



Wisbech Community Led Local Development

External Evaluation (interim Report)



European Union
European
Social Fund



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SUMMARY

Community Led Local Development (CLLD) is a way of delivering local development using structural funds from the European Social Fund (ESF). The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is one of the Managing Authorities for CLLD, overseeing the implementation of the fund in England. CLLD is:

- **A 'bottom-up' approach** – it is led by a Local Action Group (LAG) and delivered through a Local Development Strategy (LDS).
- **An 'integrated' approach** – focused on supporting people to develop new skills and increase their chances of getting a job in ways that complement other employability programmes also taking place.
- **An 'inclusive area-based' approach** – encouraging all sections of the local community to participate.
- **Providing added value** – investing in things that would otherwise not happen.
- **Offering value for money** – by taking into account the outputs that will be delivered for the amount of funding requested.

To prepare its application for CLLD funding, Cambridgeshire ACRE and the LAG undertook extensive community consultation in Wisbech. This involved asking for ideas and interventions that would support people to move towards or into employment. Information from the consultation informed the development of the LDS. This focused on addressing four areas of concern in Wisbech:

1. Poor employment opportunities, economic inactivity and work poverty.
2. Barriers to employment such as low aspiration, poor health, lack of basic skills and education.
3. Poorly integrated and marginalised people and communities.
4. Poor access to services, transport, information technology and advice.

The project was approved in December 2016, with a Funding Agreement signed between the Accountable Body (Cambridgeshire ACRE) and DWP in December 2017 – with £1,050,000 provided by ESF and £1,050,000 provided through match funding. DWP carried out a project inception visit in February 2018 and the project was launched in March 2018.

In May 2019 Rose Regeneration was appointed to carry out a 'formative' evaluation (taking place during the development and delivery of the project) and a 'summative' evaluation (assessing the project at the end). This report sets out the interim evaluation findings between June 2018 and July 2020.

The difference CLLD is making - to participants, providers, and the local community

There is a two-stage application process for potential applicants. At the first stage the applicant submits an expression of interest form which is assessed by the Accountable Body and a decision made by the LAG. If the project is eligible applicants are then invited to submit a full application at stage 2. Applicants receive support from Cambridgeshire ACRE to develop their projects and apply for CLLD funding.

Reasons for providers participating in CLLD included:

- Wanting to build on existing activities they were running to prepare people for work **“in a meaningful and funded way”**. One provider had piloted their project idea in a different geography and wanted to scale it up to support disadvantaged communities in Wisbech.
- To support participants ineligible for, or unsuitable for, other employment provision. One provider described this as **“about giving people meaningful things to do during the day and a sense of purpose.”**
- To address wider household and community issues (e.g. worklessness; incomes, education and training).

All of the providers emphasised the importance of the ‘participant journey’ in their CLLD work:

“It is clear that the people we are working with are some of the furthest from employment and come with a range of issues including language issues, mental health problems, housing problems and substance abuse. All these individuals need a personalised programme, both of skills development but also general life support.”

“They [participants] have a range of complex needs which provides a significant barrier to them becoming work ready. It is the support provided by the support team plus the work carried out by the employment team that helps them overcome these significant barriers.”

Providers identified a range of barriers facing people wanting to get into employment or improve their working life in Wisbech, including issues related to physical health, mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, debt; behaviours such as low confidence and low self-esteem, generational deprivation, and physical, economic and social isolation. Providers identified how, through their existing activities, they had supported people to address these underlying barriers in ways that had helped them to find and sustain work.

“Some of them used the skills they acquired with us to work for the RAF, schools and in other sectors – and these people came to us with no experience”.

Discussions with providers have highlighted the following features of the project:

- **Participant centred:** people are not expected to participate in the project in a set or standard way.
- **Recruiting and retaining the right staff and volunteers:** that are suited to supporting people with multiple and complex needs.
- **Addressing multiple barriers:** staff spend time working with individual participants to understand the employability and non-employability issues that they face.
- **Goals focused:** providers emphasise the importance of the work they do to support participants on their journey towards work – providers are not outputs and results driven.

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Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a way of developing a value for less tangible outcomes funded through the project. SROI provides a more rounded view of what is being achieved. Working with providers (individually and at provider network meetings), and the LAG, a list of outcomes has been developed for the project and a financial proxy from a tool called the Social Value Engine assigned to each. This interim analysis of the social value delivered by the project so far covers the period up to Quarter 1 2020. It includes a review of the narrative in the quarterly reports and claims submitted by each provider. The analysis therefore includes all the outputs and outcomes arising from their work for which they have evidence. **The interim analysis shows for every £1.00 invested in the project £2.03 of gross social value is being generated.**

The outputs delivered so far

The table below shows the outputs and results agreed for the project with DWP, the contracted targets for projects currently running (for providers with a signed grant funding agreement in place) and achievements against these so far up to July 2020.

	DWP Contracted Target	Contracted Target (total)	Contracted Target (running)	Total so far	To achieve DWP target
Total Participants	1,184	1,841	1,471	366	818
Men	593	925	763	206	387
Women	591	916	708	160	431
Unemployed (including long-term unemployed)	829	1,134	878	187	642
Economically Inactive (including not in education or training)	355	707	593	178	177
Aged 50+	296	318	253	94	202
Disabilities	178	328	165	111	67
Ethnic Minorities	234	419	341	69	165
Moved into Education/ Training on leaving	237	233	153	55	182
Moved into Employment (including self-employment)	116	212	157	95	21

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Economically Inactive moved into Job Search	89	243	187	16	73
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Achieving the overall targets for the project, including the total number of participants (and split between unemployed and economically inactive) and exiting participants into education/training and job search remains a significant challenge. New providers due to come on-stream should ensure these targets are more attainable. Due to the delayed start to the project the Accountable Body has requested a 12-month extension to delivery which would see the date to achieve these targets extended to 30 June 2022.

The Accountable Body and LAG focus is now shifting from a focus on spend (and contracting) to a focus on outputs and targets – with providers being asked to concentrate on meeting their outputs and targets rather than on the number of participants they are working with. ***“We are reaching a tipping point between animation and supporting providers to meet outputs and targets.”***

The costs so far - and estimating value-for-money

Cambridgeshire ACRE was able to apply for CLLD because of match funding provided by Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council – contributing £107,000, £53,500, and £17,697 respectively over the five-year period. This reduced the financial risk to Cambridgeshire ACRE as a smaller charity and provided assurance that Management and Administration costs could be met. The Management and Administration costs for running the project currently sit at £175,883.13 against an overall budget of £356,394.

Of the £1,743,606 of ESF grant available to providers; £628,179.27 has been allocated, with £124,953.39 in the pipeline for approval and £118,670.34 remaining. The Accountable Body has indicated it faces a 9-month delay in receiving grant payments from DWP, leading it to cash flow the project.

Before the project started DWP undertook a value-for-money analysis of the outputs, results and financial plan contained in the LDS. This information provides some unit costs and benchmarks which can be used once more information is available from providers and the Accountable Body on spend, outputs and under which LDS package.

The focus of the LAG is on using the evaluation as part of its work to make the case for further investment. As more information about outcomes is submitted by providers and confirmed by the Accountable Body, the social value analysis, unit costs and benchmarking these could form part of this business case.

The LAG has also reviewed the LDS in line with current delivery, identifying where the gaps are. The LAG and Accountable Body have recently focused on ***“refreshing the LDS and seeing how we can focus it with the remaining [sum of money]...what gaps are in the LDS and do we need something in all of the gaps?”*** Identifying gaps in the delivery of the LDS led the LAG and Accountable Body to issue a ‘call for

projects' in July 2020 for applicants to come forward to deliver activities that address under-employment, and/or support healthier lifestyles, digital inclusion and sustainable transport.

The impact of COVID-19

The Accountable Body has undertaken a survey with providers to consider what impact COVID-19 has had on current delivery and if/how the pandemic might affect their ability to meet their contracted outputs and results.

From the responses received some providers are considering the participant pipeline – finding new ways to sign up participants; while others are thinking through how to translate participant numbers into an exit by supporting them more actively towards job search, learning or employment. Two providers were able to exit participants into employment during lockdown (e.g. as key workers in the NHS, supermarkets and food supply chain), while other providers noted an increase in people contacting them for employability support amid a local reduction in jobs. A number of providers were looking at updating their risk assessments and health and safety procedures to implement Government guidelines.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows the number of staff furloughed in Wisbech is 23%; 5% below the national average. Yet there are higher levels of furloughing in some sectors, including manufacturing and wholesale/retail.

Evaluation next steps

In response to these interim findings the focus of the evaluation going forward is on:

- **Participant voices:** observation of group activities and one-to-one support with participants, including interviews, to understand the difference CLLD is making to them (in the short and longer term).
- Enhancing the current **evidence base:** continuing to update the data profile, developing/ understanding the unit costs of CLLD (by LDS package, provider, participant and project type), benchmarking these with similar initiatives, and measuring outcomes (SROI). This work will also seek to highlight the added value that the LAG and local providers bring (e.g. match funding, volunteering, using CLLD learning to inform other initiatives).
- **Strategic context/alignment:** reviewing how the project aligns to current and planned employability initiatives – and to changes in the local labour market (including local responses to COVID-19).

INTRODUCING WISBECH CLLD

What is CLLD?

Community Led Local Development (CLLD) is a way of delivering local development using structural funds from the European Social Fund. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is one of the Managing Authorities for CLLD, overseeing the implementation of the fund in England.

CLLD is a 'bottom-up' community led approach that uses European funding to target selected areas in Wisbech to encourage local organisations and groups [known as providers] to suggest, design and deliver projects that contribute to increased employment and improve the working lives of local people.

Why is the project needed?

DWP, in its capacity as the Managing Authority for the ESF, invited areas to submit Community-led Local Development Strategies.

The Government required CLLD projects to:

- Focus upon sub-regional areas at a level below Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area boundaries with a population of not less than 10,000 and not more than 150,000.
- Prioritise areas identified as being in the most deprived 20% areas by reference to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 in More Developed and Transition Areas.
- Be led by Local Action Groups (LAGs) representing public, private and local socio-economic interests.
- Complement and not duplicate LEADER LAG and EMFF LAG activity.
- Adopt integrated and multi-sectoral strategies with a public sector contribution in the region of EUR 3m per CLLD Strategy.
- Be driven by local needs and potential as identified by the community through the LAG.
- Be innovative at a local level.

DWP set out some key principals for CLLD areas to follow. These included:

- **A 'bottom-up' approach** – CLLD must be led by LAGs, and implemented through integrated area based Local Development Strategies (LDSs). The local community should be involved in the process of developing the strategy.
- **An 'integrated' approach** – the LDS should consider how people supported through the ESF will develop new skills or increase their chances of getting a job. The LDS also needs to clarify how CLLD will align to other ESF activities, ERDF, LEADER, FLAG and any other activities supported by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).
- **An 'inclusive area-based' approach** – the LAG should include people from all sections of the local community and reflect the make-up of the area.
- **Added value** – the LDS must make the case for achieving things that would not happen without ESF funding.

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- **Value for money** – the LDS must take into account the outputs that will be delivered and the local impact of these in accordance with the amount of money requested.

The Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (GCGP EP), a business led organisation focused on driving forward sustainable economic growth in the area, set out the priorities that CLLD should deliver locally. The GCGP EP wanted CLLD to provide targeted support to pockets of deprivation and social need and complement the community-led LEADER approach by providing coverage to those communities excluded from LEADER coverage. The GCGP EP earmarked funding for CLLD initiatives in Fenland (Wisbech) and Peterborough (Millfield and New England). Since the project began, GCGP EP has become the Business Board of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

How was the project developed?

Applying for Wisbech (Fenland) to become a CLLD area comprised two stages. Stage 1 involved:

- I. Establishing a LAG for the area. The LAG was required to have representatives from private, voluntary & community and public sector organisations with the capacity and capability to oversee the delivery of stage 2.
- II. Work through the LAG to develop a LDS aligned to local strategic priorities and agreed with DWP.
- III. Identify an Accountable Body to support the LAG in overseeing the implantation of the LDS.

To prepare the application, Cambridgeshire ACRE and the LAG undertook extensive community consultation. The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Raise awareness of CLLD with a cross section of the community.
- Gather information from the community to develop a SWOT [strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats].
- Collate ideas and interventions that may support people to move towards or into employment.
- Encourage positive thinking and innovative approaches to problem solving within the community.

Consultees included employers, potential participants, education and training providers, community organisations and public sector bodies. Cambridgeshire ACRE and the LAG worked in partnership with locally trusted organisations, had a CLLD stand at local events, and held information and workshop sessions at times and in places to ensure the widest range of people could get involved. In addition to 15 consultation events, this process included an online survey for local residents to complete, an organisational survey (e.g. for Town and Parish Councils, local community groups), and participant surveys for potential beneficiaries. The LAG established a community engagement sub group to oversee the consultation and review the findings.

Alongside this a communications plan was developed to keep stakeholders up-to-date with Stage 1 and progress towards Stage 2. This included establishing a CLLD website, asking partners/stakeholders to promote the CLLD website, social media, Cambridgeshire ACRE's news digest, face to face meetings/

presentations and producing articles for town/community magazines. Three key and overarching messages were developed:

- CLLD provides an opportunity to address the employment and labour mobility issues that are holding many people in Wisbech back from participating more fully in the labour market.
- CLLD is different from previous programmes in that it will take a bottom-up approach, inviting local people and businesses to contribute to identifying the solutions to the town's development needs.
- Whether you are a local business, social enterprise, trade association, charity, voluntary or community group, parish or town council, we need to hear from you in order to make CLLD a success.

Stage 2 required CLLD areas to submit a full application to implement their LDS. This required Cambridgeshire ACRE and the LAG to confirm:

- Who would act as the Accountable Body for delivering the LDS, working through the LAG?
Cambridgeshire ACRE was selected as the Accountable Body.
- Set out a full financial plan for the LDS. *The total overall budget required to fulfil the LDS was stated as £2,100,000 – with £1,050,000 provided by ESF and £1,050,000 provided through match funding.*
- Confirm the percentage of funding to be allocated to the management and administration of LDS delivery. DWP set a ceiling of up to 25% of the value of the finance plan in the LDS for this activity. *17% was allocated to M&A for the project.*
- Put in place the management systems, processes and capacity required to deliver the LDS.
Cambridgeshire ACRE worked with the LAG to develop and implement a series of processes covering applications, dispersing grant funding, monitoring and verification.
- Be accountable for ensuring delivery of the outputs and results set out in the LDS. *Cambridgeshire ACRE and the LAG set out the target investment and expected outputs and results across the CLLD area.*

How is the project being delivered?

All of the information collated at stages 1 and 2 were used to produce the LDS. The LDS is centred on addressing four areas of concern in Wisbech:

1. Poor employment opportunities, economic inactivity and work poverty.
2. Barriers to employment such as low aspiration, crisis, poor health, lack of basic skills and education and capacity to integrate with local communities.
3. Poorly integrated and marginalised people and communities.
4. Poor access to services, transport, information technology and advice.

The CLLD area covers a resident population of 33,845 people and includes the wards of Clarkson, Kirkgate, Waterlees, Hill, Peckover, Staithe and Medworth; and parts of Roman Bank, Mershe Lande, Emneth with Outwell and Elm and Christchurch.

