of the impacts of migration where they arise, as well as what works to build integrated communities"⁴. This evaluation is intended to contribute to that aim, as it focuses on explaining the processes by which project impacts occurred.

Within Rotherham, the CMF-funded programme sits within Rotherham Together Partnership's broader cohesion strategy, *Rotherham - Building Stronger Communities* (RBSC). Cohesion is a major policy priority for the borough: although the ethnic minority

BOX 1: The CMF Programme partners

Voluntary and community sector organisations

Clifton Learning Partnership (CLP)

Kimberworth Park Community Partnership (KPCP)

Premier Learning (PL)

Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA)

Rotherham United Community Sports Trust (RUCST)

Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR)

Units within RMBC

Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate (ACE)

Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)

Regeneration and Environment (R&E)

+ University of Sheffield

¹ Prior to January 2018 this was the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

² CMF Prospectus: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-migration-fund-prospectus>

³ Integrated Communities Fund Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-communities-innovation-fund>

⁴ CMF Prospectus p. 5.

population is well below the national average (8.1% compared to 20.2% in 2011) it is rising rapidly, doubling between 2001 and 2011, and probably now over 10%¹. The largest established resident communities (or 'host communities' for short) are White British and Pakistani & Kashmiri. Much of the recent growth has been through migration from many Eastern European countries, including significant numbers of Roma. Rapid migration has put additional demands on services, and there are ongoing tensions between all three principal communities, heightened by highly publicised cases of child sexual exploitation and political activity by the Far Right.

To date, the CMF has provided the only substantial external funds for projects under RBSC. The first phase of CMF in Rotherham, evaluated in this report, totalled £1.3 million, starting in July 2017. Most of the 23 projects started later in 2017 and finished in March 2019, with the exception of RUCST's Football Talk and Social Action Project, and Kimberworth Park's community development training work, both of which finished in June 2019.

The evaluation

This evaluation was carried out by Dr Stephen Connelly, with support from Professor David Robinson, from the Department of Urban Studies & Planning at the University of Sheffield, and was funded from Rotherham's CMF. The evaluation complements the output monitoring carried out by the RBSC Coordinator (funded under CMF and based in RMBC's ACE Office), to whom all the projects submitted detailed quarterly monitoring reports. While I have drawn on these reports, the purpose of this evaluation was different, aimed principally to support learning about *what works?*² as well as demonstrating the impact of the Fund.

This report is structured as follows:

Section 2 *The evaluation: principles and methods* sets out the underlying approach taken to the evaluation, the methods used to collect data, and caveats about the evaluation process which should be borne in mind when reading the report.

Section 3 *The RMBC CMF programme* provides an overall assessment of the programme's impacts and key lessons learned.

Section 4 *Supporting community cohesion: lessons learned from the CMF* discusses in turn the enabling and constraining factors for each of the nine different approaches ('mechanisms') used across the projects, and the implications of these for future work.

Section 5 *The projects* presents data on achievement of outputs, contribution to overall programme aims, and discusses enablers and constraints of success and the implications of these for sustainability of the projects.

Appendix 1 links the partner organisations, projects and CMF themes. Appendix 2 gives a detailed summary of the quantitative aspects of the evaluation – the targets and achieved outputs against the indicators contained in the bid document.

¹ Rotherham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2019):
https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/jsna/info/23/people/54/ethnicity_and_cultural_identity

Section 2 The evaluation: principles and methods

The evaluation was based on the *processes* by which activities may have had effects on individuals, communities and organisations. This approach (known as ‘realist evaluation’¹) leads to learning about *what works*² as well as assessing *outcomes*: this is important for planning future projects. In the context of complex programmes operating in complex environments, it also helps address the issue of whether, and to what extent, outcomes can be attributed to a particular activity². It is important to stress that *proving* causal connections is usually impossible: such an evaluation aims to provide plausible and convincing evidence of links between cause and effect.

This approach was valuable for CMF, as the short duration and limited scope of the projects, in contrast to the broad social aim of improving community cohesion, meant that while project activities and impacts on individuals were easily visible, wider social effects were unlikely to be observable or measurable within the timeframe of the programme or evaluation. Thus evidence-based understanding of the processes set in train by the projects, and of the risks and opportunities they faced, is crucial if informed decisions are to be made going forward³.

Overall it is useful to see what is happening in terms of *mechanisms* (the activities and the effects of these) which take place in organisational and social *contexts* and so lead to *outcomes*⁴.

Understanding these processes in detail involved developing a ‘theory of change’ (ToC): i.e. a model of

(a) the causal pathways from activities to outputs to outcomes to impacts (sometimes known as the ‘logic model’)

plus

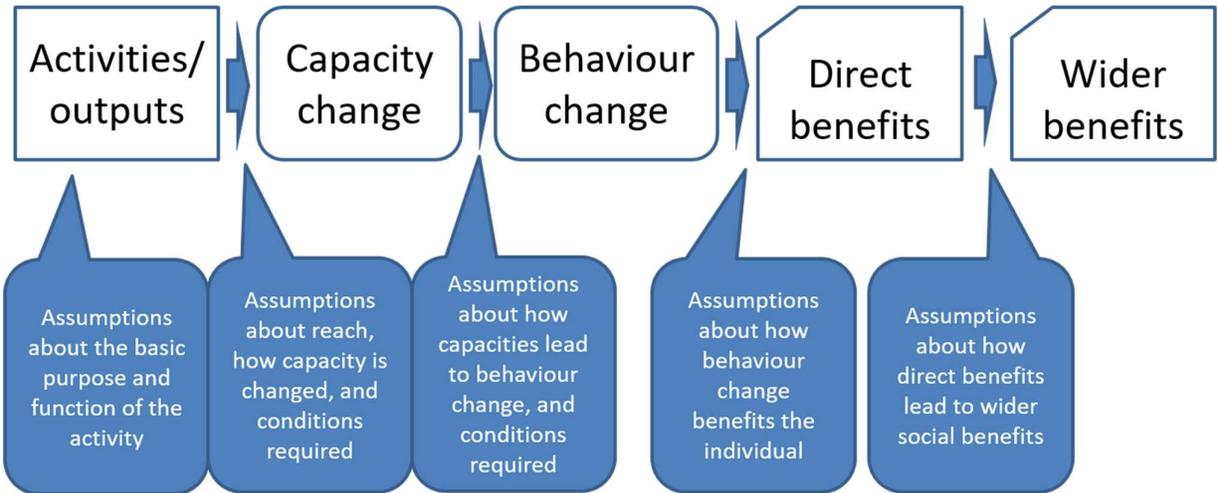
(b) the assumptions showing why and under what conditions the links in these causal pathways are expected to work.

¹ Pawson, R. and N. Tilley (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*, London: SAGE.

² See Mayne, J. (2001) ‘Addressing Attribution Through Contribution Analysis: Using Performance Measures Sensibly’ *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 16(1): 1-24, and Mayne, J. (2015) ‘Useful Theory of Change Models’ *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 30(2).

³ The only available quantified information relevant to changes in community cohesion across the borough is the 6-monthly ‘resident satisfaction survey’ (https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/4019/lga_resident_satisfaction_survey_-_december_2018). With only 500 adults in the survey, and against a background of national and local politics, this is too blunt an instrument to capture any outcomes from the CMF. This lack of quantified outcomes *does not in any way* mean that the CMF has no impact, just that quantified outcomes measures are not feasible for a programme of this kind in this context.

⁴ Pawson, R. and N. Tilley (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*, London: SAGE.



A Theory of Change (ToC): general outline

The ToC was developed by the evaluator on the basis of the CMF project document and a first round of interviews with the RMBC CMF team and project managers from the partner organisations and RMBC departments. It was finalised after a workshop involving the same group, and used to inform data collection for the evaluation. Quantitative data was principally on activities/outputs: very little was available for the other stages in the logic model i.e. change in people’s capacities, resultant behaviour change, direct benefits for individuals, and benefits for the community as a whole. In consequence the explanation and assessment of impacts rests heavily on two rounds of qualitative interviews with the separate projects’ managers and other core staff, and additional interviews at the end of the evaluation period with five front line staff delivering the projects and five individuals who had been ‘beneficiaries’. Three people active in local community development work, but not directly involved in the projects, were also interviewed to give an more independent view on the effectiveness of the programme. This approach enabled us to follow changes to the programme, as new opportunities arose and activities proposed in the project document were found to need modification or abandonment.

The full ToC is complex¹. Across the 25 projects, nine different mechanisms were identified i.e. different **approaches** to cohesion, distinguished by the processes by which they were intended to have an impact. In order to help identify pros and cons of different approaches, these are discussed in Section 4 in terms of their contribution to the broad objectives of the programme:

- positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services
- improved relationships within communities (i.e. community cohesion)
- improved relationships between communities and the local authority
- improved wellbeing (environmental, economic, social/family) for deprived communities

and a subsidiary objective of improving governance and inter-organisational relationships.

¹ The full ToC is too complicated to reproduce in this report. A web-based version of the logic model can be found at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp/staff/steve_connolly/rotherham

Section 5 discusses in more detail how each *project* 'worked', and assesses its impact with respect to these objectives alongside the overarching objective of improving the situation of the established resident communities, either directly or through reduction in demands on services.

Overall this report is oriented to making plausible, evidence-based suggestions for how the achieved outputs had wider effects, and what opportunities and constraints need to be taken into account in future planning.

Constraints on the evaluation

The following issues need to be borne in mind when reading the report. The ideal evaluation would identify the extent to which each activity contributed to the overall outcomes, and how. However, this ideal was compromised by:

External factors:

The programme took place in the wider context of austerity¹, the run-up to Brexit, and the ongoing impacts of the cases of child sexual exploitation, which included ongoing media coverage of court cases, regular marches by the Far Right in the town, and the concluding phases of the authority emerging from management by externally appointed commissioners. All of these plausibly – but incalculably – negatively affect community cohesion and relationships between communities and the local authority. This makes it even less likely that such a relatively short programme would have visible effects at borough scale.

Local policy factors:

Not only was the CMF programme itself complex (25 projects, 6 principal external partners), but it took place in a crowded policy environment, overlapped with other cohesion and governance initiatives, and was linked to other projects of the partner organisations. In consequence the programme's achievements must be understood as being partly a result of this environment (e.g. because organisations already had relationships with target communities) and to some extent inseparable from them.

Nature of the programme:

The CMF work was both short term (12-18 months for different projects) and relatively small scale, at least in terms of focused work with individuals. (Some of the events reached many hundreds of people.) Impacts can only therefore be expected at a small scale, and even for individuals most of the data is necessarily about learning/capacity change, rather than (longer term) behaviour changes. This makes assessment of effectiveness difficult, as a key assumption underlying many of the mechanisms is that people will continue to act differently on the basis of what they have learned e.g. from positive experiences of other communities. Within a short programme this assumption is untestable.

¹ By 2021 RMBC will have experienced a c. £200m reduction in budget since 2010, approximately equivalent to a full year's expenditure. See https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200598/consultations_-_closed/1304/budget_2019-20_and_2020-21

Evaluation methodology and resources:

Some kinds of impacts are essentially unknowable through an evaluation of this type (e.g. longer term impacts); others are in-principle knowable (e.g. the impact of ESOL on learners' lives, or of attending a multi-cultural event) but impossible within the resource constraints of the present evaluation (34 days of evaluator time). A full understanding of the programme and its impacts would require a research project on a much larger scale.

Section 3 The RBSC Controlling Migration Fund programme

Overall this was a very successful programme. Strikingly:

- the funds were used very creatively, with the ambition to deliver on wider cohesion objectives as well as simply achieving project outputs
- almost all the outputs were delivered, or will be by the time the projects close; many targets were exceeded
- the services delivered were clearly meeting very real needs; demand probably far exceeds what could be provided through the CMF resources
- project staff were impressively dedicated and committed to the objectives and the programme, and the work as a whole was characterised by professionalism and cooperation.

Since all the organisations involved were experienced and already active in the field, the funds were used in different ways with respect to existing programmes:

- to start new activities e.g. training of community development workers
- to realise ideas lying dormant because of resource constraints e.g. Early Help in schools, community navigators, environmental enforcement software
- to deepen and widen existing provision e.g. new ESOL courses, and smaller groups of learners and more targeted support
- to expand existing activities e.g. of small organisations through the grants programmes, anti-fly tipping CCTV coverage, bringing people together through sports
- support activities previously funded through other means e.g. the Festival of Angels.

All of these are valuable and valid approaches, but they have different implications for sustainability – see below.

The few exceptions to successful delivery were principally where problems of recruitment or procurement delayed the start of activities, or where an innovative activity proved inappropriate or unworkable. RMBC's appropriate response was to allow flexibility and support organisations to find alternative approaches, demonstrating a sensible focus on outcomes rather than merely outputs.

I also note that some outputs went formally unrecorded as they emerged during the programme and so were not tied to service level agreements over outputs. This was particularly the case in the community development projects, where new activities were driven by participants.