The project was approved in December 2016, with a Funding Agreement signed between the Accountable Body (Cambridgeshire ACRE) and DWP in December 2017 – with £1,050,000 provided by ESF and

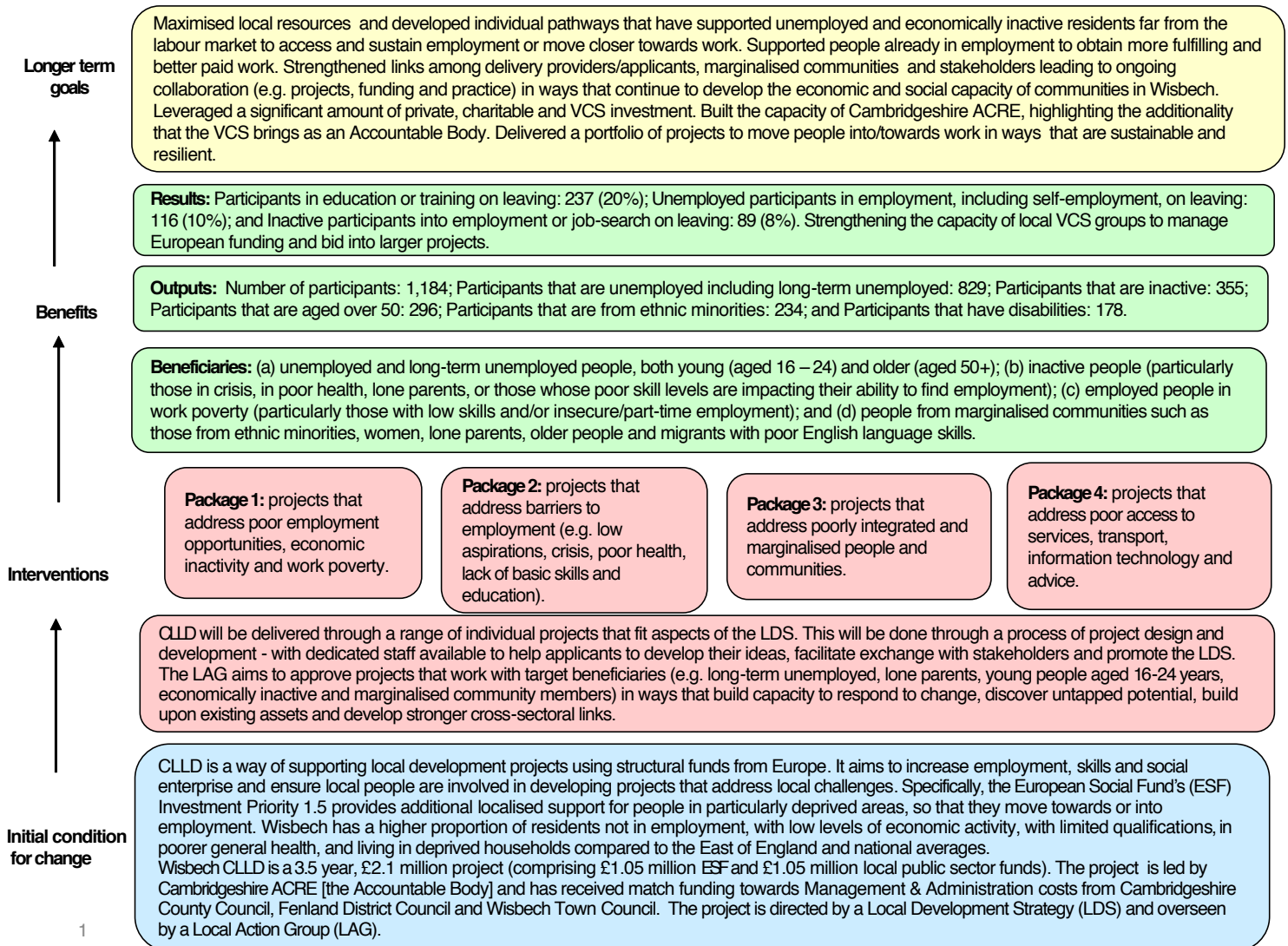
£1,050,000 provided through match funding. DWP carried out a project inception visit in February 2018 and the project was launched in March 2018.

The LAG oversees the funding from DWP in this area in line with the objectives of the LDS. The total amount of funding (50% of project value) starts from £10,000 per project; with the maximum amount of support available depending on the type of project, number of participants (outputs and results) and the cost involved.

There is a two-stage application process for potential providers. At the first stage the applicant submits an expression of interest form which is assessed by the Accountable Body (Cambridgeshire ACRE) and a decision made by the LAG. If the project is eligible applicants are then invited to submit a full application at stage 2. Applicants receive support from the Accountable Body to develop their projects and apply for CLLD funding.

A theory of change has been developed for project as part of the evaluation. This description/flow chart is based upon the documents reviewed to understand how Stage 1 and Stage 2 developed. The theory of change provides an overarching summary of the project rather than the more detailed information contained throughout this document.

WISBECH COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Rose Regeneration was appointed to undertake an external evaluation of the project in May 2019. This followed a LAG workshop to confirm the brief for the evaluation. The Accountable Body described how the workshop had “***provided a point for discussion as to what outcomes the LAG was looking to achieve for the overall CLLD project.***”

The evaluation is both ‘formative’ (taking place during the development and delivery of the project) and ‘summative’ (assessing the project at the end). This is important because it provides the Accountable Body, LAG, providers, and stakeholders with ongoing feedback which they can use to make real-time modifications during delivery and carry forward into any successor project(s).

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to:

- Complete desktop research / analysis of all available information.
- Devise a consultation strategy for collecting qualitative data to add value to the quantitative monitoring by understanding people’s experiences of the CLLD project.
- Work with the Accountable Body and LAG to support them in collecting valuable data and information (e.g. peer evaluation).
- Collect stories of change and success from providers.
- Attend LAG meetings to provide ongoing feedback on the information collected.
- Complete an interim and final evaluation reports to determine the extent to which the project has led to change and lessons for future projects.

HM Treasury publishes guidance on what to consider when designing an evaluation (the Magenta Book). This identifies three methodologies which are being used to evaluate the project:

- **Process evaluation** – this is an assessment of how the project systems were set up and if the project is being implemented as was intended.
- **Impact evaluation** – this is an assessment of the outcomes and achievements of the project on participants in helping them to overcome the issues and barriers they face to participate in the labour market.
- **Economic evaluation** - this is an assessment of how much the project costs and how it is offering value-for-money.

The table below lists the activities being undertaken to measure the impact, processes and cost of the project over the course of the evaluation:

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		Evaluation activities	Outputs
Formative	Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a data profile for Wisbech that can be updated. Interviews with providers. Attendance at quarterly provider network meetings – to update on progress and gain insights for the evaluation. Set up SROI data collection process. Identify a CLLD project in a different geography and share learning and practice. 	<p>Attendance at LAG meetings – to provide an update on progress and gain insights for the evaluation.</p> <p>Interim report.</p>
	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review to produce baseline and theory of change. Review systems developed at the outset to deliver the project – and any refinements / improvements made so far. 	
	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding profile – analysis of spend so far. 	
Summative	Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation of delivery. Interviews with current participants. Interviews participants that have exited the project: where are they now? Attendance at provider network meetings. Final SROI analysis. 	Attendance at LAG meetings.
	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate examples of Strategic Added Value (refinements / improvements made to systems and processes). Interviews with stakeholders to understand strategic context / alignment with other initiatives. 	<p>Sharing and learning event, TBC</p> <p>Final report.</p>
	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate the costs of delivering CLLD from Accountable Body and provider perspectives – and the match funding and added value delivered. 	

“Using a method of formative evaluation helps Cambridgeshire ACRE to respond to issues and sticking points with procedures as the project progresses. It means the LAG has a responsibility and voice to how things are developing.”

About this document

This interim report is intended to:

- Provide information on the starting point for the Wisbech CLLD project – and the situation or circumstances that the project aims to change.

- Provide a reference point for assessing impact, process and economic changes as a result of the project.
- Provide a framework for comparing the situation before and after project activities – setting out the evaluation activities undertaken so far and activities that will be carried out moving forward.

This interim report is structured into four main sections:

- I. **Impact evaluation:** this section considers the outcomes and achievements made by the project so far.
- II. **Process evaluation:** this section considers whether the project is following the approach established at the outset.
- III. **Economic evaluation:** this section looks at how much the project costs.
- IV. **Where next?** This section highlights some overarching themes emerging from the external evaluation so far.

IN FOCUS: IMPACT FINDINGS

This section of the report considers what providers, participants, LAG members, the Accountable Body and stakeholders are gaining from participating in the project – and the outcomes and achievements of the project so far. These findings are drawn from:

- Interviews with individual providers and attendance at provider network meetings to gather their perspectives on the difference the project is making to participants, their organisation and the local community.
- Attendance at LAG meetings to gain insights on the implementation of the project.
- Interviews with staff at the Accountable Body about the operation of the project – including the support offered to providers, participants and the LAG.
- Interviews with three stakeholders who offered an external perspective on the delivery of the project.

What outputs and results have been set for the project?

The table below shows the outputs and results agreed with DWP, the contracted targets for projects currently running [i.e., projects that have been approved by the LAG and for which there is Grant Funding Agreement signed and in place] and achievement against these so far on a quarterly basis up to end July 2020.

	DWP Contracted Target	Contracted Target (total)	Contracted Target (running)	2018	2019				2020			Total so far	To achieve DWP target
				Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3		
Total Participants	1,184	1,841	1,471	30	38	74	68	56	39	52	9	366	818
Men	593	925	763	19	19	41	42	30	20	31	4	206	387
Women	591	916	708	11	19	33	26	26	19	21	5	160	431
Unemployed (including long-term unemployed)	829	1,134	878	12	11	52	28	22	27	30	5	187	642
Economically Inactive (including not in education or training)	355	707	593	18	27	22	39	34	12	22	4	178	177
Aged 50+	296	318	253	12	16	11	15	15	10	14	1	94	202
Disabilities	178	328	165	15	23	10	14	24	15	9	1	111	67
Ethnic Minorities	234	419	341	6	5	9	22	8	8	10	1	69	165

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Moved into Education/ Training on leaving	237	233	153	0	1	3	10	12	17	11	1	55	182
Moved into Employment (including self-employment)	116	212	157	2	0	15	21	17	16	21	3	95	21
Economically Inactive moved into Job Search	89	243	187	0	0	1	1	3	5	6	0	16	73

Achieving the overall targets for the project for DWP; including the total number of participants (and the split between unemployed and economically inactive) and exiting participants into education/training and job search remains a significant challenge. However, the Accountable Body has a monitoring spreadsheet for each provider – setting out their contracted targets and actual delivery – which is under constant review and new providers are due to come on-stream which should ensure these targets become more attainable. Due to the 12-month delay to project start, the Accountable Body has also submitted a change form to DWP which, if approved, would extend the period to achieve these targets to 30 June 2022.

Provider, Local Action Group and Accountable Body perspectives

How did providers hear about CLLD and why did they decide to take part?

Some providers were aware of CLLD at the outset, while other providers were signposted to the project by other community organisations: ***“we were around when it was first discussed at the LEP and we helped with some of the early conversations and joined the group that worked with Cambridgeshire ACRE to develop the project.”*** ***“CCVS invited us to a presentation of the CLLD...and I thought that’s way beyond us at the time...but Cambridgeshire ACRE made us realise that we could apply.”***

Reasons for providers participating in CLLD included:

- Wanting to build on existing activities they were running to prepare people for work ***“in a meaningful and funded way”***. One provider had piloted their project idea in a different geography and wanted to scale it up to support disadvantaged communities in Wisbech.
- To support participants ineligible for, or unsuitable for, other employment provision. One provider described this as ***“about giving people meaningful things to do during the day and a sense of purpose.”***
- To address wider household and community issues (e.g. worklessness; incomes, education and training).

What support have providers offered – and what is working well and less well?

Some providers use existing staff to deliver CLLD while others have recruited staff and/or volunteers. Providers described the management and oversight in place to support staff and volunteers (e.g. policies, procedures, team meetings, one-to-one supervision). Some providers have found retaining staff and volunteers difficult:

“we’re on to our third [member of staff] as the other two didn’t stay very long...they went on to get other [permanent/long-term contract] jobs.” “The number of regular volunteers is tricky to estimate because some of them also volunteer elsewhere or also work.”

Participant referrals have come from existing service users, community links, local intelligence, awareness of other services available to participants, word of mouth and organisations that providers have worked with before and networks they are a part of. One provider is working more closely with DWP, describing how ***“this [CLLD] has led to referrals and stronger partnership working...with referrals from job coaches directly into CLLD rather than advising them to pop into one of our other services to get a bit of help with their CV...We have office space at DWP once a week to publicise who we are and what we are doing. A drugs and alcohol agency is also offering us space and referrals are now coming in from the probation service.”*** In some instances peer-to-peer referral is taking place. Despite taking a wide approach to referrals, some providers highlighted the difficulties of recruiting participants, citing issues around eligibility (i.e., living just outside of the CLLD area), participant reluctance to complete paperwork, and the number of employability initiatives available locally. ***“We all have a similar client base and want the same goal. How can we complement each other and not compete with one another?”*** One provider made a film, put it online and sent copies to cinemas and leisure venues to attract new participants.

Many providers have made changes to delivery in real-time as part of an approach to ***“continuously reflect on the project and how well we are doing. We have modified the way we have approached the work in the light of our experience over the last 3 quarters, for example, by providing training to non-support staff.”***

For some providers participants have received support and exited the project: ***“some are in employment (6 participants) or in training (4 participants) or are actively seeking work (5 participants).”***

For other providers it is too early to capture the outcomes being achieved by participants:

“While participants haven’t hit their results yet we have evidence of people moving further towards the job market. [When he first joined us], one of our volunteers didn’t think he was mentally or physically able to work but he’s now in a good place and he’s getting himself work ready [with CLLD support].”

“We haven’t achieved any outputs or results yet. Of the participants we’re working with some will go into education and training, that’s definitely feasible,...I think we can get future

participants actively looking for work, into employment or setting up as self-employed or starting their own business.”

“All of our participants are interested in work opportunities and we’ve been helping them towards that by providing them with volunteering opportunities.”

“CLLD participants are the furthest from the labour market so few would be doing something without lots of help and support”

“The project results and outputs...we’re not hitting those because we’ve not got enough participants.”

It was also acknowledged that ***“some clients will relapse because of the issues, barriers and needs that they have.”***

Providers gave examples of participants gaining in confidence, developing skills specifically to be able to take up work opportunities, interest in starting a business or returning to education and learning, and some now wanting to try new experiences.

Tom suffers with chronic depression and crippling anxiety, leaving him extremely isolated in his home. He has been attending sessions for around 6 weeks now, with support from staff...often via text message each Friday morning. He is now able to enter the room independently, talks to some of our volunteers, helps pack tables and chairs away at the end of the session – and most recently, had the idea and confidence to set up an ‘X-Box corner’...We are so proud of his achievements in such a short space of time, and are aiming to build him into the team as a volunteer, with a personal development plan and training.

Some providers have supported participants but been unable to claim outcomes because guidance from DWP has changed: ***“what they say at the start is not what they become and the goal posts change...and this causes problems when you have to play catch-up and it’s very difficult to collect evidence from clients a year or more later.”*** Another provider described ***“having to tell staff about changes can be demotivating – one minute they’re eligible and then they’re not...when you’re working with a vulnerable client group you need a clear and consistent message and that’s been difficult with CLLD.”***

Some providers collect additional information about the impact of their project on participants such as case studies, learning plans, journeys, feedback forms and/or consulting external organisations/partners.

Some providers have considered dependency and how to manage this within the delivery team: ***“when are you going to be leaving us? And we set that with the client at quite an early stage. We ask what their end goal is and then the time frame originates from this. We also have disengagement***

protocols so if we've been working with a client and their participation is sporadic and they become difficult to contact and they aren't achieving anything we exit them from the project." "It's [CLLD] not about hanging onto people. It's about getting them to a point where they move ahead and fully fledged."

Providers acknowledged the support they had received from the Accountable Body and the LAG at EOI and full stages (e.g. help completing paperwork, feedback on the project idea, providing reassurance). ***"The bid was slightly modified in light of feedback from the LAG – the LAG liked the direction of travel and the work we wanted to do on the ground, the delivery....but they wanted us to change some of the wording and description in the application."*** Some providers juggling multiple projects/funding streams felt they might have benefitted from more support at the EOI stage.

Providers also highlighted the importance of the provider network meetings in identifying linkages in themes and participant needs across funded projects and how ***"if you grossed up the inter-relationships between our projects this would provide evidence of the community moving forward together."*** This approach to provider partnership could be built upon, with the collective learning from CLLD used to inform future initiatives.

Providers cited the following examples of where things had worked less well:

- CLLD funding is limited to a number of wards and all of the providers are targeting the same/similar participants. It is difficult to find out whether a participant is already working with another provider and therefore already enrolled onto the project. The need to ensure CLLD aligns with other/existing employability provision was also highlighted.
- CLLD can be more difficult to deliver for smaller organisations as they tend to have more limited admin, finance and HR support in place. Even in larger organisations providers felt it would be beneficial to have dedicated staff delivering on CLLD rather than working on multiple projects.
- Providers described needing to consider how CLLD fits with their organisational aims, objectives and strategic direction rather than chasing funding and mission drift.
- Some providers have struggled to understand and fully comply with the administrative and financial processes set by DWP, describing how these are ***"geared at getting people into work...not tackling social isolation, confidence, skills..."*** Cash flow has been an issue for many providers, with instances of a significant time lag between submitting a claim and receiving payment provided.

How has CLLD helped participants - in the short and longer term?

All of the providers emphasised the importance of the 'participant journey' in their CLLD work:

"It is clear that the people we are working with are some of the furthest from employment and come with a range of issues including language issues, mental health problems, housing problems and substance abuse. All these individuals need a personalised programme, both of skills development but also general life support, and it is important that

if they access the work experience course they are working with the correct support worker.”

“They [participants] have a range of complex needs which provides a significant barrier to them becoming work ready. It is the support provided by the support team plus the work carried out by the employment team that helps them overcome these significant barriers.”

Some providers were already supporting people to improve their work and employment prospects. Examples include: providing volunteering and work experience placements, group activities to increase confidence and team building (e.g. singing/performance, cultural events) and one-to-one support. Some providers were also helping people to maintain their employment or work towards obtaining new employment if needed.

Providers identified a range of barriers facing people wanting to get into employment or improve their working life in Wisbech, including issues related to physical health, mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, debt; behaviours such as low confidence and low self-esteem, generational deprivation, and physical, economic and social isolation.

Providers identified how, through their existing activities, they had supported people to address these underlying barriers in ways that had helped them to find and sustain work.

“Some of them used the skills they acquired with us to work for the RAF, schools and in other sectors – and these people came to us with no experience”.

In designing their projects providers took into account some or all of the following factors:

- **Need:** wanting to help people with long term difficulties in finding work, often because of their personal circumstances or situation. ***“Our project focuses on the neediest and most excluded from society.”***
- **LDS:** how their project fits with the priorities set out in the LDS – with providers describing how their work aligns with packages 1, 2 and/or 3.
- **Existing provision:** how their project fits with, and differs from, other mainstream employability initiatives i.e., wanting to support people with complex needs over a longer period of time. ***“Some of the participants we are supporting through CLLD have dropped out of other employment support programmes – CLLD is more flexible than other programmes in letting you support people.”***
“We wanted to support people not being supported through other programmes such as people in part-time, unfulfilling and poorly paid work...and people who had fallen through the system.”
- **People:** support is tailored around the individual and addressing their needs. ***“We know there is a need to work with individuals over a longer period of time and people need pre-help before they can move into employment.”*** ***“They come to us and say ‘I can’t do that’, ‘I’m no good at that’, and we wanted to address those barriers by providing new experiences for local people.”***

- **Data:** some providers have used information from established services to build an evidence base of 'what works' to inform their CLLD project. ***"We have 16+ years of data that demonstrates how employment skills help to improve their quality of life...income...the whole person."***
- **Activities/support:** how CLLD extends the existing services and reach of providers by offering dedicated provision for participants furthest from the labour market who are often struggling mentally, emotionally and financially every day. ***"It [CLLD] builds on the employment support we provide – and the work we do with individuals and addressing their needs on their journey. It's increased the support we provide to our clients...and therefore increased local provision."***

Lee became a participant just after a difficult point in his life, including an attempt to take his own life. Since he started working with us he has opened a bank account, attended sessions with us weekly, and is now looking at increasing this. He has been applying for local jobs and is keen to use his experiences to help others. He has also started volunteering at a monthly youth group as a youth worker and is attending entry level youth work and safeguarding courses. He is currently saving money to make some garden improvements. He has said that all the things that he is learning as a volunteer with us are inspiring him to do more home improvement projects.

Providers also identified issues outside of the scope of CLLD affecting people's ability to gain and sustain work – particularly access to transport and access to mental health support. There was a recognition that the CLLD project overall can only go so far in addressing the underlying issues facing participants.

Discussions with providers have highlighted the following key ingredients of success to the project:

- **Participant centred:** people are not expected to participate in the project in a set or standard way.
- **Recruiting and retaining the right staff and volunteers:** that are suited to supporting people with multiple and complex needs.
- **Addressing multiple barriers:** staff spend time identifying and working with individual participants to understand the employability and non-employability issues that they face.
- **Goals focused:** providers emphasise the importance of the work they do to support participants on their journey towards work – providers are not outputs and results driven (i.e., x people gaining employment).

The impact of COVID-19

In January 2020 the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed that a novel coronavirus was the cause of a respiratory illness in a cluster of people in Wuhan, China. Following levels of spread and severity across the globe in March 2020 the UK Government imposed a lockdown, banning all "non-essential" travel and contact with people outside of one's household. In June the Government set out relaxation to some lockdown measures which took effect from early July. The economic impact of COVID-19 has tipped the UK into deep recession – some people have already lost their jobs and others will do so in the coming months and years ahead. Some people will face worse employment prospects in the future. It is against this backdrop that

providers have sought to support participants during the lockdown. While acknowledging the importance of face-to-face support and group work, providers adapted quickly to support participants virtually:

“Isolation caused by lockdown restrictions has been a concern for many people, but particularly for our participants and volunteers. We supported them with 98 welfare calls, texts, emails and zoom chats during this quarter. Some were just to touch base but others were to help provide food deliveries and links to local support services.”

“We set up a volunteer group with participants to help make PPE for the NHS and other frontline staff. We collected donated materials, delivered them to the volunteers, and then collected and distributed the finished items. So far 912 items of PPE have been supplied to hospitals, GP surgeries and care homes.”

“We have transferred our CLLD work online and are looking at how we can deliver activities...and we are making online connections with people who are potential participants.”

“Moving our services online is a positive step forward but COVID is setting limitations which will affect the number of participants who can achieve results. What we are doing is engaging participants so they are making changes in their self-perceptions and are benefiting from the connections we are making with them.”

“We have had to temporarily postpone face to face registration events and are currently working on plans to recruit participants without the need to meet face to face.”

Providers are currently seeking to support participants who disengaged during lockdown and identify new participants in need to support. This includes looking at how to scale up their delivery and provide some support face to face in line with Government guidance. While some providers are adapting their CLLD offer (particularly around community recovery and resilience), other providers are concerned that some of the support staff within their organisation will be redeployed to COVID-19 related work.

“Because of the real impact for people during the recovery stage of the pandemic, a new outcome is evolving around the development of new workshops/courses that can specifically support people when they come out of self-isolation/social distancing. As it is very clear that the pandemic will impact on people’s physical and mental health...we will be well positioned to specifically support people and the local communities through the recovery stage of the pandemic.”

The Accountable Body has undertaken a survey with providers to consider what impact COVID-19 has had on current delivery and if/how the pandemic might affect their ability to meet their contracted outputs and results.

From the responses received some providers are considering the participant pipeline – finding new ways to sign up participants, while others are thinking through how to translate participant numbers into an exit by supporting them more actively towards job search, learning or employment. Two providers were able to exit participants into employment during lockdown (e.g. as key workers in the NHS, supermarkets and food supply chain), while other providers noted an increase in people contacting them for employability support amid a local reduction in jobs. A number of providers were looking at updating their risk assessments and health and safety procedures to implement Government guidelines.

What would providers and participants have done without CLLD?

Some providers described how they would not have been able to run their project without CLLD and other providers highlighted the crucial role CLLD investment is playing in helping them to scale up their employability activities. This has led CLLD to have a wider reach into provider organisations rather than being seen as a standalone or ad hoc project. For example, providers described how they were sharing information about their projects internally (e.g. with other teams, providing reports to their management team and/or trustee board) and externally with referral organisations and other partners. ***“Because of our work on employability and progressing people into work the philosophy of the organisation has moved and employment is now an integral part of that.”***

Some providers are starting to put in place plans for when their CLLD funding ends:

“We want to apply for other funding pots to be able to continue to support unemployed people.”

“New employability programmes are always coming on-stream and we need to understand where the potential is in line with meeting the needs of our clients and organisation.”

“We want to grow and sustain our organisation going forward and CLLD has helped us to do that.”

What has been the role of the LAG in developing and implementing the LDS?

The LAG, comprising representatives from local public, private and civil society sectors, is responsible for bringing forward and funding projects identified through the LDS. In conjunction with the Accountable Body, the group leads the implementation of the LDS and is responsible for the financial performance and compliant delivery of the project overall.

The LAG meets as frequently as the project needs. ***“In the beginning people attended to get money but they haven’t drifted off...they’ve stayed with it and shared knowledge and experience with each other and applicants and providers.”*** ***“The LAG is made up of organisations not coming together just for this pot of money but organisations with a history of working in partnership – what’s best for the area?”***

In practice, the role of the LAG includes: setting the strategic direction for grant investment, translating LDS objectives into actions and investment, encouraging collaborative and innovative relationships with a wide audience, ensuring the project meets its outputs by its end date, ensuring a clear separation of duties between the development and approval of applications, and conducting its business in a compliant manner in line with guidance from DWP.

The LAG, supported by the Accountable Body, has held open calls as well as identified specific packages and programmes that could be delivered. It has used the intervention logic table contained in the LDS to target project animation. Animation is viewed as vital in **“giving local people inspiration in bringing project ideas forward.”** But it was also acknowledged that it is **“harder for smaller organisations to gamble [in terms of the time needed to prepare an EOI and full application].”** In assessing applications the LAG has had an **“impact on the providers applying...we’ve been high on deliverability, offering feedback and putting time into reviewing applications.”**

How does the LAG contribute to the delivery of the project?

“The LAG gels together on decision making” and works as a group to consider the following factors when assessing applications:

- Geography – ensuring the application is within the CLLD boundary.
- Clarity about what the applicant requires CLLD funding for – and if there is any cross over with other funding initiatives (e.g. LEADER, BBO). Is there an issue of double funding? This includes clarity of who the intended participants are and how applicants will recruit them without competing with existing providers.
- What is the need?
- Does the applicant link the proposed activities with the outcomes they want to deliver?
- How does the application align to the LDS – and fit with other providers/projects funded under CLLD so as to avoid duplication and replication?
- Evidence (e.g. copies of job descriptions).
- Outputs and results – are they realistic and achievable? Some providers put high targets in their application and the Accountable Body and LAG have negotiated with the applicant to lower them.
- Timescales – when will the project start and finish?
- Budget – the level of funding requested versus the bureaucracy of the paperwork. The LAG highlighted the importance of putting together a budget that shows full cost recovery rather than just the delivery costs (e.g. putting in admin and finance worker support). Does the applicant understand the match funding requirements (and that volunteer time counts?) Is the applicant offering value for money?
- Using local knowledge and awareness of the applicant organisation, area of activity and target participants – how well connected is the potential provider with the area and partners in the area? Do they have a track record?
- Using industry/sector specific knowledge (e.g. digital, mental health, young people) – this helps **“the LAG triangulate what the applicant is saying they will deliver and the impact of their work in**

the longer term on participants – does it deliver results? Where does it move people towards around their employability?”

- ***Alignment*** with other initiatives and providers – ***“have they made links locally and how are they building engagement in the area?” “If they have delivered a successful project elsewhere how will what they want to deliver in Wisbech be different from this?”***
- Will it happen ***without CLLD?***

How has the LAG shared learning and practice about the project?

As part of the evaluation the LAG visited the Yorkshire Coast CLLD programme managed by East Riding of Yorkshire Council in March 2020. The visit provided an opportunity for the LAG and Accountable Body to share and compare CLLD data and learning. The visit covered systems and processes, project delivery and also provided an opportunity to meet providers from Bridlington and Scarborough. As a result of this work, the LAG and Accountable Body has updated the claims process which now enables providers to submit claims monthly instead of quarterly if they wish.

In July 2020 the Accountable Body participated in a Rural Services Network (RSN) event on education and skills. LAG members have also liaised with, and been a part of, Wisbech 2020 vision which focuses on infrastructure and growth.

What does success look like, from a LAG perspective?

Real partnership working and the sustainability of organisations are key components of success for some LAG members: ***“how do providers see themselves moving forward in 3-5 years’ time – and are they starting now before the [CLLD] money runs out?”***

The Accountable Body and LAG focus is now shifting from a focus on spend (and contracting) to a focus on outputs and targets – asking providers to concentrate on achieving results rather than on the total number of participants they are working with. ***“We are reaching a tipping point between animation and supporting providers to meet outputs and targets.”***

The LAG has also reviewed the LDS in line with current delivery, identifying where the gaps are. The LAG and Accountable Body have recently focused on ***“refreshing the LDS and seeing how we can focus it with the remaining [sum of money]...what gaps are in the LDS and do we need something in all of the gaps?”*** Identifying gaps in the delivery of the LDS has led the LAG and Accountable Body to issue a ‘call for projects’ in July 2020 covering the following objectives/activities:

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Objectives	Activity examples
To reduce under-employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress from part-time to full-time work, increase hours at work, move away from a Zero Hour contract or better employment opportunities for lone parents. Activities for upskilling/vocational qualifications and identifying progression routes.
To support inactive participants to become more active and lead healthier lifestyles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that support inactive people to take up sport, improve their general fitness and make use of 'green space'. Projects which provide support to inactive people with healthy eating, smoking cessation and alcohol/drugs awareness to allow those in poor health to move towards more active lifestyles.
To improve digital inclusion or computer literacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that provide tablet and smartphone loans to those that are the most isolated. Training in computer skills in order that people can stay connected and self-manage issues such as health, money, learning and employment.
To improve access to sustainable transport solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop cycling by repairing/loaning cycles and encouraging 'cycle to work' schemes. Develop community transport schemes to access work opportunities both in and outside of Wisbech. Develop a network of Community Travel Champions to provide a 'buddy system' to assist people nervous of travelling to access training and job opportunities.

From a LAG perspective, delivery of the project overall has been affected by:

- *Timescales*: there was a 12-month delay at the start of the project which made keeping providers and participants engaged difficult without a dedicated animation resource. ***"It felt [6 years ago] that we were kicking the can along the road to keep it alive and then Cambridgeshire ACRE became involved...the programme identity has changed: it was going to be about if/how businesses could be involved but that went down another route...the start date shifted by a year...the [LAG] group kept going over all that time and built relationships with the local community and organisations."*** A project change request to extend the project delivery period has been submitted to DWP and a formal decision is awaited.
- *Local context*: the balance between the resources available to deliver the project [by the Accountable Body and LAG] and what local people and organisations are geared up to do. The place and context within which CLLD sits in Wisbech, against a national programme, needs to be recognised.
- The LDS did not reflect the *lack of capacity of local organisations* to participate in the project – there are no programme sponsors or early adopters. More dedicated animation resources have had to be put in place to increase the capacity of local VCS organisations to be able to apply for, and deliver, CLLD.
- The *need to make the case for future funding* including unit costs, comparison of costs, SROI and social impact. ***"You need to have a statistical evidence base of the value you have delivered."***

- In light of the review of the LDS and identified gaps, and as a consequence of COVID-19, how does CLLD reflect the circumstances of people looking to improve their working life in Wisbech now?
- For LEADER the Accountable Body has put together a business plan for the end of funding and what support will be on offer – it was suggested a similar approach could be taken for CLLD.

Accountable body perspectives on how the project was developed and is being implemented

Cambridgeshire ACRE led the early development of the project; supporting a group of public, private and voluntary sector groups that had come together to respond to the Local Enterprise Partnership [now Combined Authority's] CLLD call. Cambridgeshire ACRE supported the group with the application, building on its track record of animation support and being sub-contracted to be the Accountable Body for the LEADER programme; and because it had delivered a spectrum of programmes and was seen as a neutral and honest broker by the local community. ***“It is useful being a voluntary sector organisation as we are closer to the sector and can understand the issues that might be faced.”***

Cambridgeshire ACRE has therefore drawn on its fifteen-year LEADER experience to inform the administration and management of CLLD in the following ways:

- *The provision of a tried and tested methodology in the development of a LDS.* This included collating data, community consultation, building a LAG, and ongoing marketing and communication to build momentum.
- *The provision of approved LAG processes and procedures and training* to ensure LAG members understood their roles and responsibilities before the project started.
- *Matching EU and DWP application processes with the perspective of applicants*, many of whom have been small voluntary groups unfamiliar with European programmes. If/where required, Cambridgeshire ACRE has been able to provide groups with support around charity law, funding, and governance, enabling them to feel more confident engaging with the project.
- To manage the *provider pipeline* Cambridgeshire ACRE reviewed RPA guidance on the success rate of expressions of interest and their conversion rate into full applications and approvals. This informed the EOI stage in being open and transparent about the opportunities around CLLD while balancing the ability of providers to understand and go through the application process.
- *Project calls* have also been used to plan Cambridgeshire ACRE's workload. However, demand has not been an issue – and this may be specific to geography and Wisbech as a town (e.g. larger regional providers showed an interest then decided because of match funding and involvement in BBO not to apply to CLLD), a lack of capacity in local groups to run a CLLD funded project, and/or no main applicant coming forward to manage a partnership project with multiple providers.