Outcomes

There is **clear evidence** of CMF programme **impacts on many individuals, on services and on governance relationships**. It generated a great deal of **innovation** and **new capacity** both in the local authority and in the voluntary and community organisations. It also achieved a great deal in **demonstrating what can be achieved**, and generating **understanding** of how to deliver effective and innovative approaches to cohesion in future – ideally with resource committed for longer time periods. Unsurprisingly, given the constraints noted above (external context, short time frame) there is no evaluable impact on community cohesion at borough level. Visible change, especially in such a negative environment, will take more time and resources to achieve.

In terms of the broad intended outcomes of the programme:

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

Several of the projects delivered **services directly to host communities** (e.g. housing advice, opportunities for young people to participate in social action projects, opportunities for participation in sport, enviro-crime¹ enforcement); others provided services to recently arrived migrants which **reduced pressure on statutory services** (e.g. ESOL, community navigators, housing advice); others supported recently arrived people in ways which will **reduce sources of inter-community tension** (e.g. housing advice, enviro-crime enforcement, ESOL). Early interventions (e.g. through advice, family and young person support) were shown to **reduce more costly later involvement** by statutory services.

Community cohesion

There is a great deal of evidence of people having experiences which plausibly will encourage them to **relate better with people from other communities**. This seems to have been particularly effective when a) engagement with people from different communities has been over an extended period and b) it has been facilitated through some kind of joint activity, usually one not explicitly related to cohesion (e.g. sport) though also including facilitated 'difficult conversations' about identity and migration. The **longer term impact is impossible to gauge** at this time: it depends on people both keeping hold of newly-acquired attitudes and behaving differently as a result, and on their ability to influence others in their communities. These are not necessarily easy, and one conclusion from the evaluation is that **ongoing support is desirable** for people who have been involved.

Relationships between community and the local authority

As with community cohesion, at the individual level it seems very likely (though with little direct evidence) that many people's **positive interactions with the authority** will have made them more favourably disposed towards it. Activities such as R&E's work, the embedded advice worker at CLP, CYPS's Early Help and outreach work gave people experiences of direct, immediate help or evidence of local authority responsiveness to e.g. reports of fly tipping.

Improved wellbeing

There were some striking impacts – at the extreme **transformative and even life-saving** – on individuals achieved through the projects. Although the impacts are not visible at community scale, the effects of early help with family problems (including child abuse), access to services, language classes and opportunities to volunteer (amongst others) all have **enormous positive implications for the individuals and families concerned**, and for those with whom they come into contact (either within communities or service providers.) There were also some **perceptible local environmental improvements**, and **improvements in housing quality**, particularly in Eastwood as result of the work of CLP and RMBC R&E.

¹ 'Enviro-crime' covers such offences as litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly posting and fly tipping. See <https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/documents/s12272/Envirocrime%20strategy%20aPPENDIX.pdf>

Governance relationships

The programme has led to some **increased cooperation over delivery, sharing of knowledge and information** between VCS organisations and with RMBC, also perhaps **signposting of clients** between organisations. There had clearly been such engagement prior to the programme, so the evidence was mixed as to where the CMF had prompted new activities and relationships. There was some evidence of **better relationships within the sector and between them and RMBC**. RMBC's approach to managing the programme – characterised as both collegiate and flexible - was appreciated by the VCS partners. There was inevitably always some scope for tension, given the authority's role as accountable body, and competition between organisations for resources; what matters going forward is for all **partners to sustain an open and respectful attitude** to the others.

Overall strengths of the programme

- achievement of a large number of valuable impacts, even in such a short timeframe, on individuals and (to a lesser extent) communities in Rotherham
- increased capacity of VCS and statutory organisations to deliver, and in some cases diversify, their service provision, some of which will be sustained through mainstreaming and embedding lessons learned through the programme in future work
- the diversity of projects and partners with shared goals, and the capacity to deliver positive outputs
- the professionalism, commitment and willingness to innovate of those involved
- the approach of working as a partnership of experienced VCS and statutory organisations, which enabled delivery and confidence that outputs would be achieved, even where organisations were being innovative; essentially delivery was building on a firm foundation of existing skills, experience and relationships
- the emphasis on broader integration objectives (as intended by MHCLG), both in the activities and also in approach: the organisations involved expressed a clear (sometimes passionate) community development ethos, rather than being driven narrowly by targets and funding
- flexibility in management, from both MHCLG and RMBC
- good relationships between organisations, reflecting to some extent the value of employing a worker with a VCS background as project coordinator, and also the coordinating structure of regular meetings of organisational leads.

Challenges facing the programme

Lack of **strategic coherence**: while the programme's diversity was a strength, packaging the aspirations of a number of organisations into a single programme came at the cost of having clear links between the overall goals and activities to achieve these.

Underlying this was a lack of any overall logic model (setting out how activities should lead to the broad outcomes) or theory of change (the assumptions and risks involved in turning the logic model into reality). This undermined the strategic planning of the programme which - as approved by MHCLG - set a large number of targets comprising a mix of outputs, outcomes and every stage in between. This plausibly meant that alternative strategic options were ignored at the planning stage, and potential synergies and efficiencies missed. It also – as a subsidiary issue – made evaluation challenging, as the programme's multiple, implicit, underlying theories of change had to be drawn out as part of the evaluation task.

Two specific strategic issues:

- the programme could have developed links to RMBC's **neighbourhood** approach to governance as this developed concurrently, as this might have helped coordinate service provision
- the programme omitted **economic development** as a goal, despite this being in RBSC Strategy, and the recognised importance of this for achieving cohesion¹. MHCLG's criteria for CMF funding did not encourage this, so this is not a criticism of Rotherham's CMF planning, but its absence plausibly reduced the programme's effectiveness in tackling cohesion problems. I note that some underspent CMF funds have been used effectively to leverage three times as much EU AMIF funding (c. £136,000) which does include support for integration of migrants into the labour market.

Largely outside RMBC's control, the **short timescale** of all the work means that overall impact has been reduced, and some activities (especially community development) are only just starting to have effects.

'**Reach**': there are enduring problems with reaching Roma and White British populations for some kinds of programmes, and with linking up White and ethnic minority communities. To some extent this was related to the programme design (i.e. a relative lack of focus within the programme on these objectives), but even where such engagement was intended some projects still struggled to recruit and have impact. Such work is hard, and needs sustained resourcing.

Looking forward

Given the high quality of all the evaluated work, it would be inappropriate to single out particular projects/organisations for continuation funding or not: they all delivered (most of) their outputs, and cost/benefit analysis for projects or outcomes was not part of this evaluation's remit.

However, given the continuing constraints on resources, the following would be sensible priorities:

- Focused work with individuals/small groups (e.g. KPCP, PL, RUCST) – this is where real but incremental impact on community cohesion is possible
- Training of community development workers – this gives an element of sustainability, though it assumes (and requires) that those trained will have opportunities to act on their training
- Maximising effectiveness of both these requires ongoing support for participants *after* training/involvement
- Advice/support work – this yields rewards in terms of later, greater, expenditure avoided.

Lower priority should be given to larger, more diffuse, events (as opposed to extended activities), which have unknown and perhaps marginal impact. However, it may be that the symbolic value of multicultural events is sufficiently important to outweigh limited actual impact – this is a political judgement beyond this evaluation's remit.

¹ See e.g. Ratcliffe, P. and I. Newman (2011) *Promoting social cohesion: Implications for policy and evaluation*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Overall there is value in supporting a broad portfolio of activities and a diversity of providers: there is a value to planning for resilience through such breadth, which also promotes unplanned synergies between projects. However, making sure that all of them are effective involves addressing the strategic weaknesses of the CMF.

Strategic approach: the existing *Rotherham - Building Stronger Communities* community cohesion strategy should be revised and deepened, so that it sets out in a systematic way its goals and the approaches to be adopted to achieve them, over a relatively long timescale (several years) and with integration between activities. One possibility would be to structure this around the mechanisms identified in this evaluation; the strategy should certainly draw on the lessons contained in this report. Resources should then be sought (or accessed serendipitously) to act within this, rather than programmes being funding driven. (Of course there will always be an element of funders' priorities shaping action, but all the organisations involved in RBSC are adept at working creatively with those constraints.) Any such strategy should include activities targeted towards economic development and link to neighbourhood working. (An evaluation framework, with proper resourcing, should be built into the strategy from the outset.)

Reach: More attention should be given to the White working-class communities, e.g. in providing advice services for people living in the private rented housing sector, ensuring that opportunities to participate in sport and cultural activities reach the outlying villages and deprived urban areas etc. Other projects should have an explicit cohesion aspect so that provision to migrants also benefits host communities: e.g. ESOL providers should cover integration in their teaching. (Note that PL are exemplary in this, where other providers may focus more narrowly on achieving language proficiency.) At a finer-grained level, more attention could be given to attempting to reach individuals within communities who are most in need, but perhaps less likely to access the activities/services on offer.

Sustainability: The key here is to look at what organisations are doing, or could do, with other funding and see where RBSC/CMF can influence, support or supplement this, or alternatively withdraw. Given the range of types of projects CMF supported, all more or less successful, different approaches will be necessary:

- some should be supported to continue as they are, without demanding innovation as a condition of new funding (e.g. PL's approach to ESOL; co-location of RMBC workers in community advice centres)
- some should be supported to innovate (e.g. the KPCP community mentors, now a trained resource who need opportunities to use their skills)
- some activities/approaches can (and are) being mainstreamed e.g. CYPs's schools-based workers, RUCST's inter-community contact approach. This should be encouraged and may not require further resourcing
- resources should be put into supporting individuals who have been involved in community cohesion activities to reinforce behaviour change and their potential as change agents.

Timescale: the benefit of planning strategically, over a medium timescale (e.g. 5 years), is that development and learning (by projects, organisations, and individuals) can be planned for, and outcomes evaluated, over longer timescales than single funding tranches.

Transparency and trust: the possibility of longer term partnership working rests on a culture of trust and mutual respect. This will only really develop and become robust with time spent working together, to overcome historic mistrust, rivalries, and attitudes. Currently these relationships are generally good, but fragile and easily damaged: all organisations, but

RMBC especially (given its powerful position and leadership role), need to pay attention to how they behave towards others, and how they are perceived.

Section 4 Supporting community cohesion: lessons learned from the CMF

Introduction: the 9 mechanisms

The activities across the 23 intervention projects¹ have been grouped into 9 'mechanisms': that is, broad approaches or types of activity linked to ways in which they might be assumed to lead to programme outcomes. Box 2 lists the mechanisms, roughly ordered as working with individuals, working with collectives, environmental action and state-led action. This inevitably simplifies a very complex range of activities, most of which have multiple effects and lead to a range of outcomes, but provides a framework from which lessons can be drawn.

BOX 2: The programme mechanisms - nine different approaches to community cohesion

- A. Working with key individuals
- B. Providing advice
- C. Training/education
- D. Getting individuals together across communities
- E. Financial support for community groups
- F. Environmental projects
- G. Increasing enforcement activity
- H. Targeted state support to families and young people
- I. Working with governance organisations (state and VCS)

For each mechanism I identify:

- its contribution to the programme's broad objectives
- the risks which might constrain this
- other beneficial impacts of the approach
- the projects involved and examples (not an exhaustive list) of relevant activities
- factors enabling and limiting success; and
- lessons for the future in relation to implementing projects based on the approach.

¹ That is, all the projects apart from the two involved solely in data collection and evaluation.

A. Working with key individuals

Contribution to broad objectives

The core idea is that people working on projects together, and/or the provision of support and training to individuals in a community, will give them new skills and confidence to act on these, and give them positive experiences of contact with people from other cultures. The benefits to the community are both very general – in terms of better intercultural relationships – and also specific, where individuals become links between communities and voluntary and statutory organisations.

Risks

Two principal assumptions underpin this: that working together will improve attitudes and relationships, and that people will sustain and propagate positive views after the project ends. The first was clearly evidenced in the programme, the second is untested but might be quite weak without further, ongoing support.

Other benefits

We can also expect benefits to the individuals concerned (in terms of enhanced skills, and therefore employment prospects etc.)

Notes

Overlaps with training provision (as these involve giving people new skills) and providing advice (as one of the possible roles of such individuals is in advising others in the community).

Projects involved

3 Community Development Worker (CLP)

4 Community Development Training (KPCP)

14 Accredited and non-accredited ESOL (Premier Learning) (classroom volunteers)

15 Social Action Projects (RUCST)

16 The Good Neighbour Project (CLP)

Examples from the projects

One of KPCP's mentors who was not previously active in her community, and had no community development experience. Trained as community mentor, she is now enthusiastic to continue by participating in and organising inter-community activities, and has a stable faith-based organisation within which to function.

One of CLP's 'street champions' is an experienced White community activist, but previously working in a fairly low level way. The champions programme gave her a new vehicle for this activism, which unlike her previous experience involved interaction with people from other communities, which has significantly changed her attitudes and her everyday engagement with ethnic minority residents.