From April 2020 providers have been able to submit monthly claims to the Accountable Body [rather than quarterly]. This is because cash flow has been an issue for some providers. For the Accountable Body ***“this is about how we manage cash flow as for our own payments from DWP we've just been paid for Quarter 2 June 2019...you need a very healthy reserve to run this programme.”*** The Accountable Body also noted that they ***“need to manage the risk in checking the claims and to manage the risk of***

clawback. The monthly claims process for providers will make it more manageable but the accuracy of claims in some providers needs to improve as this has been a problem and slows everything up. Smaller organisations do struggle with capacity in managing CLLD and getting the claims right.” It currently takes the Accountable Body 45 days to process a claim and they can go back to a provider with queries up to this point – one LAG member suggested having timescales for going back to providers with queries **“so providers hear sooner about errors.”**

The Accountable Body has highlighted the role of the LAG in **“providing local community intelligence to support and make projects happen; whilst at the same time as questioning the outcome and impact of the work in the context of Wisbech....we [the Accountable Body], working with the LAG, have been in a much better position to facilitate Wisbech organisations who have been enabled to engage the most vulnerable participants.”** The role of LAG members in being responsible for deciding on funding applications – the bottom up approach taken to implementation and delivery – was also highlighted. **“LAG input has been important in project development and in supporting the Accountable Body to understand project potential.”**

The Accountable Body acknowledges how not being a Local Authority affected the visibility of the project early-on and the need to share achievements with colleagues in the wider public sector: **“we do need to work harder to raise the attention to the project and its approach and opportunities.”**

The Accountable Body has sought to build capacity and confidence in local voluntary groups to be apply for CLLD: **“we work with providers who may not immediately sign up to the project due to a lack of confidence or anxiety about the registration process.”**

The Accountable Body is now seeking to re-energise existing providers to meet their contracted targets and working with providers due to come on-stream to ensure they are able to hit their targets. **“In general providers tend to be over-optimistic in their projected outputs and results...we have worked with them to rethink outputs and targets and will need to do this on an ongoing basis.”** The Accountable Body acknowledges the 12-month delay at the start of the project has contributed to under-performance of the project in meeting its contracted targets and outputs.

The Accountable Body held three partnership meetings in 2019 (in May, September, and November) and has a meeting planned in September 2020. The sessions bring all the providers together and provide a key opportunity to share key updates about the project as well as information about participants, compliance, finance, publicity, and cross cutting themes. **“These events have provided an opportunity to work through practical examples that have caused issues with claim submission and how these can be easily resolved.”** They also provide the Accountable Body with opportunities to hear first-hand from providers how they can be better supported to meet the compliance requirements of the funding.

The Accountable Body is also seeking to build on the provider network meetings, and the informal support that has taken place between some providers (e.g. sharing learning plan templates), to build more formal means for peer to peer sharing and learning. **“These events have led to some peer to peer opportunities...although not as many as hoped yet. Better partnership working across providers is an area that could be further developed in meeting individual and overall project result targets and thus overall delivery.”** It was acknowledged that there can be a culture of competitiveness in the voluntary sector and that this project was working hard to overcome this and ensure true collaboration and cross referrals of participants.

What does success look like?

- CLLD builds upon a devolved funding and LAG delivery model – which is taken forward and adopted by other future funding programmes.
- The Accountable Body and LAG have improved the speed of commissioning and procurement.
- CLLD has led to an increasing focus on equality and diversity leading to action not just an awareness of these issues.

The Accountable Body is working with the LAG to consider how best to manage demand going forward given the current COVID-19 response of other national and regional programmes and funding streams. Existing providers are not showing fragility in their response to COVID-19 but organisationally some may not have been able to generate other income in the same way (e.g. through room hire, fundraising events).

What do external stakeholders think about the implementation and delivery of the project?

Stakeholders described some of the barriers facing participants as being around **“not being literate or numerate let alone having functional skills to fully participate in society”**; as well as the behavioural and cultural changes needed in participants for whom **“the mentality is it’s a deprived area and that’s why I’m out of work. The lack of ambition is quite worrying.”** **“Wisbech is seen as being isolated but it’s a place not an island.”** CLLD was seen as an approach to raising expectations, providing people with inspiration and a sense of worth. **“Some people are in low skill, low paid jobs and they are trapped in that cycle.”**

Stakeholders acknowledged that the amount of time the Accountable Body has spent on project animation had increased: **“It [project animation] didn’t have sense of direction at beginning but over last year it’s really, really grown into a far more transparent way of working...now the whole LAG is more involved and engaged...and they’ve got the right people at the table.”**

For stakeholders involved in the development of the LDS, the delay in project start led to **“losing a fair amount of ground...and then they become so busy and got blinkered with needing to deliver that it was too tightly managed and there were organisations that could have helped them target groups if they could have explained the value of CLLD....it’s more refreshed now and it’s a really good project with potential.”** Stakeholders suggested approaching smaller groups, under the radar, including

migrant groups, and how the animation work led by the Accountable Body with individual providers would reduce fear of the targets and criteria which may have put them off from applying. They also highlighted how providers need to work with participants through **“stealth – what’s in it for me?”** and how **“starting at the grassroots of communities you have to build resilience as there’s a saying that you can’t do it and you need something as an alternative that will instil change in people and galvanise communities.”**

Stakeholders highlighted the need for local groups to receive pump priming funding, for grants to be front loaded and how the payment options for CLLD (in arrears) was difficult for many community groups.

Stakeholders discussed the impact COVID-19 might have on the local economy:

“It’s set us back 5 years and that does worry me. We’re seeing mental health have a massive impact on people. The confidence of people and them being able to see themselves in a better place...we’re losing control of that.”

“All programmes need to manage changing demand – especially when furlough ends and people lose their jobs and face-to-face community provision may be limited. The ethos of provision should not be to go for the easy wins but focus on what the end users want. You [CLLD] know your client base and can provide them with the right wraparound support.”

It was suggested that CLLD could undertake further work around its strategic alignment and the added value it delivers: **“what is CLLD doing differently from other provision and who haven’t you got to yet?”**

Social Value

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a way of developing a value for less tangible outcomes funded through the project. SROI provides a more rounded view of what is being achieved (beyond meeting contracted outputs and results).

To undertake the social value analysis the evaluation team is using the [Social Value Engine \(http://socialvalueengine.com/\)](http://socialvalueengine.com/). The Engine has been developed by Rose Regeneration and East Riding of Yorkshire Council and provides a systematic and robust assessment of social value. It is accredited by Social Value UK and contains some 200+ peer-reviewed financial proxies.

Working with providers (individually and at provider network meetings), and the LAG, a list of outcomes was developed for the project and a financial proxy from the Social Value Engine assigned to each. This interim analysis of the social value delivered by the project covers the period up to Quarter 1 2020. This has involved looking, in detail, at the narrative in quarterly reports supplied by providers and to draw out not just the results they are able to claim from a contractual perspective, but also a wider analysis of all the outputs and outcomes

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arising from their work for which they have evidence. The table below sets out the results achieved so far, including indicating where some categories of outcome and associated financial proxies are still to be initiated.

CLLD project outcomes	Financial proxy from the Social Value Engine	Unit Cost (£)	Number of units so far	Impact so far	Source
Overcoming unemployment	value to an individual of moving from unemployment to a secure job	12,030	*	*	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/657492/Movement_into_employment_return_on_investment_tool.pdf
Participants in education or training	value of undertaking a part time course for work	1,584	*	*	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuing-adult-learning-comparing-wellbeing-valuation-and-contingent-valuation
Employment gained	employment gained - average increase in income	6,894	*	*	http://socialvalueengine.com/calculator/sroi_real_jobs_evaluation_accredited.pdf
Personal development	better career profile leading to increasing personal financial benefits in future	10,916	113	1,233,508	https://ella-foundation.org/stage-2-predictive-sroi-report-study/
Better economic circumstances from learning	employment gained - average increase in income	6,894	8	55,152	http://socialvalueengine.com/calculator/sroi_real_jobs_evaluation_accredited.pdf
Micro business set up costs	average cost of starting a micro-business	49,503	*	*	http://socialvalueengine.com/calculator/Average%20cost%20of%20starting%20a%20business.pdf
Participation of employers	employment incentive costs	4,674	*	*	http://socialvalueengine.com/calculator/DWPthe-work-programme.pdf

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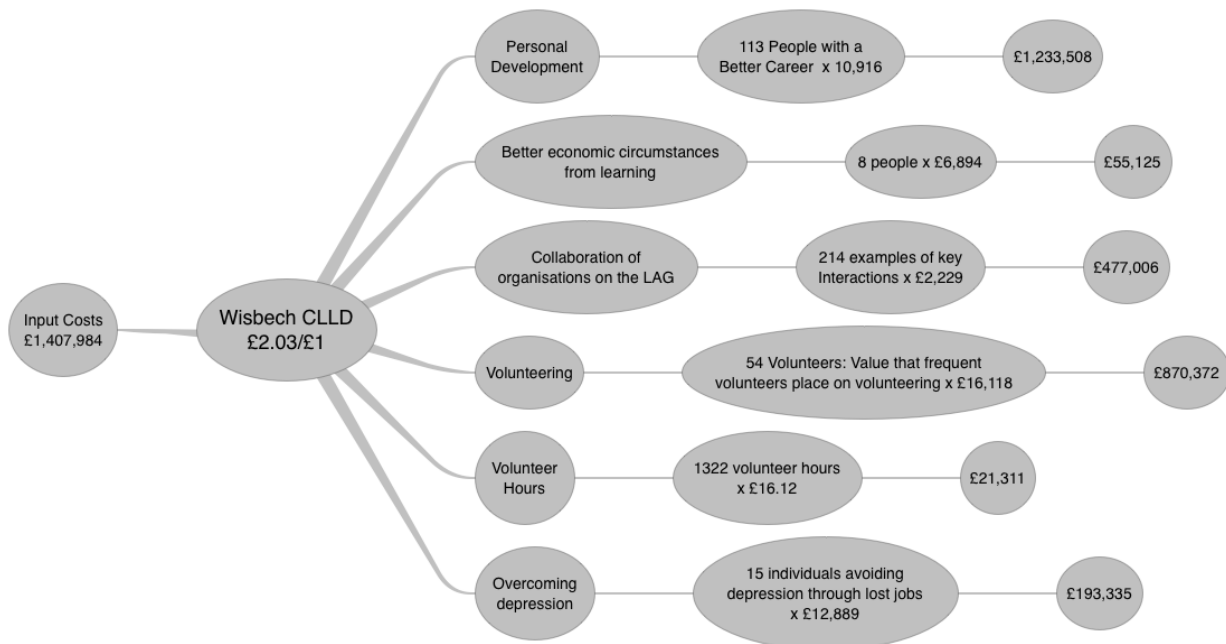
CLLD project outcomes	Financial proxy from the Social Value Engine	Unit Cost (£)	Number of units so far	Impact so far	Source
Collaboration of organisations on LAG	cost of time spent collaborating	2,229	214	477,006	http://socialvalueengine.com/calculator/CCVG_SROI_report_fv_120214.pdf
Volunteering	value that frequent volunteers place on volunteering	16,118	54	870,372	http://socialvalueengine.com/calculator/WP112.pdf
Overcoming depression	cost of depression (lost employment)	12,889	15	193,335	https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/Paying-the-Price-the-cost-of-mental-health-care-England-2026-McCrone-Dhanasiri-Patel-Knapp-Lawton-Smith-Kings-Fund-May-2008_0.pdf
Volunteer hours	value placed by a local authority on volunteering	16.12	1322	21,311	http://socialvalueengine.com/calculator/Voluntary%20Sector.pdf
* indicates that evidence of this outcome was not available when the interim analysis was carried out					

These figures have then been divided by the inputs i.e., the amount of funding drawn down up to Quarter 1 2020 (£1,407,984).

At this interim stage, the analysis shows that for every £1.00 invested in the project £2.03 of gross social value is being generated.

This information is summarised in the diagram over the page.

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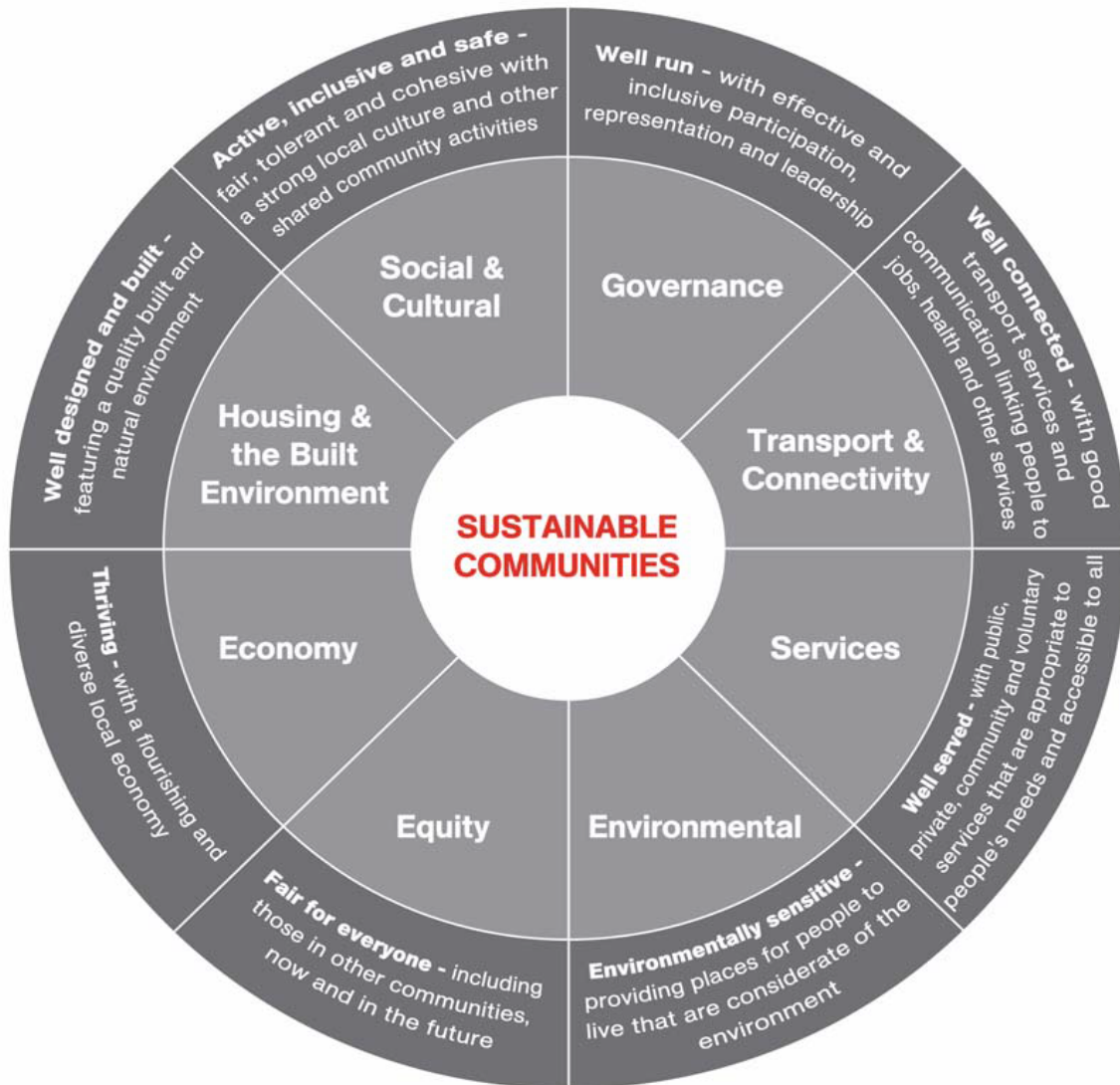
The social value is currently low – this is due to a lack of evidence from providers, the Accountable Body confirming existing evidence with some providers, and/or the relatively high cost of the project compared to the outcomes that have presently been achieved.