Factors enabling success

- identifying people with the individual capacity and motivation, and life circumstances (family, employment, health etc.) which enable them to carry out the role

- supportive environments in which to perform the role, in particular community development organisations able to provide mentoring and other support, as well as a physical and organisational base

Factors limiting success

- timescale of project too short to fully develop skills
- absence of ongoing support, or follow-up, to enable new skills/capacities to be put into practice
- people who might benefit most as individuals may not engage, *because* a project is run through a school or other organisation, or through fear of criticism for 'unacceptable' (typically ethnocentric or racist) views

Lessons for the future

- put in place support mechanisms, either through basing key individuals in community organisations, or by supporting teachers or other professionals to support young people at school or in other activities (e.g. sport)
- outreach needs to be done by trusted organisations/individuals: this could probably become a virtuous self-reinforcing process as reputations for being non-judgemental and supportive are established.

B. Providing advice

Contribution to broad objectives

Housing and 'new arrival' advice contributes across all the objectives: to intercommunity relationships through improved landlord/tenant and neighbour relationships; to better use of services and attitudes of the community towards statutory providers; and directly to improvements in wellbeing, both through needs being met by services and through housing improvements. Timely advice should also contribute to reduced pressures and costs on statutory services as later, costly emergencies may be avoided, even if advice leads to an increase in demand for some services.

Risks

Effective advice rests on the assumptions that people are ignorant of their rights, responsibilities and services available; that they can access advice providers; and that they will be able to act on advice. These are probably reasonable assumptions in many cases, but there may also be situations in which people are not ignorant but cannot act (e.g. because of fear of intimidation, lack of confidence, ability to negotiate service providers) or cannot reach advice (because of where it is located, language issues etc.).

Other benefits

Direct benefits to individuals can be very varied and very significant: recent arrivals in particular may have a range of needs (poverty, health care etc.) which can only be addressed if they receive advice on how to connect with relevant services.

Notes

Informal advice covering some of the same areas (e.g. about accessing services) is also provided in other contexts e.g. in ESOL classes. Evaluating advice is difficult, except in the case of CLP's embedded housing and young people's support workers, which enabled (some) problems to be resolved more or less immediately – thus confirming the effectiveness of the advice given.

Projects involved

2 Community Navigators (RMBC CYPS/REMA)

8 Advice and Information Service (REMA)

9 Advice and Information Service (CLP)

Success factors

- people with the right attributes: dedicated, empathetic, flexible, with knowledge of the local system and the situations faced by advice seekers, with appropriate language skills
- location in a trusted local community base, giving easy access to advisers in a non-threatening environment
- co-location of staff able to address some issues immediately, making a direct link between advice seeking and problem resolution
- co-located local authority staff able to work directly with the public, and alongside voluntary and community sector staff, without barriers caused by 'cultural' differences and attitudes
- funding for central government (OISC) accreditation to provide specialist immigration advice.

Examples from the projects

Two “community navigators” for recent arrivals, based at REMA and both from ethnic minority communities and multi-lingual, providing advice and signposting to individuals and families who have arrived in the past 12 months.

OISC training and accreditation means that there is now a Rotherham-based organisation with the capacity and authorisation to offer immigration advice, which was previously absent in the Borough.

CLP’s advice work, with RMBC Housing and Rush House (young people’s support/advice) workers ‘embedded’ alongside CLP’s multi-lingual staff in CLP’s community centre.

Limiting factors

- difficulty finding appropriate staff
- difficulty raising awareness of the service, particularly among very recent arrivals – and conversely, coping with the demand once word of mouth started being effective.

Lessons for the future

These are services which should be continued and expanded more or less in their current form:

- in community locations with longer-term funding to give staff security
- similar services should be supported/established/re-instated/expanded in other poor neighbourhoods, to support White and ethnic minority communities, particularly those in private (as opposed to social) rented housing, as well as recently arrived individuals/families.

C. Training/education

Contribution to broad objectives

Three principal kinds of training were carried out, with different contributions. Community development workers contribute to inter-community relationships, and also in the case of street champions to material improvements in their environment. English language proficiency – along with broader knowledge of the country acquired through ESOL provision - is essential (but not sufficient) for individuals to play a part in society (and so contributes both to cohesion and improved community/local authority relationships). Awareness of hate crime and how to respond to it is important in improving inter-community relationships, and potentially also community/authority relationships to the extent that the latter is seen to be responsive to ethnic minority and other minority concerns.

Risks

The key assumptions/risks here are that lack of knowledge/skills is what is holding people back (from 'integration', employment, reporting hate crime etc.); that people will see training/education as a valuable way of gaining knowledge/skills; that training is effective; and that people will be able to act on the knowledge gained. All of these may be weak assumptions in some circumstances – in particular while knowledge may be necessary it may well not be sufficient where there are structural barriers (e.g. lack of suitable employment opportunities, or community development projects) or other social issues (lack of confidence, lack of community support) which reduce people's ability to put new capacities into practice.

Other benefits

The material and psychological benefits of education/training to individuals can be enormous, in terms of improved confidence, ability to navigate 'the system' etc.

Notes

Some aspects of education/training are clear and amenable to evaluation (e.g. English language proficiency); others are almost impossible to assess (e.g. the longer term impacts of such proficiency).

Projects involved

- 3 Community Development Worker (CLP)
- 4 Community Development Training (KPCP)
- 12 Let's Practice English - Football Talk (RUCST)
- 13 Let's Practice English - Conversation Clubs (REMA)
- 14 Accredited and non-accredited ESOL (Premier Learning)

Almost all the projects had a 'hate crime' component, actioned through advice work, ESOL, bespoke sessions in the Social Action Project etc.

Examples from the projects

Premier Learning's classes, and in particular the training of learners to be volunteer classroom assistants, the use of CMF funds to enable teaching smaller groups, targeted interventions for specific language problems (e.g. illiteracy in first languages) .

Hate Crime awareness, as something which many providers did as part of their teaching – either bringing in specialists or weaving it into 'ordinary' sessions - linked to new ways (e.g. social media) of reporting – which also led to a conference on hate crime.

RUCST's unaccredited 'Football Talk' – using sport as the reason/focus for people to come together and learn, without pressure, which also provides opportunities for intercultural mixing.

Success factors

- commitment of organisations to achieving integration and intercultural awareness (as opposed to just language learning)
- using central activity (e.g. language learning or sport) as a vehicle for broader learning
- use of more advanced or ex-learners to support others' learning
- treating learners as individuals, including targeted discipline around attendance
- funding committed for longer than a single course, enabling planned progression
- a mix of providers, enabling progression from unaccredited to accredited learning, and on to higher levels

Limiting factors

- demand higher than supply
- shortage of high quality tutors, with the right attitudes and qualifications, especially in context of short contracts
- a plethora of providers, with insufficiently shared knowledge of what is available
- uncoordinated activity, potentially limiting reach (by missing some areas/groups) and causing inefficiencies (though there is no actual evidence of overlapping/redundant provision)

Lessons for the future

- sustain a mix of provision, by different providers, using different vehicles, level of accreditation, and in a range of locations
 - build on the ESOL mapping exercise carried out by RBSC in 2018 by keeping it updated and well-publicised, and use this to plan strategic support, to ensure/expand:
 - varied progression pathways
 - wide geographical coverage;
- and to
- avoid duplication.

D. Getting individuals together across communities

'Getting people together' activities cover a range of intensity and timespan, from close, extended interactions (e.g. RUCST's Social Action Project), intense but one-off discussions (e.g. KPCP's 'World Cafés'), through working more loosely together (e.g. Parents Together for Sport) to large scale events where the opportunity exists to meet and learn about other communities (e.g. Festival of Angels), but contact, if any, may be ephemeral.

Contribution to broad objectives

Direct, positive contact between people from different communities and – in particular – the opportunity to learn about and have stereotypes/negative perceptions challenged, seems fundamental to improving relationships between communities and groups, whether these be ethnically-, age-, or gender-based.

Risks

While the basic mechanism is obvious, achieving success is faced by a set of serious risks: those who engage may not be those with the most entrenched attitudes, or whose attitudes most need changing, if community relationships are to improve; contact may result in increased antagonism/reinforcing of prejudices.

Avoiding these requires the availability of sufficient competent facilitators who can effectively deal with tension and conflict, and are able to create effective (potentially very difficult) interactions. For the effect of contact to be enduring, individuals must be sufficiently confident to change their behaviour within their cultural context: this may be difficult without support and opportunities for further development. Moreover, local and national policies and politics, the media, and wider societal attitudes may undermine any changes made through a project.

Other benefits

Whether or not impacts are felt at community level, individuals may benefit from more harmonious relationships and new friendships, from having their views taken seriously, and simply from the enjoyment of the activities around which people get together (sport, craft etc.) However, a parallel set of risks exists for individuals – of having their views aired but not respected, of finding 'new' views weaken existing relationships and friendships etc.

Notes

Most of the CMF projects involve an element of inter-community mixing, beyond those with this as an explicit aim (e.g. ESOL classes, which tend to be very multi-cultural.) Evaluating impact is challenged by the need for any change to be long-term, the likelihood of unpredictable spin-offs where attitudes are changed, and the untraceability of effects from the more fleeting encounters e.g. at festivals. No attempt was made in this evaluation to deal with the last of these, as no robust methodology exists.

Projects involved

- 3 Community Development Worker (CLP)
- 4 Community Development Training (KPCP)
- 12 Let's Practice English - Conversation Clubs (REMA)
- 13 Let's Practice English - Football Talk (RUCST)
- 14 Accredited and non-accredited ESOL (Premier Learning)
- 15 Social Action Projects (RUCST)

- 16 The Good Neighbour Project (CLP)
- 17 Louder Together (RMBC ACE)
- 18 Building Stronger Communities Forum (RMBC ACE)
- 19 Building Stronger Communities Grants (RMBC ACE)
- 20 BSC Initiatives Fund (RMBC ACE)
- 21 Difficult Conversations (REMA)
- 22 Parents together for sport (RUCST)
- 23 Love is Louder (REMA)

Examples from the projects

RUCST's Social Action Project (SAP), Parents Together for Sport: both of these involve bringing people together from different communities, with more (SAP) or less (Parents Together...) explicit discussion of difference. Both involve extended periods of close contact between individuals, and seem effective in breaking down barriers at an individual level. Again, the wider impact could not be evaluated within the timescale of the project, but plausibly (particularly where these are the first time people have engaged positively across community divides) this is effective. Definitely there are reports from the SAP of young people creating inter-community links after the project, where previously hostility would have been normal. RUCST's own view is that the approach is so effective that they have mainstreamed it into all their activities.

KPCP's world cafés and REMA's 'safe spaces conversations': these have the most explicit focus on raising 'difficult' issues around inter-community relationships, and allowing often suppressed views to be expressed. Individuals involved clearly have their views challenged and in some cases changed, particularly if they have never had conversations across community divides. The wider impacts are not yet evaluable, but there is now a local pool of trained individuals capable of facilitating such conversations.

Festival of Angels (REMA): individual and community groups working separately on a common project, with an intercultural dimension, then sharing the results with the public. Effects are achieved through the sustained period of the art work (which in some but not all cases will have involved explicit discussion of the intercultural aspects) and then through meeting people at displays and through the content of the exhibits (carrying the message of commonality of ideas across faiths). Very slight anecdotal evidence for the effectiveness of this – on the face of it this is a good idea, but impossible to evaluate within the resources of this project.

Success factors

- sustained contact between individuals, with an activity focus
- carefully facilitated conversations
- skilled facilitators/trainers
- 'intelligence' in selecting appropriate participants

Limiting factors

- difficulty in reaching those with the most entrenched views (though these may best be reached by their peers, outside a 'project' setting)
- the ability of individuals to sustain newly acquired positive views and behaviours within their peer group/community
- some of this work, especially the SAP, is very expensive per person involved
- ephemeral contact e.g. at festivals/events is of unknowable effectiveness, but plausibly rather low

Lessons for the future

This is perhaps the mechanism with most promise and least evidence for its effectiveness. It should be supported – it is hard to see how long term change can be achieved without inter-community contact.

- KPCP's and REMA's work on difficult conversations should be sustained
- organisations should be supported to bring people from geographically/culturally separate communities together around activities, with explicit – and careful – attention given to raising intercultural issues
- where possible, those involved should receive follow-up support to enable them to sustain and spread their positive attitudes and behaviours
- attention should be paid to cost
- the symbolic, political value of large scale intercultural events may be significant, and outweigh their uncertain immediate impact on relationships.

E. Financial support for community groups

Contribution to broad objectives

This is a very broad category - 37 projects received funds. Particularly when well targeted both geographically and in terms of making integration a condition of funding, such funds can improve the physical and social wellbeing of deprived and/or marginalised groups and communities, provide opportunities for inter-community communication, and should improve citizens' attitudes to the funding provider(s) i.e. principally the local authority, but also Voluntary Action Rotherham and MHCLG.

Risks

These funds are necessarily administered in a light-touch way, so ensuring that they do contribute to the broader objectives is difficult – some money may not be well spent in this regard. There is also a risk that better organised groups, rather than those who might benefit most, will access the funding. There is a slight risk that it may even be counter-productive (e.g. if poorly-conceived events give rise to friction between communities) and also that positive attitudes may only be achieved towards the immediate (perceived) source of funds i.e. VAR for the BSC Grants, with neither the local authority nor central government receiving any reputational benefit.