The current analysis reflects the gross amount of social value generated (i.e., everyone’s contributions) rather than the net amount (i.e., CLLD’s unique contribution to achieving these outcomes). This is because the interim analysis has not been deflated to take account of:

- *Deadweight*: what proportion of the outcomes would have happened if CLLD had not taken place?
- *Attribution*: what proportion might other organisations/activities have contributed towards these outcomes?
- *Drop off*: what proportion of the outcomes will deteriorate over time?
- *Displacement*: has CLLD competed with other initiatives to achieve these outcomes and displaced similar/other activities as a result?

To estimate a percentage for each of these deflators we will work with providers (individually and through provider network meetings) and then triangulate this information with the LAG.

The Social Value Engine uses the Bristol Accord to see how a project is building a more sustainable community, somewhere where people want to live and work (both now and in the future). The Bristol Accord was developed in 2005 when the UK Government worked with all Member States to agree a common understanding of what makes communities sustainable. A sustainable community should be safe, fair, thriving, environmentally sensitive, well connected and well designed and built:



We have plotted how the social value being delivered by CLLD so far [those outcomes where evidence is currently available] aligns to each of the eight domains of the Bristol Accord:

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Accord domain	Value of Impact (£)
1. Active, Inclusive and Safe	1,085,018
7. Thriving	1,287,660
8. Well Served	477,006

The project is currently delivering the most value in the seventh domain of the Accord (thriving) – this is because CLLD is seeking to support participants to move into good quality jobs, training and learning opportunities. The project is also delivering returns in the first domain (active, inclusive and safe) because it aims to offer a sense of community and belonging, and deliver social inclusion, equality of opportunity and increase participant life chances. The project is also delivering outcomes tagged in the eighth domain (well served) in bringing together public, private and voluntary organisations to offer services that are accessible to the local community. As more evidence is collected about the outcomes CLLD is achieving, more domains of the Accord may be included in the analysis.

Evaluation question: what outcomes and achievements are participants, providers, LAG members and the Accountable Body gaining from participating in CLLD?

CLLD takes a person centred approach which means it focuses on identifying the barriers that participants face and seeks to help them overcome these so they move further towards the labour market or into work. This can lead some providers to want to work with a number of participants rather than being focused on who they need to work with in order to be able to meet the outputs and results CLLD is expected to deliver overall for DWP.

Providers are often working with participants who are unlikely to, or unwilling to, participate in other employability initiatives and/or they fall under the radar of some mainstream programmes. This includes supporting participants who are in low-wage, low-skilled jobs who want to improve their working lives. The LAG is focused on the impact of the project on participants in the longer term: does it deliver results? Where does it move people towards or around their employability? The LAG is working with the Accountable Body to ensure providers are re-energised and on-track to meet the targets and results that were agreed with them at the outset.

Across CLLD nationally the Accountable Body is usually a Local Authority. Cambridgeshire ACRE has drawn on its LEADER experience to oversee the management and administration of the project – having a RCC lead the project has enabled it to strengthen VCS and community group participation in the project; and moved the dialogue away from providers wanting to work with the same beneficiaries and being internally focused (to reach their own targets) to working more collaboratively.

The project is, however, significantly under-achieving on the overall targets agreed with DWP at the outset – supporting 336 participants so far [to end of Q3 2020] against an overall target of 1,184 by the end of the project; and this is accompanied by participants needing to achieve education/training, employment or job search results.

More recently the focus of the Accountable Body and LAG has been moving away from spend towards how these targets and results might be achieved. The Accountable Body has submitted a project change form to DWP, requesting a 12-month extension to both the activity end date. Clearly a significant amount of work now needs to be done by the Accountable Body, LAG and existing and new providers to work towards achieving these targets and results.

The focus of the LAG is also on using the evaluation as part of its work to make the case for future investment. As more information on outcomes is submitted by providers and confirmed by the Accountable Body, an analysis of the social value generated [the net contribution of the project to these outcomes rather than the gross/everyone's contributions] could form part of this business case.

IN FOCUS: PROCESS FINDINGS

This section of the report describes the processes and systems used to set up the project and how these have been implemented and refined over time. These findings are based upon:

- Meetings with the Accountable Body to understand how the operating systems were developed.
- Meetings with the Accountable Body and providers to understand how these operating systems work – through an applicant/provider journey.
- Collating examples of how the operating systems have been refined and improved since the project started [a Strategic Added Value log].
- A desktop review of 34 employability related strategic documents.
- The analysis of additional data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the impact of COVID-19 on labour markets.

What systems and processes have been set up?

The Accountable Body uses the Microsoft suite – windows, excel, word – and loads information about the project onto a shared server, with all files password protected. The Accountable Body also uses QuickBooks, an electronic accounting system. These systems are used for other projects at Cambridgeshire ACRE and were designed to meet guidance from DWP (i.e., that accounting systems and software should demonstrate where European Structural and Investment Funds is being spent; evidence the costs incurred; and be suitable for checking and authorising claims etc.)

Information from these systems is used to compile a progress report which is submitted to DWP on a quarterly basis (e.g. narrative around targets/milestones, costs, outcomes; and in preparing the target and project outcome annex, participant monitoring spreadsheet, financial transactions list spreadsheet, and current list of staff working on the project).

The following in-house systems and processes have been made available for CLLD:

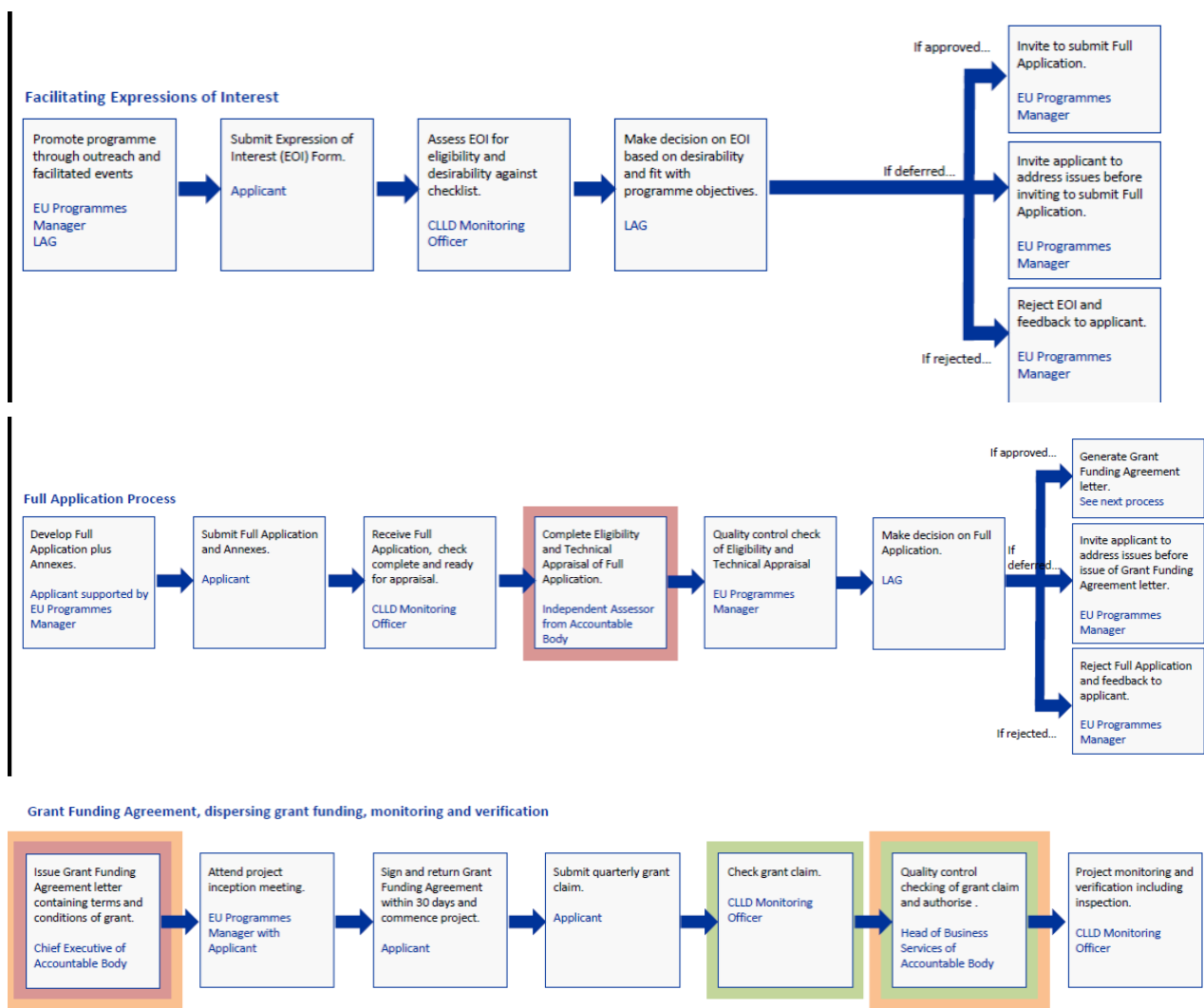
- *LEADER systems, process and forms* – pre-award paperwork for CLLD (e.g. EOI form, eligibility and technical checklist, invitation to full application template) and the technical appraisal form used by the Accountable Body all derive from LEADER. **“It was seen a cost effective to use the skills of our staff team to manage two EU programmes...in terms of the balance in the ebb and flow of the workload.”**
- *BBO systems, processes, and forms* – award/post-award paperwork (e.g. grant funding agreement checklist, funding agreement, data compliance questionnaire, entry and exit forms) for CLLD have been developed from those used for BBO.
- *QuickBooks* - this allows records to be created for specific projects and then more detailed reports for individual providers to be created to it can be clearly seen where ESF/CLLD funding is being spent.

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For CLLD, a dedicated Excel spreadsheet is used to monitor the project pipeline and all applications in progress.

DWP set out system requirements but did not specify a particular system or supply a set of templates for Accountable Bodies. Having experience of LEADER and BBO, and links to Local Authorities, has assisted Cambridgeshire ACRE in developing existing systems to meet the requirements for CLLD.

The flowcharts below were developed by the Accountable Body in September 2018 and illustrate how providers/projects navigate these operating systems:



These flowcharts highlight the role of:

- The *project animateur* in working with applicants during the EOI and full application stages. They are often able to answer questions at the LAG meeting from members (e.g. details about previous or current activities).
- The role of the *Accountable Body* in carrying out eligibility and initial assessment checks and then providing the LAG with a narrative report of each EOI. The Accountable Body also carries out checks on full applications before they are passed to the technical appraiser. The Accountable Body manages the grant funding agreements where the LAG approves applications, and carries out an inception visit to take the applicant through the checklist and discuss reporting, claims, document retention, financial management, cash flow, eligibility of participants.
- The role of the LAG – how the project fits with the LDS (the relevance and opportunity of the application). The LAG can approve, reject or defer the EOI – if deferred the project animateur will work with the applicant who will then resubmit their EOI. The LAG receives EOIs and full applications 1-2 weeks before a LAG meeting.
- The role of the *technical appraiser* in scoring a full application – information about the project including costs, milestones, outputs and risks; strategic fit; value for money; need for the project; financial assessment; cross cutting themes and delivery approach are all considered. The Accountable Body will also carry out technical check between the EOI and full application to confirm there are no significant changes or variances. The appraiser (employed by Cambridgeshire ACRE and who appraises other programmes including LEADER) then makes a recommendation to approve, approve with recommendations, defer or reject alongside the score.
- The role of *provider network meetings* – these enable the Accountable Body to share information and explain processes and systems to all successful applicants in addition to the individual inception visit. A similar approach has been followed in other/previous Cambridgeshire ACRE projects and has been adapted for CLLD.
- The role of the *Managing Authority* – all templates and documents were shared with DWP at the inception visit. The Accountable Body notifies DWP of all/any changes to templates and send these to DWP for approval.

What refinements and improvements have been made to project systems and processes so far?

The following examples of Strategic Added Value (SAV) have been captured so far:

- The *application forms* used for CLLD were developed in February/March 2018 with assistance from the LAG and then piloted. LAG members then began asking the same/similar questions about the applications at meetings so the Accountable Body added these to the templates (e.g. asking for information about match funding, a rationale for justifying the number of participants the applicant will support). This was viewed as putting a potential applicant in the right mind-set in knowing what the LAG wanted to understand and it has reduced the workload of the Accountable Body and led to

efficiencies because they do not have to go back to applicants with a series of questions. It has also become easier for the LAG to make decisions as all the information they require can be found in the application form.

- A number of providers raised concerns about having a printed *participant registration document*, writing on it and then having to type it up or send it to the Accountable Body to be typed up. The Accountable Body developed a spreadsheet with this information presented in an easier format (on one sheet so not multiple pages to navigate and fill in).
- The LAG sometimes request additional documents at the application stage (e.g. job descriptions, organogram). *Templates* have been developed by the Accountable Body and can be shared with applicants/providers as part of the application process.
- A dedicated project *animateur* has been appointed to support applicants to understand and complete EOI and full applications. This is viewed as important by the LAG and Accountable Body in building the capacity and expertise of local VCS organisations to participate in CLLD.
- The role of the Accountable Body *inception visit* to each provider to help them understand how to complete and retain documents in a given format (e.g. mileage, expenses, VAT receipts). The Accountable Body has also developed an *ESF template time sheet* which it sends to providers.
- The Accountable Body has produced '*project monitoring guidance*' for successful providers. This builds upon the inception visits and clearly explains the processes providers are expected to comply with in monitoring their activities, outputs and budget.
- The *encryption software* for sharing participant data and information was identified by a provider and then assessed by the Accountable Body. This free, open source, solution is now used by Cambridgeshire ACRE and some providers.
- DWP has made changes to the *narrative report* Cambridgeshire ACRE submits on a quarterly basis requesting a more detailed breakdown of financial expenditure – to compare actual to forecast on a quarterly, annual and overall basis. The cross-cutting themes were covered in the narrative report but DWP subsequently requested that these be reported against the delivery plan. Both require existing information to be presented in a different format and have generated additional work for the Accountable Body.
- When the Managing Authority makes changes, the Accountable Body provides applicants/providers with time to implement these.

What insights do data and documents provide?

The LAG, Accountable Body, providers and stakeholders have all highlighted the importance of aligning CLLD to other employability provision. The evaluation team undertook a review of key articles pertinent to the particular role that CLLD can play, from a policy perspective, in enhancing employability outcomes. 34 articles were identified from other OECD countries, the European Union, national Government and academic journals. This review indicates the importance of CLLD in addressing '*hidden unemployment*.' The literature also

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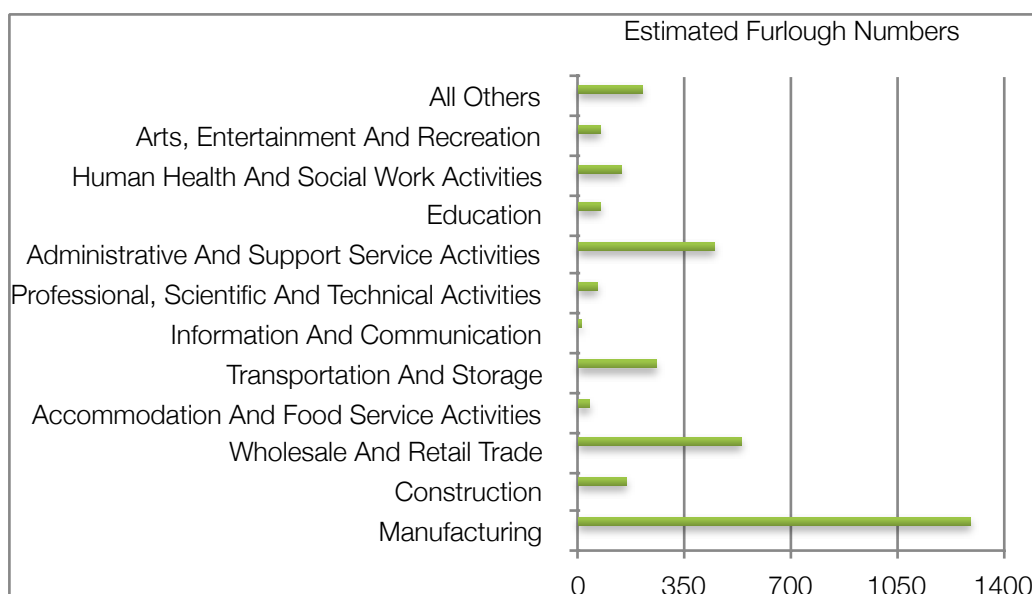
emphasises a need to prevent widening inequalities and marginalising disadvantaged groups further from the labour market. The review provides the following insights for CLLD:

- National approaches to economic development have, over the last decade, focused more on managing growth than necessarily responding to unemployment. This emphasis may change going forward in response to COVID-19 and higher levels of unemployment.
- The UK's Industrial Strategy, which underpins national and regional policy in the context of employment, makes no direct reference to economic inactivity and contains few references to unemployment.
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority view the Fens as a sub-economy [based on travel to work patterns, supply chain mapping and housing market analysis] in highlighting the lower labour market performance related to the accessibility of both jobs and training. The CA is seeking to develop initiatives to address skills gaps, develop bespoke lifelong learning, strengthen the agri-tech sector, provide more start up and scale up space for businesses, deepen business networks and improve infrastructure (e.g. rail link).