Other benefits

These are very varied, ranging from tackling loneliness/isolation and providing opportunities for networking and support (e.g. of carers, LGBT+ people, people of Chinese heritage), to improving quality of life for users of a deaf people's lunch club and of the general public through events at Ulley Park.

Projects involved

19 Building Stronger Communities Grants (RMBC ACE/VAR) – 37 projects, £15,012 in total
20 BSC Initiatives Fund (RMBC ACE)

Examples from the projects

Crossroad Care Rotherham event in Maltby (a former mining village/small town, with significant levels of deprivation), bringing carers together with each other and service providers, with the longer term goal of building a community of carers, and reaching out to isolated and 'hidden' carers.

Rainbow Project event as part of the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, which gave LGBT+ people safe access to Rotherham town centre, promoted hate crime reporting awareness, and aimed to build positive relationships between the LGBT+ community and the police.

Success factors

- small scale funding can make a big difference to small groups
- ease of application and light touch monitoring
- quick turnaround for applications
- visibility of support from local authority to local communities

Limiting factors

- reactive nature of allocation process limits strategic use of funds
- lack of obvious connection between funds and CMF objectives, beyond simply providing support to host community activities (mitigated by asking applicants to specify cohesion outcomes).

Lessons for the future

This kind of funding should be kept going – while hard to evaluate, it is relatively inexpensive, can reach significant numbers of people and plausibly impacts positively on attitudes to the local authority and VAR. However:

- spending could be targeted more geographically to ensure all communities benefit
- spending could be tied more closely to tackling cohesion (though this needs to be balanced against the value of simply supporting small groups)
- consideration might be given to using contact through the funds as a way of signposting groups to other CMF-related activities.

F. Environmental projects

Contribution to broad objectives

These are two very different kinds of projects with the same goal of making a direct contribution to the broad objective of improving the physical environment in deprived communities. The speedy and visible responsiveness of the RMBC-based project plausibly improves community attitudes to the authority.

Risks

Community-based direct improvement projects rely on recruiting committed volunteers, seemingly always few in numbers and prone to dropping/burning out, and assume either that such people will be available indefinitely, or that improving the environment will lead to more responsible behaviour in the community as a whole. Both these assumptions seem weak and are unlikely to be fulfilled, at least at large scale. Local authority-based enforcement projects are potentially more enduring – funding permitting – but risk alienating the community (or at least targeted individuals), and/or reducing their sense of responsibility for keeping an area clean. Limited resources also mean that enforcement may simply displace activity rather than stop it.

Other benefits

The community-based projects also brought people together across communities, and so contribute at an individual level to the inter-community cohesion objective. Individuals can also gain in terms of personal connection to their communities and neighbours, and also in terms of self-worth.

Projects involved

3 Community Development Worker (CLP)

10 Additional Environmental Health Officer (RMBC RE)

Examples from the projects

CLP street champions – a small group of volunteers from the community who conduct litter-picks/street clean-ups on a regular basis, communicate with other members of the community about caring for the local environment, and report environmental problems for the local authority to deal with.

RMBC R&E – Two technological innovations were introduced: additional CCTV cameras at fly tipping hotspots, and a new mobile phone app for reporting environmental problems and organising front line staff workloads. The latter was remarkably successful in terms of savings in staff time spent in the office – equivalent to 2 FTE staff – and in enabling speedy and visible responsiveness to public reports.

Success factors

- sustained intervention in small areas
- opportunities for getting individuals together across communities in positive community action

- technology: simple, easy to learn and use technology, with immediate and obvious benefits to staff and citizens, and no obvious negative effects or resistance from users (unusually with a technological innovation!)

Limiting factors

- continual/recurring nature of enviro-crime and anti-social behaviour leading to environment problems, unless/until medium-to-long term culture changes reduce littering and tipping
- continuing economic incentives to fly tip
- widespread geography of the problem, vs. resources in staff to deal with it

For neighbourhood improvement: the need for intensive action in small areas, and high numbers of people involved in making a difference.

For CCTV

- vandalism of visible cameras (to some extent abated by using hidden cameras)
- limited numbers of cameras: the results are consequently local solutions + displacement of the problem, rather than wider behaviour change

Lessons for the future

- community-based action useful as a way of getting individuals together across communities, and perhaps in symbolic and 'ownership' terms, but actual, sustained environmental improvement is a task for the state
- technology – with savings ploughed back into expanding the service – looks remarkably promising in this field
- increase numbers of covert cameras at hotspots (temporary in order to reduce possible hostile community reaction to surveillance)

G. Increasing enforcement activity

Contribution to broad objectives

This most clearly contributes directly to the objective of improving wellbeing for deprived communities, through enforcing better housing conditions and more secure tenancies, along with acceptable behaviour by tenants. However, it also plausibly improves relationships both between communities – to the extent that landlords and tenants are from different ethnic backgrounds, and that anti-social behaviour is successfully tackled – and the attitudes of supported tenants towards the state. It may also improve relationships between the landlords' community and the local authority, though there is some suggestion that the reverse is also the case.

Risks

Of all the approaches this is the one which risks undermining the community cohesion agenda, given the significant numbers of landlords from the Pakistani community, and the numbers of tenants from other communities, particularly Eastern European. Clearly individuals may feel aggrieved and disadvantaged – this is perhaps inevitable, and not a problem as long as at community level the enforcement activity is seen as upholding the law, rather than as targeted oppression. Selective licensing (SL) also carries the risk of displacing 'bad landlords' rather than changing their behaviour.

Other benefits

Better and more secure housing conditions have a number of very significant spin-offs in health (physical and mental) terms, and also plausibly contribute to children's educational attainment. More stable communities – with less turnover in insecure rented accommodation – should also impact on community cohesion, and at an individual level on people's wellbeing, both materially and socially.

Projects involved

11 Additional enforcement activity (RMBC R&E)

Examples from the projects

Selective licensing – using powers under the Housing Act 2004 (for 5 years from 1st May 2015) across much of the town centre, and Maltby and Dinnington.

Success factors

- clear process, with clear explanations of benefits to landlords and tenants¹ and through advice workers (e.g. at CLP)
- perception by (most of?) those affected of mutual benefits – new behaviour is being learned (evidenced by falling tenancy turnover and falling housing advice issues at CLP)
- resource from CMF to increase level of rechecking of SL properties – essential to avoid 'backsliding' by landlords

¹ A good example is at https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200077/private_housing/924/landlord_licensing/2

Limiting factors

- limited spatial and temporal scope of SL areas: limits impact and raises possibility of displacement rather than eradication of poor landlords/tenants¹
- staff resource for enforcement

Lessons for the future

This activity has clear benefits, but is limited by resource and statutory constraints.

- mainstream as far as possible within resource constraints
- extend SL area and period
- lobby central government to enable permanent, borough-wide SL
- communication with host and migrant communities (perhaps through intermediaries such as REMA and CLP) about SL, enviro-crime and how these are being dealt with in order to reduce community misunderstandings.

¹ Blandy notes that local authorities opposed SL when it was mooted by central government on these grounds, preferring a blanket approach across the private rented sector to improve standards. See Blandy, S. (2001) 'Housing standards in the private rented sector and the three Rs: regulation, responsibility and rights' in D. Cowan and A. Marsh, *Two Steps Forward: Housing Policy in the New Millennium*, Bristol: Policy Press pp. 73-92.

H. Targeted state support to families and young people

Contribution to broad objectives

This work contributes principally to the overall CMF objective of supporting host communities through reducing pressure on services and local authority budgets, primarily through identifying and tackling problems – or potential problems – at an early stage when remedy is relatively inexpensive.

Risks

The approach assumes that by putting professionals closer to individuals who may be at risk, warning signs will be identified and action can be taken. This relies on trained and experienced front line staff, *and* on the existence of adequate services to take the necessary steps: both these may be at risk in the context of austerity. This may be exacerbated if the costs and savings fall in different budgets, and so savings are either not recognised or cannot be balanced against costs for bureaucratic reasons.

Other benefits

The direct benefits to individuals and families who receive early support are enormous in terms of quality of life and worsening problems avoided.

Projects involved

5 CYPS – Targeted Family Support Workers

6 Targeted Youth Support

Examples from the projects

Targeted Family Support Workers: this involved placing workers in schools, adding to an existing team tackling complex issues within families, in order to assist with early identification of problems; it also allowed integration of the support provided by schools with RMBC's Early Help and other services.

Targeted Youth Support is on-street, night-time youth outreach work in the town centre. The underpinning aim is to build trust, in part through constructive interventions (services, provision of 'voice' etc.) as well as supporting young people at risk or displaying potentially risky behaviour.

Success factors

- proactive identification and early intervention
- cooperation of schools, and colocation of workers
- putting workers onto the streets, again enabling both identification of problems, and also proactive work with hard to reach and at risk young people

Limiting factors

- initial distrust and resistance by schools
- limited scale of resource vs. scale of the problem on the streets
- limited options for tackling the causes of on-street problems – this is essentially valuable work treating symptoms

Lessons for the future

- mainstream the school-based Family Support Workers
- explore possibilities for expanding colocation e.g. to community centres
- ensure open communication/information about RMBC's CYPS and its services with voluntary and community organisations to promote early identification of issues and signposting.

I. Working with governance organisations (state and VCS)

Contribution to broad objectives

This is an 'infrastructural' aspect to CMF which contributes to all the objectives, both within the lifetime of the project and – in principle and if successful – into the future, as strengthened relationships between statutory organisations, and between the state and voluntary and community sectors, will support work under future funding programmes.

Risks

The principal risk is that material conflicts of interest (e.g. over limited funding), inter-organisational and interpersonal tensions, and engrained behavioural norms will undermine more collaborative approaches.

Projects involved

1 Building Stronger Communities Coordinator (RMBC ACE)

18 Building Stronger Communities Forum (RMBC ACE)

Examples from the projects

The BSC Forum, bringing together key stakeholders in promoting community cohesion in the borough.

Building Stronger Communities Networking meetings: larger meetings for a wider range of organisations, at which significant levels of learning and networking took place, with the possibility for more collective future planning.

Success factors

- a sense of common purpose, and an enthusiasm to make the most of the funding opportunity to do more than simply deliver on a set of projects (i.e. avoiding an overly instrumental approach which treated CMF as 'just another funding pot')
- a willingness to work collectively, despite historical tensions
- the existence of a network of established, experienced organisations, able to take advantage of the CMF and work collectively
- openness and flexibility of approach
- providing opportunities for meeting and talking in an informal setting

Limiting factors

- persistence of historical tensions and mistrust between organisations, and especially between voluntary and community organisations and the local authority
- curtailment of the Networking meetings by the local authority

Lessons for the future

- support opportunities both for focused, joint working meetings, and for wider networking events – this might usefully tie in to neighbourhood working, but also should be borough (or at least town) wide to avoid setting up new, geographical boundaries
- all parties, but perhaps especially the local authority, to build on CMF to work more collaboratively and avoid slipping into stereotypical roles

Section 5 The projects

Introduction: the 23 projects

This section provides a detailed overview of each of projects, grouped by the providing organisation. For each project I:

- ... briefly describe the organisation, based on its own material
- ... indicate the data sources and any unusual aspects of the evaluation
- ... detail the projects and activities
- ... describe the outputs
- ... draw out the impacts of the projects with respect to the programme outcomes
 - Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services
 - Community cohesion (including hate crime work)
 - Relationships between community and the local authority
 - Improved wellbeing
 - Governance relationships

I then identify:

- any emergent projects and synergies not anticipated in the programme design
- factors enabling achievement
- constraints and risks related to the project achievements; and
- opportunities and challenges for the sustainability of the work.

Clifton Learning Partnership

The organisation

Clifton Learning Partnership (CLP)¹ is a registered charity based in Eastwood, delivering a range of projects aimed at creating a more cohesive community in this very diverse neighbourhood, home to the greatest number of recent migrants in the borough. Reflecting its origins in working with schools in an Education Action Zone², it emphasises increasing skills and access to education and employment, and also offers advice, family support, and runs a community centre and environmental improvement projects. CLP operates from the Eastwood Village Community Centre ('Zone 1'), held on a peppercorn rent from RMBC.

Notes on evaluation

The evaluation is based on quarterly monitoring returns, and interviews with the CEO, Family Support Worker, two 'embedded' advice workers and three 'street champions'.

Projects and activities

3 Community Development Worker: training individuals from Eastwood's diverse communities to be links between the community and CLP, especially in promoting cohesion and environmental projects

9 Advice and Information Service: alongside generic advice, most aimed at Eastern European communities, workers from RMBC and Rush House³ (another voluntary sector organisation) were available to deal with housing issues and support for young people.

16 The Good Neighbour Project: a diverse range of activities intended to directly tackle community cohesion issues.

These fitted in to the overarching community development approach of the organisation, and complemented and extended existing work. CLP thus treated 3 and 16 as essentially one set of activities, of developing skilled local workers who could promote and support community cohesion and environmental improvements in the area, and engaging with wider groups of local people .

Outputs

Issues addressed and resolved include over council tax, debt advice, housing, benefit claims and assistance with family court proceedings.

Although recorded against the original targets, in response to lack of interest from the community and lack of clarity over what a 'Residents' Charter' would achieve, and the reluctance of residents to engage in formal workshops, there was a significant shift from producing a written Charter and formal training to more flexible methods and outputs addressing the same aims. These were more diffuse consultation activities, using other activities as opportunities for information gathering leading to planning of activities,

¹ <http://www.clifton-partnership.org.uk>

² An education improvement initiative under the New Labour government in the early 1990s. See e.g. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2001/01/0001130.pdf>

³ <http://www.rushhouse.co.uk/>

developing the street champions as a group of informal representatives of community views, and using the street champions as channels from CLP to the community.

Outcomes

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

CLP's advice work clearly is impacting on this, both in improving landlord/tenant relationships and in effectively sorting out problems and signposting at an early stage.

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

Lots of opportunities have been created for meeting and (perhaps more significantly) working together – the street champions exemplify this, but there was also lower intensity engagement between people at litter picks, drop-in sessions etc. Hate crime has been a lower priority than in some other projects, but all staff are trained, and publicity material is provided in the centre encouraging people to understand hate crime and report it.

Relationships between community and the local authority

While there is no evidence, it is extremely plausible that effective resolution - especially by the embedded housing worker - will lead to better relationships and attitudes. One aspect emphasised by all CLP staff and the street champions was the importance of newly arrived migrants learning a wide range of knowledge and appropriate behaviours, including their relationship with the authorities.

Improved wellbeing

Individuals who have sought advice have clearly in many cases experienced significant improvements in their – and their families' – wellbeing. Environmental improvements have been made through the projects, albeit at small scale and under continual challenge from continued anti-social behaviour.

Governance relationships

CLP reports strengthened and new relationships within the voluntary and community sector, and – especially through the embedded workers – with the local authority. These involve joint working and signposting.

Emergent projects and synergies

- the street champions are also working as community development workers on cohesion; various antisocial behaviours (e.g. littering, dumping of domestic waste, noise) are addressed through advice to tenants; CLP has developed links with RMBC R&E on recycling and waste management
- the workers strongly believe that reduced demand for housing advice has resulted from the SL programme
- community cohesion objectives cross over with environment projects in particular, as host and migrant communities have a common interest but previously little opportunity or reason for joint activities
- in response to requests coming through the advice service, CLP, REMA, and RMBC jointly organised a workshop on post-Brexit arrangements for EU citizens in the UK.

- CLP's CMF-funded work with the Roma communities has given them sufficient capability and 'profile' to be awarded funds from the Home Office to provide support to vulnerable EU citizens applying to the EU Settlement Scheme¹.

Factors enabling achievement

- a community base, with a welcoming atmosphere and provision of appropriate language speakers, all leading to a level of trust and ease of access
- also making advice accessible in external settings e.g. at school gates, for drop-in sessions
- emphasis on learning – seeing advice as an opportunity to help migrants learn how to adapt to life in the UK
- flexibility in reaching goals e.g. giving up approaches which initially seemed appropriate but didn't work, developing ways to meet unexpected challenges such as using video for disseminating advice when illiteracy is an issue
- longstanding presence in the community and links to other groups in the sector

Constraints and risks

- difficulties with recruiting volunteers, leading to slow growth in projects and limiting impact (e.g. of litter picks)
- transient population, so trained volunteers and other participants move on
- the slowness of developing genuinely community-based activities
- the resource intensiveness of advice work, particularly for complex cases
- staff turnover

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

Responding to those risks and constraints needs flexibility and willingness to respond to how the community wishes to be involved, but also make specifying a fundable programme difficult. CLP appears to be the kind of organisation which will thrive through creativity and flexibility, with its strong ethos meaning that it will use funds to further a broadly consistent vision. The risk is in continuity for individual activities, which are more conditional on funding opportunities, and so largely outside local control. This risk is compounded if future funding is more prescriptive than the CMF. It seems essential to support

- funding for advice targeted at (often extremely poor) recent migrants, especially from Roma communities
- community development workers and their training.

The links to RMBC also need sustaining, and require continuing to find staff who 'fit in' with the community setting.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens>

Kimberworth Park Community Partnership

The organisation

Kimberworth Park Community Partnership (KPCP)¹ is a registered charity which takes a holistic, asset-based approach to community development – principally in the Kimberworth Park neighbourhood – organising its own activities and acting as an umbrella and support organisation for other groups in the area. The estate residents are predominantly White British and working class, and of the CMF-funded projects this was the one most tightly focused on addressing cohesion issues with the ‘host’ community. As part of this work they also started working with the more diverse neighbouring communities. KPCP is based in its own building, the Chislett Centre, one of the principal community assets in the area.

Notes on evaluation

The evaluation is based on quarterly monitoring returns, interviews with the Community Consultant (effectively the organisation’s manager), Community Development Facilitator, the trainer of the community ‘mentors’, three of the mentors and the vicar of the local church (the last to give an external appraisal from another community development perspective: his mandate is as ‘Pioneer Community Vicar’.)

Projects and activities

4 Community Development Training: training community mentors (i.e. development workers) in 4 geographical communities, and then running ‘world cafés’ in each of these, along with other conversation events, at which community members had facilitated conversations addressing issues of concern. In Kimberworth Park this was assisted by *Who Is Your Neighbour?*, a Sheffield-based organisation specialising in ‘safe space conversations’ in White communities targeted by the Far Right. The cafés generated new projects unspecifiable at the outset; similarly the ongoing activities of the trained mentors was not predictable. Consequently project outputs do not map neatly onto the initial CMF outputs, but have very clear connections to the outcomes via both immediate effects of participation *and* the longer-term impact of projects and mentors.

Outputs

The events and projects which brought people together for discussion aimed at promoting inter-community understanding and cohesion were very varied, and also acted as training opportunities for the community mentors. For instance, a mixed group involved in community activities were taken to Sheffield’s Western Park Museum; a group attended a performance of a play about a Syrian refugee at Theatre Deli in Sheffield; two residents met representatives from the local mosque to discuss specific local problems; at their request, the mentors had a facilitated conversation around what ‘respect for other people’s religions’ means and can be practiced. Most challenging was the Kimberworth Park ‘conversation’ about Rotherham, its changing face, perceptions of immigration and its positive and negative impacts.

Reflecting their organisation’s aims, KPCP added ‘community development’ outputs to the programme which were met to some extent. In particular the community mentors form a

¹ <https://www.kimberworthpark.org.uk>

cohesive group which fits the goal of creating new community networks. Other networks are not yet visible, though seeds have been planted thorough the various discussion fora; similarly although many people have been involved in events focused on inter-community relations, whether these translate into the long term outcome of 'better relations' cannot yet be known.

The project's 'under-achievement' in its SLA target of delivering 'registered volunteers' is anomalous. The organisation's own position is that many people were active volunteers in CMF-funded activities, but not regularly enough to be counted as 'registered volunteers'. I concur with this, especially given the delivery of a small trained cohort of community development workers within a year. The notion of a 'registered volunteer' is probably unhelpfully narrow and restrictive, given the variety of valuable roles volunteers play.

Outcomes

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

This is where KPCP's work has real potential. While clear, unambiguous impacts so far are limited to the mentor group, the pro-active, very explicit focus on inter-community conversations (and the provision of safe spaces to air 'difficult', often-suppressed viewpoints) is plausibly effective in positively influencing attitudes of those involved (and perhaps though them of their social networks.) This must be one of the more effective ways of addressing stereotypes and entrenched attitudes, even though its impact is not evidenced, and is perhaps impossible to evaluate, even in the long term. The creation of a group of community development workers specialised in addressing these issues is a tremendous achievement, especially in such a short time, and – along with the organisational learning - should enable continued progress to be made. (For instance, after the project period the mentors plan to hold a 'difficult conversation' event with groups drawn from the White and ethnic minority communities from Kimberworth Park and an adjacent neighbourhood.)

The other programme goals were not emphasised in the KPCP project.

Emergent projects and synergies

KPCP's project exemplifies a flexible community development approach, which set a framework but allowed participants and the organisation to develop specific activities based on the trainees' and community's evolving needs. The different strands – of training, delivery, community engagement, tackling community cohesion – were inseparable, and led to innovative and apparently effective work.

Factors enabling achievement

- flexibility in planning within a context of a very strong ethos and vision which ensured that the emerging activities all cohered and contributed to the overall goals
- existing networks and activities through which a diverse, group of suitable trainees could be recruited; an effective trainer recruited; and support and expertise accessed (in particular from *Who is Your Neighbour?* and the local church)

Constraints and risks

- the shortness of the programme was a particular issue for KPCP's work, given the focus on training and then 'doing community development': setting up and recruitment took time; the training programme was necessarily several months long; having an impact through inter-community interaction will only bear visible fruit after some time. The

project ended at the point where the mentors were fully prepared to continue, and much had been learned about how to effectively facilitate inter-community interactions.

- suitable trainees are hard to find – especially those with little/no prior experience who then constitute a truly new asset for the community. There is also a high risk of dropping out due to changing life circumstances etc. (To their and KPCP's credit, attrition was actually very low in the mentor group.)
- a lack of resources to support ideas for new activities emerging from the community development process: this is both a constraint on what could be achieved, and also risks raising false expectations within the community, with knock-on effects on trust and future engagement.

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

The overarching challenge here is continuity: a resource has been created, in trained people and shared experience and expertise, and processes of engagement between communities have been started, yet there is no dedicated resource to sustain this. Possible (and complementary) solutions are:

- further funding for the project: KPCP is an experienced organisation, adept (as demonstrated by the CMF) in using external funds to support work consistent with its vision, but such funds are scarce and it may not be possible to fund the project in its current form
- redeployment of the mentors: the mentors' skills and experience are potentially valuable resources to other local organisations, including the local authority, and they should be supported and encouraged to apply for employment and/or volunteering opportunities. (One mentor has already become active in the local church's community activities, enabling her to continue putting new skills into practice.)

Premier Learning

The organisation

Premier Learning (PL)¹ is a small registered charity, which provides free classes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). These are predominantly recent arrivals (including refugees and asylum seekers), people on spouse visas, and migrants from Eastern Europe, but also include people (principally women) from established ethnic minority communities. Non-accredited and accredited classes are provided, the latter at English Speaking Board Entry 1-3, Level 1 and 2, and accredited through Trinity College London. PL does not have its own centre, which greatly reduces overheads but makes its provision dependent on availability of low-cost room hire in other community centres.

Alongside the language outcomes PL describes the classes as including “elements of employability, such as reading a job advert or practising interview questions”². This understates their aims, which also include learners acquiring wider knowledge of British culture and practices, study skills, and developing personally through increasing self-confidence, sense of purpose and general well-being. This broader integration and developmental ethos is very strong, reinforced through tutor training and support, and the very hands-on engagement of the organisation’s manager. Overall there was a strong sense of an organisation which supported all its students as individuals, with needs going far beyond language acquisition – its role in CMF was thus very similar to other VCS organisations, despite its apparently more limited remit.

Notes on evaluation

The evaluation is based on quarterly monitoring returns, and interviews with the manager and the Chair of trustees, and two student volunteers. Evaluation of the academic aspects of PL’s work is straightforward and covered adequately by the output figures; in contrast, accessing previous learners to evaluate the broader impacts proved impossible with the exception of those remaining within PL as volunteers.

There is a definitional issue over ‘gaining functional literacy skills’ (Output 24). What constitutes ‘functional literacy’ is contested and doesn’t map onto ESB levels. PL and I have interpreted this Output to mean that adults have increased their language ability in ways which allow them to function better in society i.e. all those who have successfully passed through the programmes.

Projects and activities

14 Accredited and non-accredited ESOL. The additional learning and developmental aims noted above were interwoven with the language teaching. There is a strong culture of continuous appraisal and evaluation of student progress, which enables support and other needs to be identified. Student support – and personal development of those involved – is also provided by the engagement of higher level learners as volunteer assistants in lower classes.

¹ <http://www.premier-learning.org/>

² <http://www.premier-learning.org/page2.html>

Outputs

See comment above about the integration of language and other learning. Although the acquisition of non-language skills was not assessed, it is assumed that this went hand in hand with language learning – thus it has been assumed that engagement in class was ‘cohesion activity’, given the diverse makeup of the classes, and that it led to increased cultural awareness’. and has been counted as such.

As well as enabling the funding of free ‘normal’ classes, the resource provided under CMF allowed: more targeted work with small groups of learners, focusing on specific issues identified in class; additional support for a cohort of learners illiterate in their first languages; classes during the usual summer break. The relatively long duration of the project (compared with other ESOL support) enabled more planning than is usual for progression within PL, with beneficial effects: at the extreme one learner stayed through the entire project period and progressed from Entry 2 to Level 2.

Outcomes

The principal interest is obviously with the overall, community level impact of this kind of work – the aggregate effect of many people becoming better able to engage with society. It is important, however, not to lose sight of the impact on individual learners. This can be transformative, not just through giving them the skills to negotiate daily life, but also through providing them with purpose, a sense of progression and achievement, and in some cases a commitment to engaging in voluntary activities and – when immigration status allows – paid employment.