CLLD participants and providers will provide useful local insights to situate the project within this broader and evolving policy context.

In response to COVID-19, some additional data analysis has been carried out on levels of furlough and jobseekers allowance.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the percentage of workers on furlough (May 2020) helps us to understand the number of staff on furlough in each key sector in Wisbech. These are estimates based on national percentages. This information suggests that, overall, the number of staff furloughed in Wisbech is 23%, 5% below the national average. There are, however, high levels of furloughing in some sectors including manufacturing and wholesale/retail which may have longer term implications for the town.



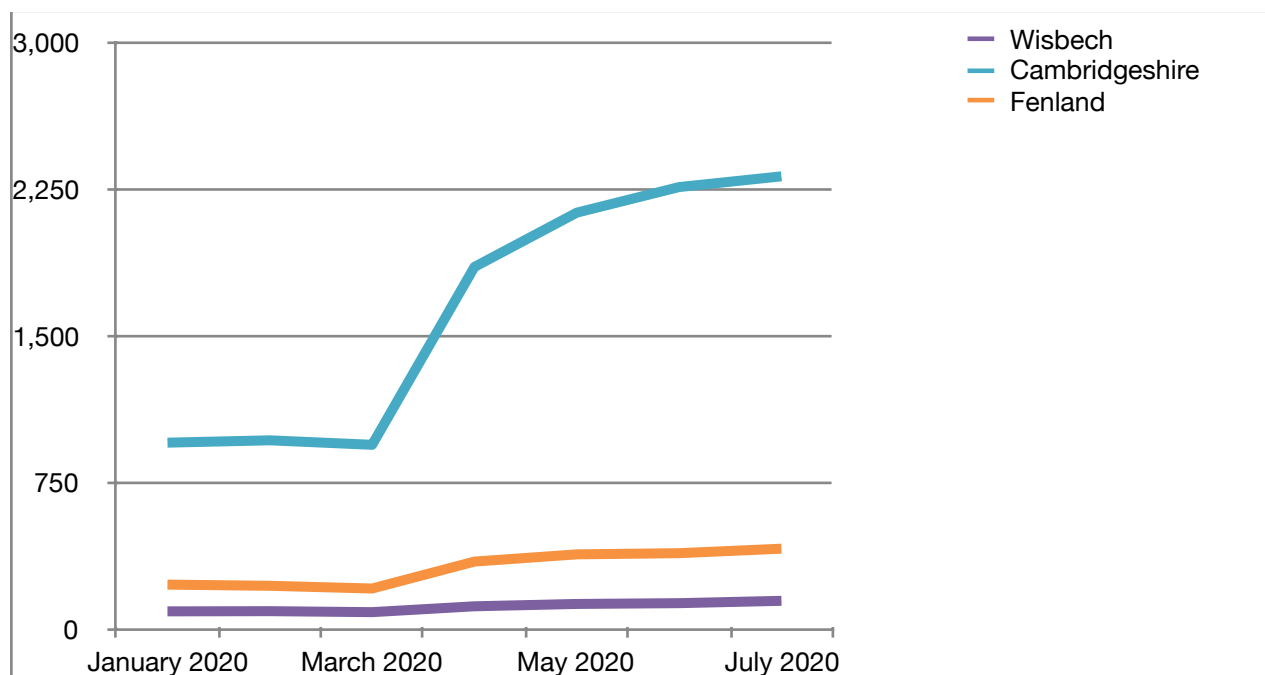
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Sector	% on furlough
Manufacturing	31.1%
Construction	46.2%
Wholesale And Retail Trade	21.5%
Accommodation And Food Service Activities	73.3%
Transportation And Storage	32.0%
Information And Communication	13.0%
Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities	13.2%
Administrative And Support Service Activities	31.3%
Education	6.8%
Human Health And Social Work Activities	8.5%
Arts, Entertainment And Recreation	69.9%
All Industries	28.4%

The information below shows changes to the number of people claiming job seekers allowance. The figures suggest that Wisbech has similar levels of claimants to the national average, but fewer claimants when compared to Fenland and Cambridgeshire.

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	% Increase
Wisbech	91	92	87	117	129	133	145	59%
Cambridgeshire	955	967	944	1,855	2,133	2,264	2,319	243%
Fenland	228	222	208	346	383	389	412	181%
England	138,689	137,338	136,674	225,698	248,496	258,928	295,925	51%

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The complete data profile can be found in Annex 1.

Evaluation question: are the project's systems and processes comprehensive and robust?

- The systems were designed to meet guidance from DWP (i.e., accounting systems and software required to demonstrate how ESF funding is being spent; evidence of costs incurred; checking and authorising claims etc.). The systems used for CLLD build upon the BBO and LEADER systems already being used by Cambridgeshire ACRE and include the use of an Excel spreadsheet to monitor all applications.
- Some of the CLLD systems have been streamlined since the project began (e.g. ensuring information the LAG requires is contained in the EOI and full application forms; that providers are clearer on the monitoring requirements). Some of these refinements have been made in response to changes from DWP; with the Accountable Body then liaising with providers to implement these across the project.
- The Accountable Body carries out an inception visit to brief each successful provider on the system and process requirements. Some providers continue to submit incomplete or inaccurate documentation and where common themes are identified these could be picked up at provider network meetings. More recently, the Accountable Body has put additional resource into ensuring providers are clearer on the paperwork requirements (e.g. regular update phone calls, monitoring guidance form).
- The current systems do not formally measure the impact CLLD has on the participants over 6 months, 1 year, after they have exited. CLLD currently only looks at what participants are doing within 4 weeks of their last activity. Do they sustain employment, use the training and learning to progress? Some providers keep in touch with participants that have exited and it may be possible to gather some information indirectly on longer term outcomes and log this on project systems.
- The strategic document review and additional data analysis highlight the important role CLLD plays in addressing hidden unemployment – and how COVID-19 may impact on the project moving forward. Information could be collected from providers and logged on the systems to capture the role the project is playing in this wider context.

IN FOCUS: ECONOMIC FINDINGS

This section of the report reviews how much funding was requested from DWP and how much money has been spent so far – and whether the project is being delivered efficiently and economically. These findings are based upon financial information submitted between the Accountable Body and DWP and discussions with providers.

How much does the project cost and how much funding has been drawn down so far?

When the budget for the project was set in the LDS Wisbech CLLD covered the period 2016 to 2022 and was based upon a total package of £2.1 million – with £1.05 million from ESF and £1.05 million from the public sector.

The three tables below show (1) a breakdown of the total project cost between Management & Administration and projects; (2) a breakdown of contracted projects and projects in the pipeline - indicating the remaining funding available for projects; and (3) total expenditure to Q2 2020.

Table 1: a breakdown of Contracted Total Project Cost between M&A Costs and Local Grant Fund Q2 2020

	ESIF Grant	Public Match Funding	Total Public Expenditure (a) + (b)	Private Match Funding	Total Project Cost (a) + (b) + (d)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
ESF Project (M&A)	£178,197.00	£178,197.00	£356,394.00	£	£356,394.00
ESF Project Local Grant Fund	£871,803.00	£871,803.00	£1,743,606.00	£	£1,743,606.00
ESF Project Total Project Cost	£1,050,000.00	£1,050,000.00	£2,100,000.00	£	£2,100,000.00
Total ESF Project Cost	£1,050,000.00	£1,050,000.00	£2,100,000.00	£	£2,100,000.00

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Table 2: a breakdown of grant funding allocated to contracted projects, projects in the pipeline and grant funding remaining

	Contracted Projects (i.e., a signed SLA / MoU in place)	Project in Pipeline (any applications received which are still in the AB's assessment/ appraisal process)	Remaining Local Grant Fund	Total Local Grant Fund (a) + (b) + (c)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
ESF	£628,179.27	£124,953.39	£118,670.34	£871,803.00
Public Match	£689,946.10	£124,803.63	£ 57,053.27	£871,803.00
Private Match	£	£	£	£
Total	£1,318,125.37	£249,757.02	£175,723.61	£1,743,606.00*

Table 3: actual total expenditure to date

	ESIF Grant	Public Match Funding	Total Public Expenditure (a) + (b)	Total Private Match Funding	Total Project Cost (a) + (b) + (d)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
ESF	£128,758.90	£128,758.90	£257,477.75	£	£257,477.75
Total	£128,758.90	£128,758.90	£257,477.75	£	£257,477.75
M&A Costs					
Total M&A Costs incurred to date:				£175,883.13	
Total M&A Costs claimed to date:				£175,883.13	

Of the £1,743,606.00 of ESF grant available to providers (table 1); £628,179.27 has been allocated, with £124,953.39 of potential grant in the pipeline/being progressed and £118,670.34 remaining (table 2).

Public match funding comes from any organisation which receives over 50% of its core funding from central or local government. Registered charities are also classified as public match funders. In-kind contributions can be in the form of volunteer time or donations of land, office space, materials etc. A monitoring spreadsheet details the ESF grant and match funding for each provider and this is monitored in real time.

These tables also show actual M&A costs for the Accountable Body: £175,883.13 to date (table 3) against a budget of £356,394.00 (table 1). Cambridgeshire ACRE was able to apply for CLLD because of match funding provided by Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council – contributing £107,000, £53,500, and £17,697 respectively over the five-year period. This reduced the financial risk to Cambridgeshire ACRE as a smaller charity and provided assurance that Management and Administration costs could be met.

The Accountable Body has indicated how it has faced a length delay in receiving its grant payments from the Managing Authority: ***“DWP are well behind schedule and large Local Authorities can cope with such payment delays. It has been a policy [of the Accountable Body] to pay providers as soon as possible as they are small organisations with limited cash reserves to fall back on. Cambridgeshire ACRE is cash flowing the project by at least 9-months expenditure which is not a desirable situation.”***

The Accountable Body has submitted a project change form to DWP. The request is for a 12-month extension to both the activity end date and the financial completion date, moving from 30 June 2021 to 30 June 2022. The request follows a delay to the start of the project (with the Funding Agreement signed in December 2017, 12 months after the start date; the project inception visit taking place in February 2018 and signed off in October 2018), the level of engagement with providers / local delivery organisations (contracting and the claims process for CLLD and the extension to the BBO project with both targeting similar participants), and the anticipated lifespan of projects in the pipeline (with some potential applicants indicating they require a 24-month project period). The extension period is for delivery only, with no additional budget for M&A or providers. The Accountable Body is awaiting written confirmation from DWP that its change request has been approved.

How reactive is the project to meeting participant needs?

The project so far has been undersubscribed, with no waiting period for participants wanting to join.

The Accountable Body has sought to build the provider and participant pipeline by employing a member of staff from a neighbouring Rural Community Council to specifically undertake project animation activities.

Is the project offering value-for-money?

The Magenta Book recommends that evaluation methods compare benefits to the costs of interventions. This includes analysis that compares the costs of an intervention with the costs of alternative ways of producing the same or similar outputs.

In January 2017 DWP undertook a value-for-money analysis of the outputs, results and financial plan set out in the LDS:

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Proposed Wisbech CLLD Outputs	Number	% of participants	ESF Unit Cost	Variation	% of GCGP Target	ESF Cost	Notes
Number of participants	1183	100.00%	887.57	-90.40	35.10%		Good VFM
Number of participants that are men	592	50.04%	1,773.65	-17.53	32.17%		Based on 50/50
Number of participants that are women	591	49.96%	1,776.65	-377.45	38.63%		Based on 50/50
Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	521	44.04%	2,015.36	618.84	22.08%	462,426.04	Slightly lower VFM
Inactive	662	55.96%	1,586.10	-2,337.44	78.81%	587,573.96	Excellent VFM
Participants over 50 years of age	578	48.86%	1,816.61	-3,769.45	97.97%		Excellent VFM
Participants from ethnic minorities	177	14.96%	5,932.20	439.25	29.50%		Slightly lower VFM
Participants with disabilities	95	8.03%	11,052.63	5,902.98	14.84%		Lower VFM

Proposed Wisbech CLLD Results	% of Participants	Target	ESF Unit Cost	Variation
Participants in education or training on leaving	20.03%	237	4,430.38	-716.86
Unemployed participants in employment, including self-employment on leaving	9.98%	52	8,892.81	2,780.47
Inactive participants into employment, or job search on leaving	4.98%	33	17,805.27	14,432.94

The Accountable Body undertook a value-for-money exercise once the project was approved and the grant funding agreement signed with DWP. This involved dividing the total grant available to providers by the total number of participants i.e., £871,803 divided by 1,184 which delivers a cost of £736 per participant. This is used as a guide by the Accountable Body in working with potential applicants to see how their costs fit with the £736 per participant figure.

This information and the calculations carried out by DWP provide some unit costs and benchmarking information which can be developed as part of the evaluation going forward.

Providers have estimated the costs of their projects by taking into account: staff and resource costs, how many participants they thought they could support, access to match funding, and experience of running similar initiatives. Most providers are monitoring their budgets on a monthly basis and are on track with what they thought their costs would be and to ensure they are collating financial information to include with their claims for the Accountable Body. As CLLD funding is paid retrospectively providers highlighted the importance of managing cash flow – and needing good financial processes in place to monitor the budget, building in sufficient admin/support staff time to help to do this.

It is not currently possible to estimate the value-for-money delivered by CLLD in practice as information on spend by provider alongside the outputs they have delivered for participants and under which LDS package is not available.

Evaluation question: how much does the project cost and is it being implemented economically and efficiently?

Cambridgeshire ACRE was able to apply for CLLD funding because of match funding provided by Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council. This reduced the financial risk to Cambridgeshire ACRE as a smaller charity acting as the Accountable Body; and provided assurance that Management and Administration costs could be met.

More work is needed to confirm how much funding has been allocated by LDS package, by provider; by participant and according to whether a participant achieves an employment, education/training, or job search result. When these figures are available these costs can be compared with the DWP value-for-money analysis and benchmarked with similar employability programmes (e.g. BBO).

The evaluation team would also suggest running a ‘unit cost’ session at a provider network meeting to understand if/how they developed a cost per participant at the application stage and how this amount compares to the implementation stage.

Taken as a collective, this will enhance the LAG’s business case for future investment alongside the information being collated under the impact chapter.

WHERE NEXT?

This section of the report presents some overarching reflections from the evaluation so far and provides an overview of planned activities over the remainder of the project.

What can be scaled up and does anything need refining?

The Accountable Body and LAG are making a shift from a focus on spend (and contracting) and the provider pipeline to a focus on achieving the overall targets and results agreed with DWP. ***“We are reaching a tipping point between animation and supporting providers to meet outputs and targets.”***

- What do the current achievements of targets and results tell us about the capacity of local organisations to participate in CLLD? ***“Our targets are unrealistic and we’ll see how it goes”***
“We’ve made some progress but the targets...the number of participants per quarter is high and we’re slightly behind.”
- What support can the LAG and Accountable Body now put in place to further ensure providers achieve the targets they set in their applications and thus ensure the deliverability of the project overall?