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

PL’s broad, interaction-focused ESOL teaching very plausibly has direct effects on service use (particularly through people taking up less service providers’ time, making fewer mistakes in engaging with providers which need rectification etc.) as well as indirectly through having the confidence and ability to engage with services at an early stage of problems (e.g. health issues) avoiding the cost of later interventions.

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

There is direct evidence of improved understanding and relationships within PL’s classes between people from different language communities who would not normally come into contact. This will plausibly carry over into attitudes and behaviour outside the classes. Relationships with English speaking ‘host’ communities very plausibly will be improved, with a corresponding reduction in tension and even hate crime, though this was not evidenced.

Relationships between community and the local authority

This project had no direct implications for this broad outcome.

Improved wellbeing

Given the necessity for functional English for almost all employment, and the inclusion of employment skills in the classes, those of PL’s learners eligible to work plausibly will have improved their economic situation – some others hope to achieve that later if, for example, their immigration status changes.

Governance relationships

Through the opportunities for networking (primarily the 'providers' meetings') the programme strengthened links between PL and other voluntary organisations. Importantly this was not just ESOL providers but also those offering other services (e.g. advice) which may be of use to PL's learners, and vice versa.

Emergent projects and synergies

Nothing of note, beyond the strengthened links and opportunities to 'signpost' learners and service users between projects noted above.

Factors enabling achievement

- an existing organisation with an ethos, approach and visibility which allowed it to recruit successfully and provide broad, 'ESOL+' education rather than simply 'language training'
- funding to provide free classes. In the context of austerity and rising demand, the importance of this for reaching people needing ESOL cannot be overstated, particularly for those currently not able to work
- flexibility in approach, and of RMBC in responding to changing need (as for instance, when students with lower initial language skills took longer than expected to reach examination level, and funding for exam fees was redirected to provide extra classes.)

Constraints and risks

- demand for ESOL, particularly free classes, outstrips supply. Obviously any organisation like this is funding constrained, but this also raises questions about 'reach' – by relying on word of mouth and referrals it isn't clear that the most needy potential learners are able to access classes.
- students dropping out without completing their course, due to e.g. forced housing moves, job opportunities, family commitments etc. PL's reported drop-out rates were relatively low (c. 10%), in part due to sustained (and time consuming) effort by the manager.
- as a small organisation working with temporary funding streams, in competition with FE colleges and other providers, PL finds it hard to recruit the best qualified tutors. Their ethos also requires tutors with a compatible approach and skills (i.e. beyond simply language teaching) which makes recruitment harder still.

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

Overshadowing all else is the issue of funding. Free ESOL classes are scarce; free *accredited* classes are almost non-existent outside programmes such as this. Progression for current learners and opportunities for future learners is dependent on continuation of some form of free provision.

If this is resolved, then a more strategic and coordinated approach to ESOL provision and support across the borough (and perhaps beyond, to include neighbouring authorities) could a) address the issue of targeting those with most need and b) improve the opportunities for learner progression.

The tutor supply issue is structural and probably insuperable, without an almost unimaginable change in central government approaches to funding community-based providers such as PL to put them on a par with the larger providers.

Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance

The organisation

Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA) is the infrastructure support organisation for the Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary and community sector in Rotherham¹. It operates from a multi-purpose community centre in Eastwood, and uses this as the location for direct provision of services to individuals from ethnic minority communities, contributing to its core objective of improving outcomes for ethnic minority communities.

Notes on evaluation

The evaluation is based on quarterly monitoring returns, and interviews with the CEO and the vicar of the local church (the last to give an appraisal from the perspective of another organisation involved in a major output of Project 23, the *Festival of Angels*.)

Projects and activities

8 Advice and Information Service: This comprises two services – an EU drop-in, delivered four times per week, at three different locations in the town, and refugee/immigration advice, including a telephone service. During the project period REMA and advice workers attained Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) accreditation, which broadened the range of advice they are authorised to provide. This is a significant CMF outcome at a community level: prior to the CMF there was no immigration advice available in Rotherham, and going forward this capacity and accreditation will enable sustained provision, provided funds continue to be available. REMA remains the sole OISC-accredited centre in Rotherham.

12 Conversation Club: This is non-accredited ESOL provision, focused on functional literacy (i.e. at a level that facilitates usage in everyday life) and some aspects of host community culture.

21 Safe Spaces Conversations: These are facilitated discussions aimed at bringing people together to have unusual, potentially challenging discussions, primarily about ethnicity, immigration, hate crime etc. Some were inter-community, others intra-community (e.g. on Islamist extremism with women from ethnic minorities).

23 Love is Louder: This is an 'envelope' under which a range of activities were carried out, all with the aim of bringing together people from different communities. To a varying extent all involved forms of extended interaction in workshops etc.

Outputs

Hidden within the gross figures of outputs achieved there is a lot of important detail.

8: **EU drop-in:** The principal nationalities of clients are Slovakian, Czech, and increasingly Romanian and Latvian. Significant proportions are from Roma communities within these countries. Advice given was roughly evenly split across child tax credit and benefit, health, housing, benefits, debt, and translation, with utilities issues a significant though lesser topic. Trends were apparent, and REMA present plausible reasons why these are real, rather than just blips. These are summarised here, as they carry useful information for other services:

¹ <http://www.rema-online.org.uk/>

- *debt and Universal Credit* significantly **up** (due to increasingly tough benefit rules/sanctions; increasing employment rates are leading to increase in working poor)
- *housing benefit* **down** (due to increasing employment rates, less eligibility)
- *health* **up** (average age of new arrivals is increasing);
- *translation* **down** (literacy rates are increasing; more service users understand UK systems).

Refugee drop in: a wide range of support around immigration/asylum claims and appeals; supporting successful applicants into housing; and signposting on to other agencies. Much of this work is very time consuming and intense work with individuals with complex, urgent administrative problems with life-changing consequences. A particularly disturbing 'output' was the 'discovery' of a homeless and destitute group of people who had been refused asylum but not deported.

12: Participants are from a wide range of backgrounds including Afghanistan, Albania, China, Iran, Kuwait, Nigeria, Poland, South Sudan and Syria.

21 These took place in various settings (e.g. bringing in residents of a care home to a mosque) and in part reacted to local demand (e.g. meetings between Muslim residents and statutory agencies to respond to the 'Punish a Muslim Day'¹ letter). One innovative variant was the convening of an online debate about the so-called 'burka ban', which reached 847 people (10% actively).

23: A very wide range of activities, mainly in partnership with other organisations. The largest were the two annual *Festival of Angels* programmes (over 1800 people in December 2017); there were also programmes of events around Black History Month and Refugee Week, and an innovative project using drumming workshops to bring together people from learning disabilities and ethnic minority communities.

Outcomes

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

REMA's contribution here is through the advice and ESOL work. While the former may increase pressure on some services (where individuals are signposted to statutory agencies) it has both immediate and longer term positive effects in addressing problems early and assisting people to settle into more stable housing etc. This reduces later, more costly interventions and reduces the time wasted by services in dealing with people who do not understand the system. The refugee work again creates some extra administrative burden – principally at national, rather than local level – but contributes to the effective and lawful application of immigration services. English proficiency similarly reduces pressures (REMA's 'entry level' service may well primarily function as a first step towards more effective and impactful learning elsewhere.)

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

The various 'bringing people together' initiatives under Projects 21 and 23 show clear evidence of changes in attitude at individual level, particularly of those who have never had

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/03/uk-communities-take-action-against-punish-a-muslim-day-letter>

inter-community conversations before. The key factor here is providing opportunities for *dialogue* that would not otherwise happen, whether this is focused around an issue, or built around concrete activities (e.g. drumming). The wider effects of this are unknowable, but plausibly these conversations are one of the few effective ways of challenging attitudes and misunderstandings which cause cohesion problems. Indirectly, improved language skills will plausibly improve relationships with host communities, with a corresponding reduction in tension and even hate crime, though this was not evidenced.

Relationships between community and the local authority

This was not relevant to the REMA work.

Improved wellbeing

At an individual level the impact of advice and ESOL can be enormous, and should not be underestimated. In different ways both have been life-changing in terms of opening up possibilities, reducing poverty, assisting people into stable housing (with significant knock-on effects in terms of education, health etc.) and relieving a wide range of stresses (up to the level of preventing at least one suicide.)

Governance relationships

Partly because of its community infrastructure remit, much of REMA's work is done in partnership with other organisations, or involves signposting clients on to others, and the CMF-funded work followed this pattern. It thus supported existing relationships, and plausibly strengthened them through increased co-working.

Emergent projects and synergies

- In response to requests coming through the advice service, REMA, CLP and RMBC jointly organised a workshop on post Brexit arrangements for EU citizens in the UK.
- There are clear, and already activated, synergies between the REMA's ESOL work and PL, and with RUCST and CLP in particular over various 'bringing people together' activities.

Factors enabling achievement

- having a dedicated community centre for ethnic minority community members, providing a non-threatening environment, language support and a range of co-located services. The latter is very useful, as particularly for new arrivals coming to the advice sessions it provided opportunities for engagement with other activities and services.
- ability to provide free expert advice, particularly in minority languages
- providing free, unaccredited and informal ESOL classes, which were accessible to newly arrived people and were used as first steps towards more formal and accredited provision
- prior experience of working with ethnic minority communities and other organisations

Constraints and risks

- the scale of the available resource: immigration advice in particular is extremely time intensive
- advice is sometimes insufficient in itself, and the services which may solve problems are themselves overstretched or even non-existent (e.g. to deal with homeless failed asylum-seekers)
- 'bringing people together' activities risk being ineffective, or at least having only very diffuse effects. In most, if not all, of REMA's CMF-funded projects this was alleviated by the extended nature of the engagement (these were not principally one-off events) but it is

not clear, for instance, whether all the angel-creation workshops had meaningful (i.e. cohesion-related) discussion built into them.

- there is a potential conflict between the organisation's advocacy role and working closely in partnership with statutory agencies (and other voluntary and community organisations), which needs to be respected by other organisations.

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

Funding is (of course) the central concern, in order to maintain continuity of provision, since all these activities require dedicated professional staff. Although the ESOL classes have been taken on by other providers, this is not the case for the other services as the CMF funding ends.

There is evidence of rising need, related both to poverty (particularly Universal Credit) and immigration/community cohesion issues. Addressing this requires a strategic, multi-organisation approach across the borough, and it was good to see this taking shape in relation to poverty, clearly taking the issue outside the remit of either CMF or the new Integration Fund. Immigration/cohesion requires something similar, within which REMA would need to play a significant role.

Facilitating 'safe spaces conversations' is a necessary, though time-consuming approach which needs to be supported. Despite the obvious risks, the digital media approach could usefully be explored further.

Rotherham United Community Sports Trust

The organisation

Rotherham United Community Sports Trust (RUCST)¹ is a registered charity closely affiliated to the town's Championship League football team. Based within the latter's stadium, it is a community development organisation which uses football as a vehicle for delivering programmes to deprived communities in the fields of education, health & wellbeing, inclusion and sport participation. Of the CMF-funded organisations RUCST was the only one to focus work not only in Rotherham town but also in the peripheral villages, which are characterised by high levels of post-industrial deprivation and low levels of ethnic diversity.

Notes on evaluation

The evaluation is based on quarterly monitoring returns, and interviews with the Head of Community, the Partnership and Development Manager, Cohesion Coordinator and two teachers from schools involved in Project 15 (Young People Social Action Project).

Projects and activities

13 Football Talk: This is non-accredited English language support, using football as the 'hook' for recruitment and for discussions focused on 'living in our community' (e.g. on using health services, accessing advice, anti-social behaviour etc.). It also involves some physical activity, aimed at improving health.

15 Young People Social Action Project (SAP): This is a new project, a junior version of the National Citizen Service² (which RUCST has been delivering to 15-19 year olds), involving bringing together groups of 13-15 year olds from schools across the borough for a series of activities culminating in a residential-based 'social action project'. (Projects included community walking football, care home fun day, a day with Newman School for children and young people with physical disabilities, medical needs and complex learning needs, a fishing day with a group of people with mental health problems.) Selection of participants creates groups of diverse religion, ethnicity, gender, dis/ability and home location; the aspiration is that local teachers recruit those young people who are viewed as having potentially the most to gain (i.e. in some cases having the most entrenched and problematic views.)

22 Parents Together for Sport: this is an extension of existing work, in five locations in the town and villages, involving coached sport sessions (not just football – this includes women's netball, badminton, running, circuit training, cycling and a walking group, responding to local demand) and different ways to bring groups together (e.g. a final 'festival' for the netball groups, a joint run between two very different running groups).

All three projects included explicit discussion of hate crime, for which RUCST is a reporting centre.

Outputs

15 The SAP brought together young people who identified as Afghan, White British, Black British, British Asian, British Pakistani, Slovakian and Arabic. The figures for involvement and

¹ <http://www.rucst.co.uk/>

² <https://www.ncsyas.co.uk/>

engagement vary because some elements – significantly the hate crime awareness work – were delivered to larger groups within schools during the SAP recruitment process, and because new activities emerged which were not strictly part of the SAPs themselves (see below - *Emergent projects...*).

22 To support sustainability the project included training coaches within groups so that they could continue unfunded after the programme finished.

Outcomes

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

'Parents together for sport' worked directly to provide opportunities in deprived, mainly White, communities. This in itself is worthwhile, given the probable positive physical and mental health impacts. Similarly the SAP provided a limited number of young people opportunities to go outside their home area and engage in activities which would otherwise not have been available to them – valuable even without the community cohesion aspects. The ESOL impacts are less direct, but as with other programmes we can assume that improving English will reduce demands on service providers.

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

This is the area of greatest impact, with all three projects demonstrating different, effective ways to encourage dialogue between members of different communities. For the individuals involved there is a great deal of evidence of changed attitudes and behaviours, and some encouraging though very limited evidence from the SAP that this has spread beyond some participants to their (previously mutually hostile) peer groups. Because of the age of those involved this is potentially of enormous importance in tackling engrained attitudes within very disconnected communities. The 'lighter touch' inter-community work of the other projects also appears very effective. One surprising and encouraging outcome was a breaking down of gender barriers in some of the sporting activities attached to Football Talk.

Hate crime. The numbers of reports through RUCST is troubling, but demonstrates the impact of the awareness raising work and the value of having reporting platforms in organisations which are seen to be more approachable and neutral than the police or local authority.

Relationships between community and the local authority

This was not addressed through RUCST's work.

Improved wellbeing

This was not directly addressed, though there will be health impacts for the participants, and potentially some (indirect) contribution to employment prospects from the ESOL training.

Governance relationships

As a new way of working for RUCST, the projects created new links with the voluntary and community and statutory sectors, in connection with both ESOL and community cohesion/hate crime.

Emergent projects and synergies

The most significant emergent and unplanned effect was the recognition of the possibility and value of bringing people from different communities together through sport, which RUCST are now endeavouring to build into *all* their work. This is a significant gain, with obvious implications for long term positive impact of the CMF funding.

More directly, Football Talk and Parents together...were used to recruit and signpost people on to ESOL classes at higher levels provided by other organisations. An unplanned positive outcome was the initiation of a Life in the UK¹ course (funded by RMBC's Adult Community Learning) in response to demand from learners.

The SAP created new links with schools, leading to new projects around knife crime, diversity ('similarities & differences') within a single school, and a mental health course for young people.

Factors enabling achievement

- RUCST is a big, confident organisation, prepared to innovate and learn
- the enthusiasm to take on activities in a new area of work, and to develop provision as opportunity and demand arose (numbers of venues and groups, and the diversity of communities reached, rose steadily during the programme; project 15 expanded into focused diversity work in a single school)
- sport provides a popular, engaging, non-threatening 'hook' for learning, whether this is gaining language skills or about hate crime and cultural diversity
- sport also provides opportunities for extended engagement within relatively large and diverse groups, important both for teaching and simply for intercultural communication
- supportive workers in partner organisations, particularly in schools
- the provision of a crèche was a key enabler for some female participants

Constraints and risks

The risks (or potential weaknesses) in the project are primarily to do with 'reach'.

- RUCST reports difficulties in engaging with the Roma communities and Pakistani men, though have made more progress with the latter.
- Reaching the most appropriate participants for the SAP was also difficult – some young people who might have benefitted most were not engaged because of the involvement of schools in recruiting (since being anti-school and therefore unwilling to participate was associated with their negative view of other communities.)
- The SAP is resource intensive, and its impact risks being negated by lack of follow-up. These are short, intense experiences for a relatively few people, and any change in their views/behaviour needs support (perhaps through schools) after the project ends.

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

RUCST has clear ideas for finding future funding for most of the activities – they seem more confident than some of the smaller organisations:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/life-in-the-uk-test>

- sustainability at community level is being built into the training-of-trainers approach, and also the constituting of sports groups as independent organisations. This leaves the inter-community activities vulnerable, but at least ensures a continued level of sporting activity.
- for ESOL learners/SAP participants progression is being actively encouraged, to further classes and to the National Citizen Service.

RMBC Regeneration and Environment

The organisation

RMBC's Regeneration and Environment (R&E)¹ department is responsible for a range of environmental services, broadly classified under 'Planning, Regeneration and Culture' and 'Community Safety and Streetscene', the latter including enforcement of environmental regulations and standards both in the public realm and in private housing.

Notes on evaluation

The evaluation was based on interviews with the Community Protection Manager (Regulation & Enforcement), a community-based warden (a front line member of staff with responsibility for responding to enviro-crime) and a CLP-based member of the R&E team.

Projects and activities

10 Additional environmental health officer: to employ additional front line staff to tackle enviro-crime in the areas of the borough covered by Selective Licensing (SL) schemes (Eastwood and Masbrough in town, Dinnington and Maltby in the outlying villages), and introduction of new software to enable officers to carry out all their reporting/recording/workload allocation tasks in the field, rather than in their offices.

11 Additional enforcement activity: to increase capacity to inspect houses and enforce the SL regulations, and additional CCTV coverage to reduce enviro-crime and nuisance (specifically fly-tipping).

There was a lot of linkage between these two projects: some of the additional staff resources in 11 were realised through time saved by the introduction of technology under 10.

Outputs

Key outputs: the new mobile technology saved time equivalent to 2 FTE staff, allowing not only more incidents to be dealt with, but improving community members' experiences of the service through faster response times and better communication between officers and public.

These projects were hampered by serious problems and delays in recruiting and IT procurement. This seems to have been due in part to structural problems (specifically a shortage of appropriately trained officers willing to take up the kind of short contracts on offer) and partly administrative/bureaucratic issues around procurement and approvals for different aspects of the project. There have been two main consequences:

- a need for flexibility in approach, in terms of re-organising spend and recruitment, in order to best meet the targets; however
- there was substantial under-achievement against targets at the end of the first CMF phase.

There was also an adjustment to the approach to enforcement: the plan was for joint SL/ICE/police enforcement operations, led by the SL team. However, it was believed that the SL aspects (ideally based on cooperation with landlords) would be compromised by the

¹ https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200026/council_departments/409/regeneration_and_environment

coercive aspects of police/ICE operations, and the approach was reversed, so that SL officers would join police/ICE-led visits but not vice versa. This seems appropriate, as the regulatory aspects of these projects (while arguably necessary) are potentially in conflict with the overall thrust of developing more cohesive communities through creative, cooperative action.

Outcomes

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

These projects have both direct and indirect impacts on host communities. Some of the operations are in settlements which are primarily White, and will have improved the physical environment in those areas (though the use of CCTV and improved reporting of enviro-crime) as well as improving the quality of housing provision through SL. Other SL operations largely engage with the Pakistani host community as landlords, and recent migrants from a range of backgrounds (many Eastern European) as tenants. SL generally benefits 'good' landlords, or those aspiring to be good landlords, through improving tenant experience, reducing turnover and ultimately through stabilising communities. Clearly – and necessarily - those not interested in providing decent homes find SL coercive. There is a risk – and some evidence – that SL is perceived by the Pakistani community more generally as targeted at them. This is unfortunate, and can only really be tackled through good communication, perhaps particularly with exemplar landlords and through trusted community organisations (such as REMA and CLP) rather than directly by the local authority.

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

The impacts here are less direct, but plausibly community cohesion will be improved in the long term by improvements in housing quality and reduction in enviro-crime. This is not straightforward: the local authority reports a mismatch between residents' (in particular host community) perceptions and reporting of enviro-crime (which frequently blame recent migrants), and the authority's own evidence base about who is responsible for the majority of fly-tipping incidents (which does not implicate the migrant groups). This needs to be addressed through communication/information, in order for the cohesion benefits of enforcement to be realised and not undermined.

Relationships between community and the local authority

This should be directly improved by the improved experience of members of the public when environmental incidents are reported. Limited evidence from the front line staff suggests that this is the case. See above concerning SL: to the extent that communities benefit from SL, relationships should improve, while to the extent that they feel SL is coercive (especially if coupled with immigration enforcement) any R&E enforcement activity risks alienating some people in both host and migrant communities.

Improved wellbeing

This is where this work has obvious, direct impacts. The project document identifies two outcomes, as "Output 30: Increased capacity to tackle waste and other environmental issues quicker and normalise new standards of behaviour" and "Output 28: Increased enforcement activity by a range of council services to make environmental improvements and improve housing standards". Both of these are addressed by these projects – successfully within the limitations around delivery noted above.

Governance relationships

The SL work has strengthened relationships between R&E and CLP, with whom there are direct links through the advice support given by housing officers based at CLP.

Emergent projects and synergies

There are obvious synergies being realised and in prospect between the housing and environmental quality aspects of enforcement: the IT is central to this, but more generally the issues around tenant and landlord behaviour and environmental nuisance are being tackled more holistically, particularly in Eastwood.

Factors enabling achievement

- successful introduction of an IT system which seems easy to use, with little or no 'start-up cost' for front line staff
- flexible management approach to employment challenges

Constraints and risks

- structural constraints of availability of suitable staff
- risks of alienating members of host communities
- risks of simply displacing unwanted behaviour – both poor landlords and enviro-crime - through enforcement, rather than eradication.
- misaligned perceptions of who is responsible for enviro-crime and nuisance risk undermining improvements in community cohesion and recognition of what the local authority is achieving

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

The key achievement here is the time and cost saving through the new IT system. This has effectively created the equivalent of two full time staff posts, with the additional benefits of improving the public visibility of the service. This should be sustained, and seems relatively unproblematic so long as the new system is integrated with other local authority IT systems, and contracts with providers are sustained.

The SL work is more problematic, as this is limited in duration and geographic spread by statute. As far as legally possible SL needs to be continued and extended, and therefore resourced – this may well be challenging in the current financial climate.

The authority should pay attention to the communication of the realities of enviro-crime and the benefits of enforcement to all communities involved.

A full evaluation and cost-benefit analysis of the R&E app should be carried out at the end of 2019.

RMBC Children and Young People's Services

The organisation

RMBC's Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)¹ is the lead department within the local authority for the welfare and education of children and young people in the borough.

Notes on evaluation

The evaluation is based on quarterly monitoring returns, interviews with the Head of Service, Performance Assurance Manager and Clifton Locality Manager from Early Help & Family, CEO Rotherham Ethic Minority Alliance and the two 'community navigators' employed under Project 2.

While there is good quantitative evidence for positive changes in needs for different kinds of local authority intervention – in particular falling Child Protection Orders – it should be noted that the CMF started as the context was changing, with the introduction a year previously of the integrated Early Help service. The CMF-funded work was an important contributing factor to improved results, but not the only one.

Projects and activities

The four CYPS projects were focused on the Eastwood/Clifton area of the town, with a focus on issues concerning recently arrived migrants, though they also worked with young people from other communities.

2 Community Navigators: this service was based at REMA, and provided advice to recent arrivals to help them settle faster into the community through signposting and assistance in accessing services. It also included a small discretionary fund for crisis payments to those unable to access other sources of funding.

5 Targeted Family Support Workers: this was an addition to an existing team tackling complex issues within families. The CMF funding supported extra workers based in schools in order to assist with early identification of problems, and integration of support provided by schools with Early Help and other services.

6 Targeted Youth Support: this was on-street, night-time youth outreach work in the town centre, engaging vulnerable or 'at risk' children and young people, those who were the subjects of complaints from the community, and those displaying risk taking and anti-social behaviour. The underpinning aim was to build trust, in part through constructive interventions (services, provision of 'voice' etc.).

7 Service Communication Worker: this aimed to supplement the existing use of interpreters with a dedicated worker who would understand the practice and policy context as well as being able to interpret between service users and providers.

Outputs

CYPS has its own sophisticated record keeping system (since it reports regularly to other bodies) which did not map exactly onto the CMF targets and indicators. The table in Appendix 2 shows the best possible reconciliation of the systems, and shows very positive impacts of

¹ https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200026/council_departments/406/children_and_young_peoples_services

the project (and other Early Help work) on reducing child protection concerns (c. 20% reduction in each quarter compared to the previous year). The numbers of cases dealt with was extremely variable, and it is hard to discern a trend here with respect to the impact of the project. Project 6's overshooting of the general cohesion target and slight underachievement against the more structured programmes reflects the nature of the work and the young people involved, and a necessary reorientation of the work towards more flexible engagement.

2: A slow start to the project gave an opportunity to do preparatory work around investigating and preventing neglect/abuse amongst a specific extended family network in Eastwood, involving mapping, a parenting programme etc. Two navigators were then employed, one Eastern European and the other West African, with a useful range of languages between them.

5: This shows some very positive results in terms of reducing child protection concerns and statutory assessments: clear evidence that this approach was reaching families early and reducing later, costly interventions. The target of increasing EH assessments was not met: it seems likely that the early interventions were preventing cases even getting to this first formal stage.

6: The activities developed were largely driven by the young people themselves, and so were unplanned at the outset. They included a local youth forum (regularly attended by girls aged 13, principally from the Roma communities), and activities such as a dance/music group (attended mainly by people of African heritage, principally refugees and asylum seekers.)

7: The local authority were unable to recruit but the funding was used to buy support from a CLP worker to achieve the same goals.