The Accountable Body and LAG recently reviewed the relationship between the development needs and priorities set out in the LDS [the 4 packages] and the implementation of projects by providers; identifying gaps around under-employment, healthier lifestyles, digital inclusion and sustainable transport. The Accountable Body and LAG are also asking existing providers how the project can respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19. The LDS was developed 6 years ago and could be reviewed alongside the current picture, existing initiatives, gaps over the next 12 months to inform any successor project: ***“the identity [of the project] has changed; it was going to be about if, how businesses could be involved but that went down another route.”*** Will the recent measures put in place by the Accountable Body and LAG (e.g. animation support, monthly claims process) encourage new local organisations to apply to CLLD to fill gaps?

The Accountable Body and LAG could work more closely with providers to collect information about the project to make the business/investment case for further funding e.g. understanding the unit costs, comparison/benchmarking costs with similar initiatives, measuring outcomes (SROI) and social impact (e.g. case studies, learning plans, participant journeys collated by providers). ***“We have 16+ years of data that demonstrates how employment skills help to improve their quality of life...income...the whole person.”*** ***“We keep in touch with some of the participants we have worked with...so we can continue to see the progress they are making.”***

It is also important to continue to build the provider network to (a) provide clarity on how to complete paperwork – with examples of correctly completed forms and handouts; (b) to emphasise the importance of delivering the targets set for the project; (c) to raise awareness of the CLLD and other activities undertaken by providers to encourage greater collaboration; and (d) to inform future initiatives.

What does success look like – and ensuring project legacy?

Providers have supported participants who have experienced long term difficulties in finding or sustaining work:

“We wanted to support people not being supported through other programmes such as people in part-time, unfulfilling and poorly paid work...and people who had fallen through the system.”

“Sustainability for us is not the CLLD workstream; the driver is that individual clients are in a better situation than when they arrived...whenever someone leaves us they leave better equipped to face life.”

Some providers are putting in place plans for when their CLLD funding ends (e.g. applying for other funding pots) and/or are formalising some of activities put in place to deliver CLLD (e.g. growing their volunteer programme). The provider network meetings present an opportunity to continue partnership working in the VCS beyond the delivery period for CLLD.

The Accountable Body and LAG are working together to see how the impact of CLLD can be captured and used to make the case for future funding (e.g. developing a statistical evidence base of the value CLLD has delivered). For the LEADER programme Cambridgeshire ACRE has put together a business plan for the end of funding and what support will be on offer: does CLLD deliver results – how/does it move people further towards or into work? What good practice and learning can inform future/forthcoming employability initiatives?

CLLD has provided a better understanding of the capacity and capability of local VCS organisations– how can this learning can inform future projects [project pipeline and project delivery, such as the need for infrastructure and an intermediary to support potential providers?] How can learning about the balance between what resources CLLD has (its funding and staffing) and the capacity of VCS organisations (to apply and deliver CLLD) inform successor projects?

Taking a “bottom up approach” and working through a LAG is the basis of CLLD as a model, how can the devolved funding and LDS approach be built into future initiatives? ***“The LDS could be a shorter, sharper document written with local communities about what the issues are now and in the next 2-3 years...and make it a working document.”***

Future evaluation work

In response to these interim findings the focus of the evaluation going forward is on:

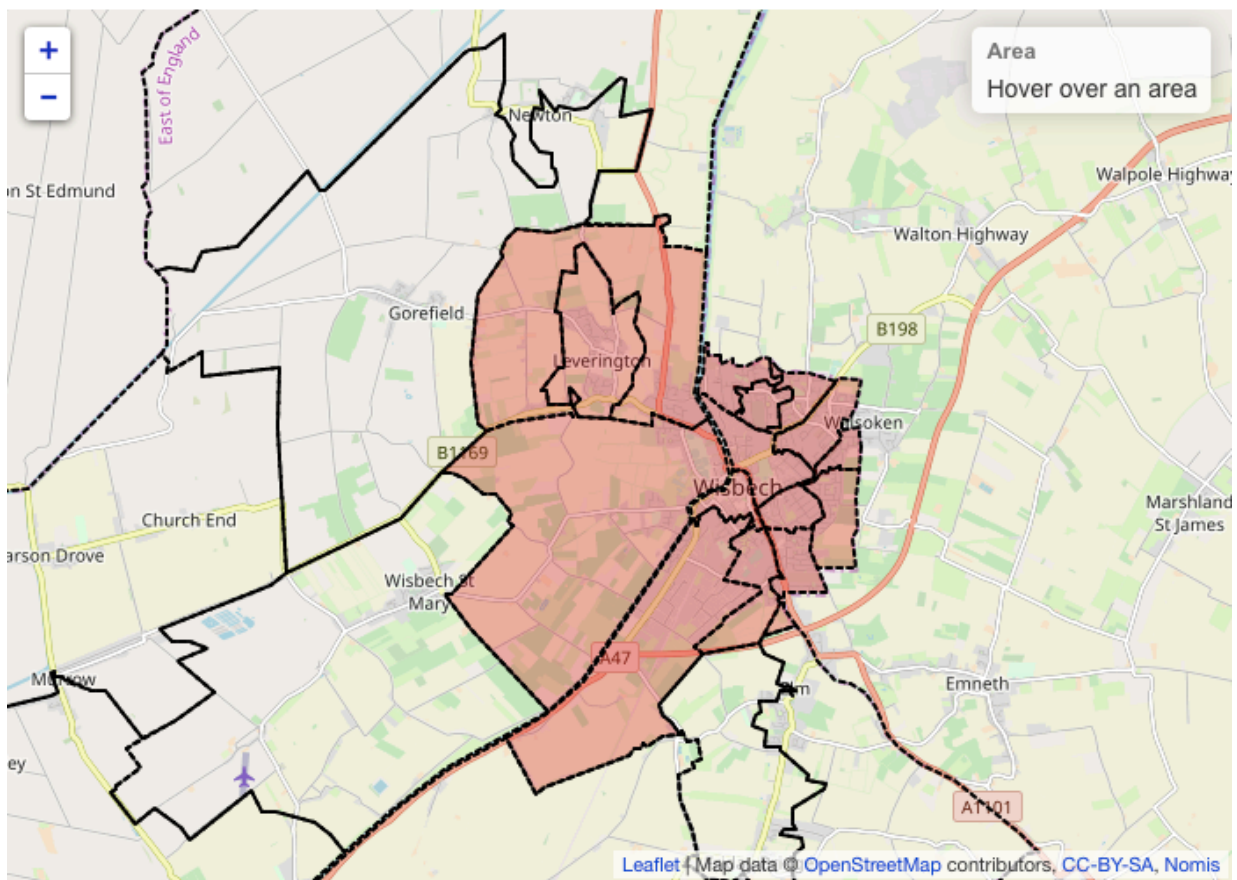
- **Participant voices:** observation of group activities and one-to-one support with participants, including interviews, to understand the difference CLLD is making to individual participants (in the short and longer term).

- Enhancing the current **evidence base**: continuing to update the data profile, developing/ understanding the unit costs of CLLD (by LDS package, provider, participant and project type), benchmarking these with similar initiatives and measuring outcomes (SROI). This also highlights the added value that the LAG and local providers bring (e.g. match funding, volunteering, using CLLD learning to inform other initiatives within their organisation).
- **Strategic context/alignment**: reviewing how the project aligns to current and planned employability initiatives – and to changes in the local labour market (including local impact and responses to COVID-19).

As part of this work the evaluation team would like to continue to attend provider network meetings and LAG meetings. We would also like to hold and sharing and learning event in 2021 to triangulate the findings from the evaluation.

ANNEX 1: DATA PROFILE

Introduction - This profile provides a comparison between key socio-economic indicators for the agreed population catchment area for the proposed development and England. This is defined by the following statistical units of geography: Wisbech lower super output areas: 001A & 001C and 002 and 003 covering all LSOAs. A map of the area is set out below:



National Insurance

The assessment of the number of national insurance number registrations from people outside the UK gives an indication of the scale of the overseas workforce. The table below shows this as a percentage of the whole population and the 16-64 age groups for every local authority area in Cambridgeshire in 2018. This demonstrates that the Fenland proportion of overseas workers assessed in terms of this indicator is not exceptional although it is marginally higher than for the other districts apart from Cambridge.

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Local Authority	NINO	Population	%	% 16-64
Cambridge	4342	125,758	0.035	0.049
East Cambridgeshire	697	89,362	0.008	0.013
Fenland	959	101,491	0.009	0.016
Huntingdonshire	701	177,352	0.004	0.006
South Cambridgeshire	1001	157,519	0.006	0.011
ONS 2018				

% Live births

The percentage of live births with parents from outside the UK is an indicator of the scale of second generation migrants and the incidence of migrants themselves. Analysis of this data demonstrates that proportion of live births with a non UK parent in Fenland district is not exceptional compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire.

	Live Births	Live Births with one parent born outside UK		Live births with both parents born outside UK		Live births where one or both parents are born outside UK	
Cambridgeshire	6,817	903	13.2	1,542	22.6	2,445	35.9
Cambridge	1,417	276	19.5	597	42.1	873	61.6
East Cambridgeshire	872	94	10.8	136	15.6	230	26.4
Fenland	1,049	62	5.9	212	20.2	274	26.1
Huntingdonshire	1,832	227	12.4	292	15.9	519	28.3
South Cambridgeshire	1,647	244	14.8	305	18.5	549	33.3
ONS 2018							

Qualifications

The data on district level qualifications show that Fenland has a lower level of higher qualifications than the East of England and GB averages.

	Fenland (Level)	Fenland (%)	East (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 And Above	13,700	23.0	35.2	39.3

WISBECH COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

	Fenland (Level)	Fenland (%)	East (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ3 And Above	25,700	43.2	53.1	57.8
NVQ2 And Above	37,400	62.9	72.8	74.9
NVQ1 And Above	50,400	84.7	86.0	85.4
Other Qualifications	4,600	7.7	6.5	6.8
No Qualifications	4,500	7.6	7.4	7.8
Annual Population Survey 2018				

Food

The food chain in the Fens data from the NFU document (see https://www.nfuonline.com/pcs-pdfs/food-farming-in-the-fens_web/) indicates the scale of food growing and processing in the wider Fenland area which further bears out the scale of these sectors in the context of the Wisbech labour market.

Stage of chain	Employees	GVA £m
Agriculture	13,414	432
Agricultural supply industry	2,968	170
Professional services	1,288	49
The commercial food chain	26,040	1,634
Food retailing and catering	36,000	800
Total	79,710	3,085

Agriculture

The data from the Agricultural Census (2016) demonstrates that farming is an important but not huge proportion of the jobs in Fenland. Agriculture comprises 2,000 out of 34,000 jobs; however employment in agriculture is 6 times higher than the England average making this an important sector of the local economy.

WISBECH COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

	Employees 2013	Employees 2016	% Difference
Fenland	2,024	2,070	2
England	295,563	301,507	2
Fenland Farmed Area	40,969	41,771	2
Eastern Farmed Area	1,370,168	1,397,545	2
England Farmed Area	9,086,480	9,120,623	0

Relative Deprivation - The English Indices of Deprivation (2015) is a relative measure across the whole of England of the characteristics of each neighbourhood measured at local authority level. The indices of deprivation cover: how poor people are, how hard it is for them to find work, how skilled they are; their health, levels of crime, how easy it is to access services and housing and the quality and feel of the place they live in – the technical description of each of these features is set out below:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income. The
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measure the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measure the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.
- The Living Environment Deprivation Domain measures the quality of the local environment. The indicators fall into two sub-domains. The 'indoors' living environment measures the quality of housing; while the 'outdoors' living environment contains measures of air quality and road traffic accidents.

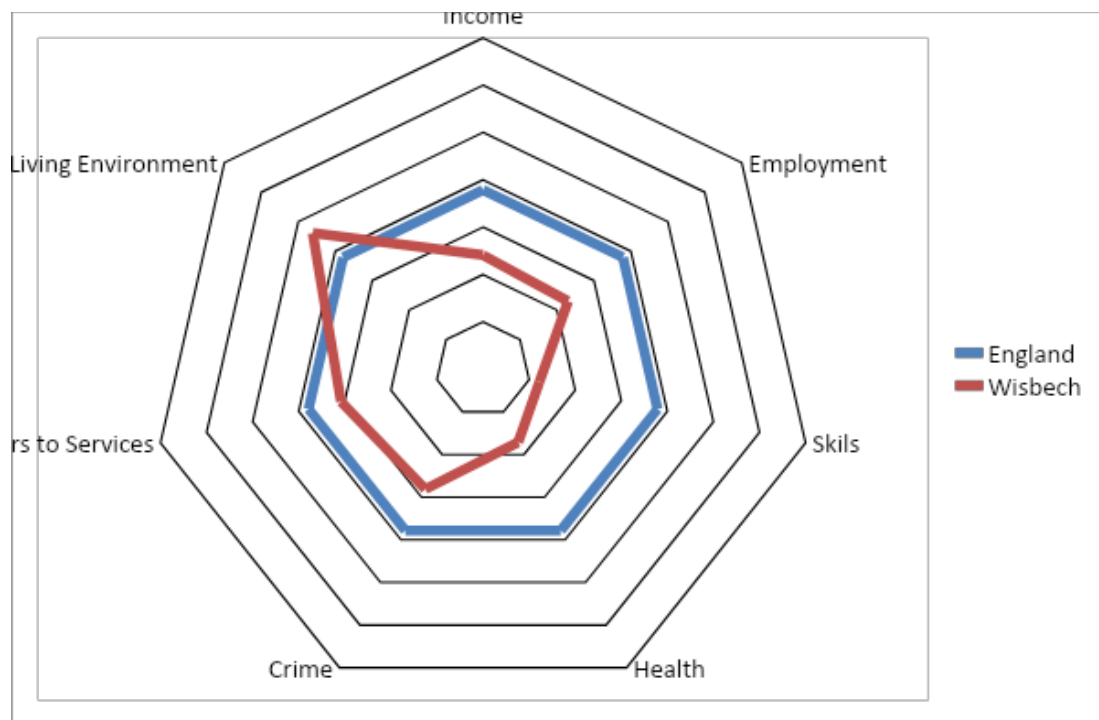
Comparative results for this neighbourhood are set out in the table below. There are 32,900 neighbourhoods in England. The Index rates them from 1 – the most deprived on any given measure to 32,900 the least deprived. We have shown the ranking for Wisbech in relation to each measure compared to England.

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IMD	England	Wisbech
Income	16,422	9,540
Employment	16,422	8,991
Education	16,422	3,602
Health	16,422	6,058
Crime	16,422	11,558
Housing Barriers	16,422	12,899
Living Env	16,422	20,527

English Indices of Deprivation 2019

The radar chart below shows these results in diagrammatic form. Where the Wisbech line is within the blue line the area is more deprived than the England average where they are outside the blue line the area is less deprived than the England average:



The area is relatively deprived on all measures but scores quite well in terms of the living environment domain.

WISBECH COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Business Profile - The table shows (in the Location Quotient column) how the number of jobs in each profession in the Wisbech catchment compares to the England average. Where there are a far higher proportion of jobs than the England average we have shaded the profession green.

Sector	2015		2018		Location Quotient	2015-18 Wisbech Change	2015-18 England Change
	Wisbech	England	Wisbech	England			
Food Processing	1,730	325,100	1,830	328,200	10	100	3,100
A : Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0	161,000	0	157,000	0.0	0	-4,000
B : Mining and quarrying	0	23,000	0	20,000	0.0	0	-3,000
C : Manufacturing	3,485	2,030,000	4,155	2,082,000	3.7	670	52,000
D : Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0	95,000	0	116,000	0.0	0	21,000
E : Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	40	157,000	40	179,000	0.4	0	22,000
F : Construction	385	1,123,000	345	1,202,000	0.5	-40	79,000
G : Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	2,515	3,941,000	2,555	3,983,000	1.2	40	42,000
H : Transportation and storage	740	1,181,000	805	1,279,000	1.2	65	98,000
I : Accommodation and food service activities	550	1,776,000	500	1,936,000	0.5	-50	160,000
J : Information and communication	145	1,107,000	105	1,150,000	0.2	-40	43,000
K : Financial and insurance activities	160	898,000	180	902,000	0.4	20	4,000
L : Real estate activities	90	435,000	90	453,000	0.4	0	18,000
M : Professional, scientific and technical activities	305	2,177,000	480	2,325,000	0.4	175	148,000

WISBECH COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Sector	2015		2018		Location Quotient	2015-18 Wisbech Change	2015-18 England Change
	Wisbech	England	Wisbech	England			
N : Administrative and support service activities	1,300	2,290,000	1,435	2,388,000	1.1	135	98,000
O : Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	200	1,029,000	310	1,030,000	0.6	110	1,000
P : Education	1,125	2,293,000	1,065	2,312,000	0.8	-60	19,000
Q : Human health and social work activities	995	3,187,000	1,570	3,306,000	0.9	575	119,000
R : Arts, entertainment and recreation	130	598,000	105	633,000	0.3	-25	35,000
S : Other service activities	210	543,000	140	524,000	0.5	-70	-19,000
Total	14,105	25,369,100	13,880	25,397,545	1.0	-225	28,445

The comparative analysis of Wisbech and England reveals particular economic strengths in the area in terms of: Food Processing where the scale of the sector is nationally if not internationally prodigious, this then tracks through as a sub-sector into manufacturing. Wholesale and storage are also big sectors, with links to transport and logistics and administration is also a large sector with Wisbech having the role of a base for key public services.

There are 13,880 jobs in the Wisbech area. Dividing the stock of jobs by the working population – a useful indicator of the economic vibrancy of an area gives a percentage called job density – the job density for the area is 0.77. This is considerably lower than the England average of 0.84. As the BRES data doesn't measure self-employment however if we increase the number of jobs by 15% to allow for this it provides a potentially more accurate percentage of 88% which is slightly higher than the national average.

Population - The population of Wisbech is 28,475. The working population is 17,959

Using mid-year population estimates for 2017 (the most recently available in the context of the geographies under consideration) the proportion of the population of the area over 65 is 18.5% compared to an average around 20% for England. The area has a working age population, which is smaller (at 63.1%) than the England average at 62.2%. The key population percentages for each area are set out in the table below:

WISBECH COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Area	Wisbech	England
% over 65	18.5	20.2
Working Population	63.1	62.2

Ethnic mix

Ethnic Group	Wisbech % rounded	England % rounded
All usual residents	100	100
White	97	85
Other White (sub-set of above)	14	4.5
Asian/Asian British	1	8
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	1	3
Other ethnic group	1	1

The Wisbech catchment is ethnically less diverse than England as a whole. It also has a far higher than the UK average distribution of other white ethnic groups.

Population

The table below shows the projected population change for the Wisbech catchment area between 2016 and 2039. It is illustrated in diagrammatic form below alongside the current and projected population figures for England to provide a comparison.

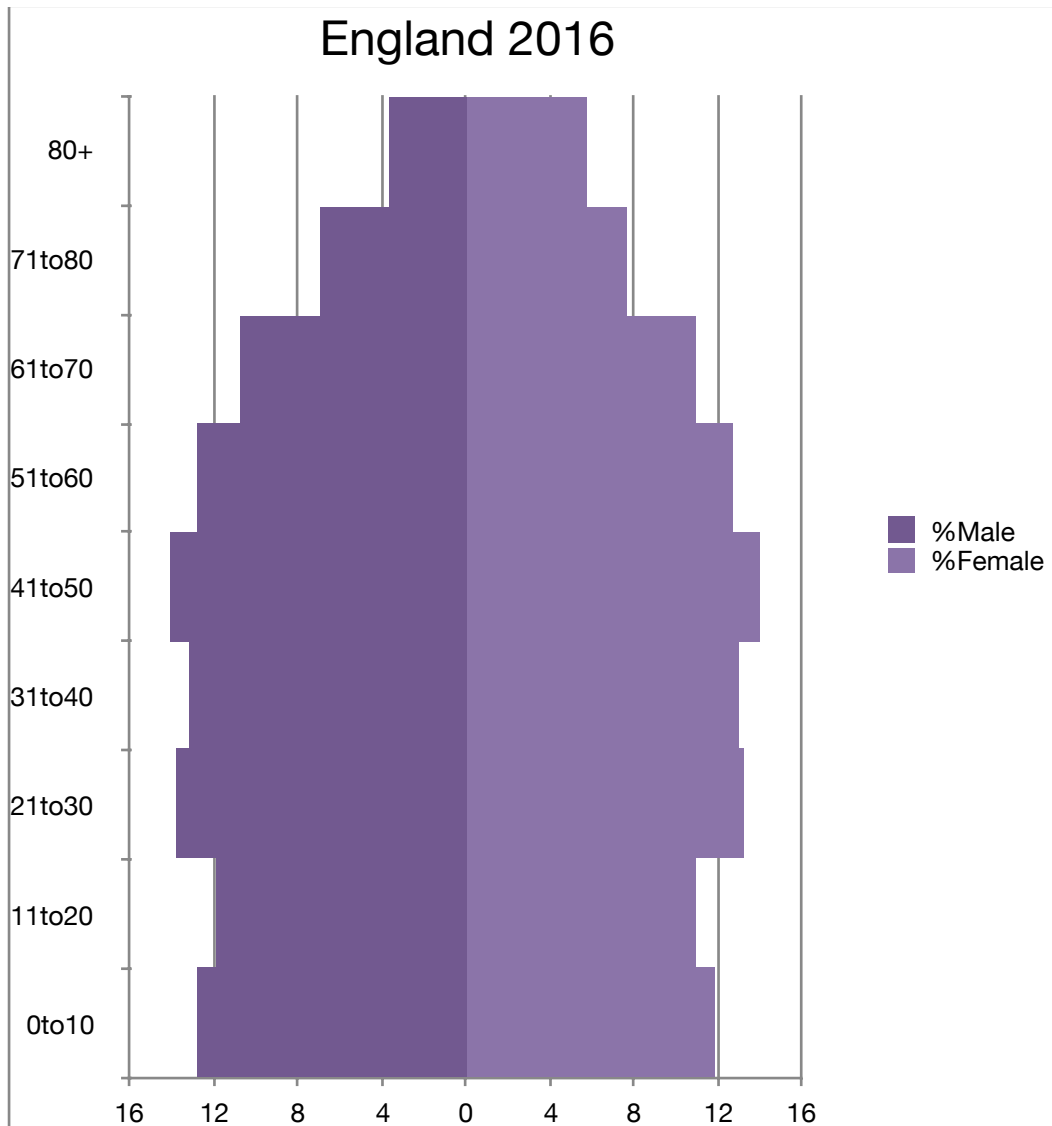
Age Band	2016			2039		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0to10	1904	1811	3715	1866	1847	3713
Nov-20	1639	1477	3116	1737	1580	3318
21- 30	2074	1941	4015	2115	1941	4056
31-40	1845	1724	3569	1827	1655	3482
41-50	1821	1812	3633	1839	1776	3615
51-60	1680	1812	3492	1697	1794	3491

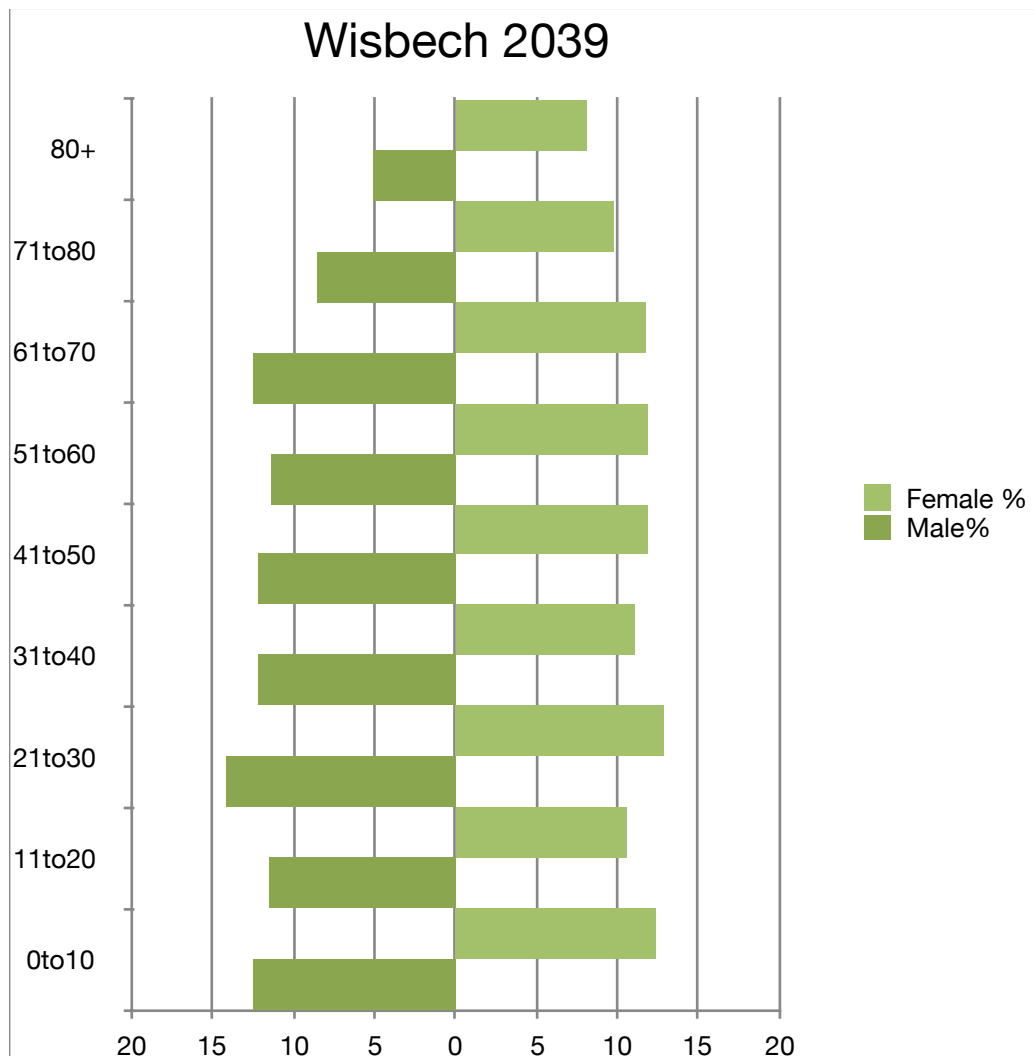
WISBECH COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

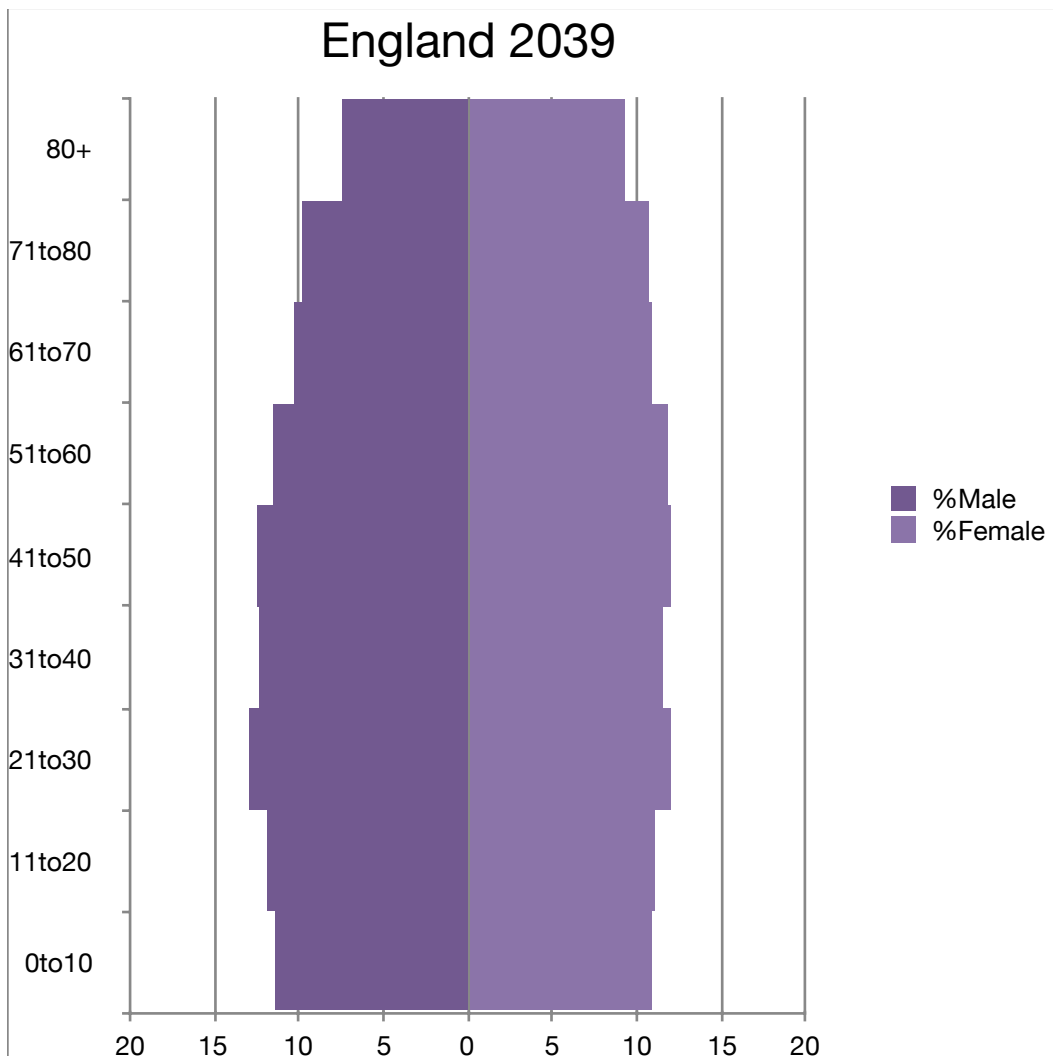
Age Band	2016			2039		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
61-70	1561	1643	3204	1873	1758	3631
71 - 80	1015	1171	2186	1279	1452	2731
80+	566	979	1545	758	1224	1982
Total	14105	14370	28475	14992	15027	30019

These results indicate a 5.4% growth in population. This compares to an all-England projection of 16.5% growth. This position of stagnation could well be related to the relative deprivation in the area. In line with England the proportion of over 75s will increase significantly over this period by 26% overall. This can be seen in the population pyramid charts below, which compare the Wisbech catchment and England.









Origin and Destination Data (2011 Census) - The table below shows the number of people from the Wisbech catchment who commute to other locations in the near sub-region for work. The second column (shaded red) shows the number of people who commute to work in the area from each local authority in the area. The top row (shaded red) shows where people from the Wisbech catchment commute to:

	place of work			
Live	Wisbech	South Holland	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Fenland
Wisbech	5,420	401	1,116	6,664
South Holland	815	21,813	1,059	1,294

King's Lynn and West Norfolk	2,683	901	38,885	3,509
Fenland	7,848	727	2,032	19,515

This origin and destination information demonstrates that the area has a very strong internal working profile linked the vast majority of its working population working in Wisbech or Fenland but with strong commuting flows also into and from Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

Council Tax Bands

Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
England	5,869,590	4,707,100	5,227,820	3,698,840	2,284,110	1,207,430	841,740	140,850
%	24	20	22	15	10	5	4	1
Wisbech	7,630	3,600	2,740	1,160	470	180	50	0
% rounded	48	23	17	7	3	1	0	0

Taken as a whole the area has a far higher proportion of Band A and B properties than the England average.

Data sources

Area of Analysis	Data Source
National Insurance	ONS 2018
% live births	ONS 2018
Qualifications	Annual Population Survey 2018
Food	NFU Food and Farming in the Fens, April 2019
Agriculture	Agricultural Census 2016
Deprivation	English Indices of Deprivation – Department of Communities and Local Government 2019
Business Data	Business Register and Employment Survey – Office for National Statistics 2015-18
Population	Office for National Statistics Population Forecasts 2016-39
Ethnicity	2011 Census
Origin and Destination	2011 Census

Area of Analysis	Data Source
Council Tax Bands	Valuation Office Agency 2017
Furlough and Unemployment	Office for National Statistics

Information about the impact of COVID-19 on the local economy (e.g. furloughed staff, jobseeker allowance claimants) is contained in the body of the main report. This data was sourced from ONS [May 2020 data for the furlough scheme; and July 2020 data for the claimant count].



Wisbech Town Council



Cambridgeshire
County Council