Outcomes

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

The combination of additional resources and the reduction in demand for services in Eastwood (in part as a result of the CMF funds) enabled CYPS resources to be redeployed elsewhere in the borough to work with host communities. As with other advice work, there were also indications – and a high plausibility – that the community navigators' work reduced the burden on services overall through solving problems early, even where in some cases it resulted in immediate demand which might not have occurred (i.e. when people were signposted to services by the navigators). Projects 2 and 5 worked together in this respect, with the navigators assisting with identification of children who might need Early Help. Project 7 also helped make service provision more efficient and so reduced pressure on local authority services.

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

Project 6 had direct impact here, insofar as it supported young people involved in anti-social behaviour or who had been complained about, and so helped reduce a cause of inter-community friction. How long-term the impacts will be for individuals will probably vary considerably.

Relationships between community and the local authority

Individuals and families who have received support tend to view the local authority favourably – evidence from ‘exit surveys’ carried out with families receiving Early Help is overwhelmingly positive. (Though such evidence suffers from bias in who completes surveys, accuracy of responses etc. it is at least indicative of a positive experience and attitudes to the local authority.) Similarly the engagement of some young people with activities over an extended period, particularly in the forum, suggests a growing, positive relationship – which may be quite a change for young people targeted as being ‘vulnerable’ or involved in anti-social behaviour.

Improved wellbeing

This is clearly an area in which all three intervention-based projects (2, 5 and 6) had significant impacts for the individuals and families concerned, whether in resolving intra-family issues early (5), supporting newly arrived, destitute families (2), or giving Roma young women a voice (6). The impact of 5 in particular was probably visible in improved outcomes, with Child Protection Orders falling as Early Help assessments rose. While numbers are relatively low – especially for the navigators, due to the complexity and resource-intensity of some of their case load – within the relatively small Eastwood community these impacts are probably significant at community level.

Governance relationships

These projects built on and enhanced existing relationships. From the perspective of the local authority there was more trust between them and the voluntary sector as result of collaborative working, evidenced by increased cooperation and communication (as for instance in the collaboration between CYPS and CLP in staffing the Eastwood based youth forum.)

Emergent projects and synergies

A significant strand of new work emerging from this were the various activities led by the needs/wishes of young people themselves. In the context of cut-backs in youth service provision over many years (nationally as well as locally), and the links between this and anti-social behaviour etc., it is good to see local authority support in this area. The giving of voice to girls from a particularly marginalised community can only be a good thing.

Synergies with the work of the other organisations working intensively in Eastwood were obvious, including the CMF-funded work of CLP and REMA.

Factors enabling achievement

- opportunity and enthusiasm for experimenting with new ways of working offered by the service reorganisation (i.e. the creation of Early Help)
- willingness and ability to collaborate with schools and voluntary sector organisations, and reciprocation of this
- location of services close to the ‘target’ group rather than in council offices – in a trusted community organisation’s building (project 2), on the street and community centres (5) and in schools (6).

Constraints and risks

- providing these services is resource intensive, requiring trained and dedicated staff time – the community navigators in particular had to deal with an enormous range of often extremely complex cases, consuming huge amounts of time
- the closeness of the relationship between local authority and voluntary sector is welcome, but also brings risks of potential conflict of interest (e.g. between statutory requirements on the local authority and the advocacy role of community organisations)
- there is some issue over 'reach': there will always be a question as to whether those most at risk and in need to support are being engaged. The community navigators in particular found that accessing very recent arrivals was difficult. However, this seems to have reduced over time – the key here may be word of mouth referrals and increased trust.

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

Continuity will be the challenge, particularly given the resource intensiveness of the work. The mainstreaming of the schools-based work as part of service reorganisation is clearly important and welcome, but the issue of supporting the other services remains.

RMBC Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate

The organisation

The Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate (ACE)¹ is responsible for corporate services, including leading on transformation of the authority. Its Performance, Intelligence and Improvement section is the administrative 'home' for the borough's community cohesion strategy (*Rotherham - Building Stronger Communities*) and for the CMF programme as part of this.

Projects and activities

- 1 Building Stronger Communities Coordinator
- 17 Support to engage migrant and non-migrant women: a series of events aimed at bringing together women from different communities across the borough
- 18 Building Stronger Communities Forum
- 19 Building Stronger Communities Grants
- 20 BSC Initiatives Fund
- 25 Research and evaluation support

This section only covers Project 17. Projects 18, 19 and 20 are covered in Section 3; 1 and 25 are outside the remit of this evaluation.

Outputs

The project delivered substantially over its targets, with 8 events organised, alongside funding for other projects including: a book to celebrate 100 years since women achieved the vote; a 'reclaim the night' walk; and a 'women's voices' project with Rotherham Older People's Forum. The projects were delivered in partnership with a range of other organisations, and involved close working with the voluntary and community sector in the borough.

Outcomes

Positive effects on host communities/reducing pressure on services

These activities were open to all, and so offered benefits to host community members alongside other recent migrants.

Community cohesion (including hate crime work)

This is the principal area with potentially broad impact from this set of projects. Plausibly – particularly because of the emphasis on the cross-cutting theme of women's empowerment – these activities impact on people's perceptions of other communities, and on solidarity between women across communal differences. However, due to the nature of these activities (particularly the single events) this impact is unmeasurable (and perhaps likely to be diffuse and limited, except in some individual cases.)

¹ https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200026/council_departments/1115/assistant_chief_executives_office

Relationships between community and the local authority

There should be a positive impact on this, to the extent that people were aware of the local authority's involvement (as opposed to only seeing the visible organising partnership, such as Louder Together.)

Improved wellbeing

This was not a direct goal of any of these activities.

Governance relationships

Most of the activities involved partnership working, linking statutory and voluntary and community organisations, and so – given the success in delivery – plausibly strengthened and improved these relationships.

Emergent projects and synergies

There are clear synergies with the work of REMA and other voluntary and community sector partners.

Factors enabling achievement

- the existence of networks of motivated and interested individuals and organisations

Constraints and risks

- while successful in attracting a wide range of participants, there is an issue of whether these activities reach 'new' people who may be positively affected, rather than those whose attitudes already encourage their participation
- changing attitudes and perceptions to members of other ethnic or faith communities would often require more sustained engagement than one-off events.

Going forward: sustainability opportunities and challenges

These are among the hardest kinds of activities to evaluate. Their impact is diffuse, reaching many individuals who will have been impacted to various degrees by their involvement and who are largely untraceable. Judging whether they should be sustained is thus more a political matter than one based on an assessment of impact. Reaffirming women's solidarity is clearly of value, and there is symbolic value in supporting public events of this kind. (The 'message' that would be sent if International Women's Day were *not* supported, for instance, is probably politically unacceptable.)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Partner organisations, themes and projects

Delivering organisation	Theme 1: Service Integration	Theme 2: Rogue Landlords initiative	Theme 3: English Language Support	Theme 4: <i>Cohesion</i>	Theme 5: Data and evidence gathering
<i>Voluntary and community sector organisations</i>					
Clifton Learning Partnership (GLP)	3: Community Development Worker	9: Advice and Information Service		16: The Good Neighbour Project	
Kimberworth Park Community Partnership (KPCP)	4: Community Development Training				
Premier Learning (PL)			14: Accredited and non-accredited ESOL		
Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA)		8: Advice and Information Service	12: Let's Practice English - Conversation Clubs	21: Difficult Conversations 23: Love is Louder	
Rotherham United Community Sports Trust (RUCST)			13: Let's Practice English - Football Talk	15: Social Action Projects 22: Parents together for sport	

Delivering organisation	Theme 1: Service Integration	Theme 2: Rogue Landlords initiative	Theme 3: English Language Support	Theme 4: <i>Cohesion</i>	Theme 5: Data and evidence gathering
<i>Units within RMBC</i>					
Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate (ACE)	1: Building Stronger Communities Coordinator			17: Support to engage migrant and non-migrant women 18: Building Stronger Communities Forum 19: Building Stronger Communities Grants (with Voluntary Action Rotherham) 20: BSC Initiatives Fund	25: Research and evaluation support
Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)	2: Community Navigators (with REMA) 5: Targeted Family Support Workers 6: Targeted Youth Support 7: Service Communication Worker				
Regeneration and Environment (R&E)		10: Additional Environmental Health Officer 11: Additional enforcement activity			
<i>University of Sheffield</i>					24: Research and evaluation support

Appendix 2: Programme outputs – targets and delivered

Note: ‘output numbers’ are taken from the original bid document and monitoring returns from the service providers. Some of this data is being monitored over a longer period (to December 2020) to further clarify achievements and benefits.

Where no quantitative targets were set but the intended direction of travel is clear the target has been given in terms of increase/reduction. Where a quantitative output has been achieved this is recorded and the target simply given as ‘no target set’.

Output Number	Output Description	CMF Programme targets in original bid	Total delivered
1	Attendance and school engagement for children and young people directly involved in the programme	Increased attendance/engagement	No significant change: mean increase over same quarter in the previous years was 0% for primary, 1% for secondary
2	Referrals in migrant communities for statutory and non-statutory support services as a result of neglect and other social issues	Reduced referrals	Mean quarterly decrease (with respect to same quarter in previous year): 17%
3	“Step up” cases to children’s social care as a result of timely family support intervention	Reduced “step-up” cases	Mean quarterly increase (with respect to same quarter in previous year): 1% (but very variable – ranged from 29% to -21% for individual quarters, with no discernible trend)
4	Child protection concerns for children in migrant communities	Reduced child protection concerns	Mean quarterly decrease (with respect to same quarter in previous year): 23%
5	People engaged in cohesion/community activity	3,000	6,968
6	Delivery of community festivals/events	6	35
7	Advice appointments	2,500	3,420
8	‘Safe spaces’ conversations facilitated	10	10

Output Number	Output Description	CMF Programme targets in original bid	Total delivered
9	Tenants and residents understanding their housing rights as well as their responsibilities	1,000	1,395
10	Houses reviewed for decency standards	900	1,135
11	Housing issues identified and resolved early	800	818
12	Tenants supported to access help from statutory agencies appropriately – thereby reducing pressures on services	200	1,043
13	Street champions identified and trained to know how and when to request support from the local authority	20	20
14	Residents from across ethnic communities engaged in environmental improvement activity	200	421
15	Members of the local community attending sessions to understand hate crime and how they can report it.	No target set	565
16	Residents engaged in the production of a <i>Residents' Charter</i>	50	56
17	Residents developing skills to resolve issues constructively and effectively	50	159
18	Residents know their neighbours and build relationships with members of different ethnic communities	50	50
19	Workshops with local residents covering negotiation skills, restorative justice approaches, mediation and conflict resolution methods	6	16

Output Number	Output Description	CMF Programme targets in original bid	Total delivered
20	Monthly meetings of cross-community resident groups	18	18
21	Neighbourhood complaints	Reduced neighbourhood complaints	Output being evaluated over longer timeframe linked to next CMF programme
22	Young people from diverse backgrounds taking part in social action projects	120	120
23	Weekly sports sessions at 30 schools per year bringing together parents from diverse backgrounds to strengthen relationships	30	35
24	Adults gaining functional literacy skills	100	700
25	Learners benefitting from accredited and non-accredited classes to improve their English language skills	150	409
26	Weekly conversation club sessions established	130	140
27	Requirement for interpreter services in the future	Reduced requirement	Output being evaluated over longer timeframe linked to next CMF programme
28	Enforcement activity by a range of council services to make environmental improvements and improve housing standards	Increased enforcement activity	Increased enforcement and clean-ups delivered through environmental projects
29	Joint police, ICE and Council enforcement operation(s) to be carried out	No target set	Operation Duxford joint operations undertaken
30	Capacity to tackle waste and other environmental issues quicker and normalise new standards of behaviour	Increased capacity	Enforcement capacity increased through additional staffing.
31	Volunteering and community projects delivered	No target set	104

Output Number	Output Description	CMF Programme targets in original bid	Total delivered
32	Increase in the number of registered volunteers from the community	No target set	209
33	Numbers of young people engaged and completing programmes successfully	No target set	276
34	Spend on cases related to vulnerability	Reduced spend	Output being evaluated over longer timeframe linked to next CMF programme
35	Cultural awareness within communities	Increased cultural awareness	564 people participated in sessions to raise cultural awareness
36	Demand on refuse collection services	Reduced demand	Increased enforcement and clean-ups delivered through environmental projects. Output being evaluated over longer timeframe linked to next CMF programme
37	Better relations between people from different geographical communities and also between neighbours and residents from different ethnic and religious backgrounds within the same locality	Better relations	Individual cases reported of improved relationships by a number of projects. Output being evaluated over longer timeframe linked to next CMF programme
38	Income generated by project	No target set	Output being evaluated over longer timeframe linked to next CMF programme
Additional outputs achieved (not in original bid)			
	Community Development Training Course - sessions delivered	Additional Output	9
	People attending Community Development Training Courses	Additional Output	72
	Trained Community Development workers	Additional Output	7
	Delivery of bespoke parenting programmes to support families	Additional Output	59

References on evaluation methodology

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