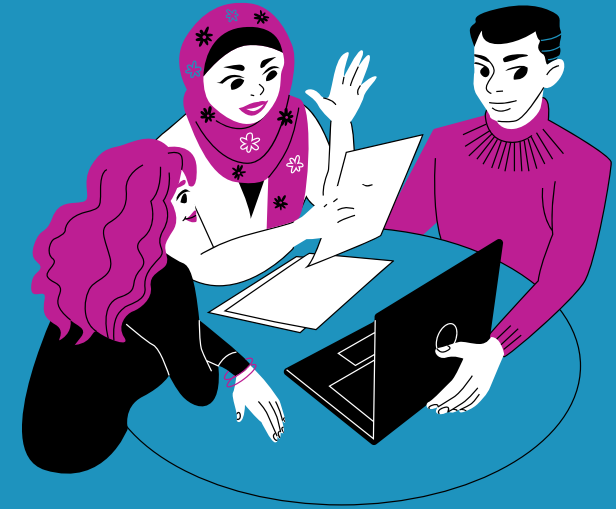


COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS ACTION PLANS



EAST BIRMINGHAM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND, COMMUNITY PILLAR

READY 2 LEVEL PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW OF THE CAO

GOAL is a social enterprise, supporting 'hard to reach' individuals in the community. Their service users range from pregnant mums, all the way up to seniors 80+ in our community who are perceived as 'hard to reach'. Many of our service users, young and old, do not engage with community initiatives due to cultural norms. To overcome some of the barriers to engagement it is vital to provide services that are:

- In the community
To overcome the social and cultural barriers, delivery through centres based in the heart of the community; settings that are trusted by the community.

- Bi-lingual support
To engage these 'hard to reach' groups, who come with very little to no language or digital skills, access to bilingual tutors/staff is crucial.
- Understanding the community
Staff that are from within the community, thus having access to local knowledge supports GOAL in developing and delivering programmes that are needs-led.

Goal is based and main service delivery centre is in a community building behind the Methodist Church in Alum Rock, Birmingham.



CONTEXT

GOAL aspired in their application to run a number of local events across different groups (age, gender, and ethnicity) to consult with local groups to gather data to contribute towards the Ready to Level Work Plan.

GOAL plans to empower the community and local organisations through:

- Dissemination of Ready to Level Work Plan and Levelling Up Programme through local networks including B8 Locality, NNS, Count Me In forum, and through Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator and Community Connectors
- Organise local events to disseminate information about the Ready to Level Work Plan and Levelling Up Programme

One large event during International Women's Week in March (family fun day) to disseminate information about the Ready to Level Up Work Plan.

Note: Due to delays in starting the project and the focus of the Loconomy programme the planned project set out in the application was modified as agreed with all parties.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

SUMMARY

Definition

The AI process was undertaken collaboratively with Yasmin Akthar CEO, and Founder of GOAL and two of her team members Donna Barton and Nelum Akhtar.

The introductory sessions provided opportunity to get to know each other and to understand the organisations foundation, history and current service. The aim was to use AI process to enable us to collaboratively reflect on how GOAL may align itself to be a key anchor organisation within Alum Rock and East Birmingham to support/align with the ambitions of the Levelling Up Agenda. Goal applied to the programme as they were keen to explore opportunities that may help them increase educational and employment opportunities for women and their families, ultimately benefiting the entire community.

GOAL was established in 2011 as a community initiative in Alum Rock that sought to provide a dedicated service working with women from pregnancy to older people (community elders). They established themselves as a community enterprise and formalised their company structure as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, which has been running for over ten years. The mission of GOAL is to empower communities by offering opportunities for skill

development, fostering entrepreneurship, and facilitating pathways to employment and self-employment. They are unique in that they are the only service in the area working with women, they have a successful track record of working with what some regard as 'hard to reach' community working predominantly with women from the south Asian community.

They are currently based in a community building owned and behind the Saltley Methodist Church on the high street in Alum Rock with a one-year lease (this includes restricted use of how they can use the building and any hire revenue going to the church). In just one year of operating from the centre GOAL has transformed the centre into a sanctuary that provides a safe space for women, a warm space, a place of welcome, and access to a range of support services. Many of the sessional paid team were themselves participants in the past.

GOAL also has a wider focus on bringing opportunities to Alum Rock and has for many years run successful European Projects. This work separates them from smaller CICs in the area and highlights their ability to lead change not just in their neighbourhood but how this can be achieved by working with national/ international partners and communities in common.



Discovery

Using a strength-based approach we had several sessions where we looked at what the organisation did well and its success since it was established in 2011. GOAL had in the previous year worked with an external partner and developed its vision.

We revisited the vision they created last year checked its relevance and looked at it within the context of understanding the organisation's core purpose, Why it does what it does, and the teams Why matched this vision. GOAL's vision is to 'empowering families to thrive' and is set out on their website available here https://www.gwacic.com/?page_id=3098

We found when we reflected on this that the organisations WHY was deeply embedded in all that they do and that this strong sense of purpose had the potential to help strengthen its role as a community anchor to help the community benefit from the Ready to Level programme and ultimately, work/projects that lead to increasing the community's economic prosperity.

The key issues that emerged that threaten what they do is insecurity around the use of the church-owned building and the lack of development in East Birmingham e.g. loss of local council services (children's centres), or projects like HS2 that have failed to employ local people. Also another challenge is linked to future planning staffing and human resources to ensure the long term sustainability of GOAL, this links to work on leadership development.

Dream

We couldn't envision the future without focusing on the issue of the building so we invited Jo White (learning Mentor) who has significant experience of community-owned buildings/assets to help GOAL consider their options and risks. Saltley Methodist Church is an old building with a dwindling congregation, the main building is underused, and much of it is in a poor state of repair. The large Friends Centre at the back is in better condition but requires renovating is where GOAL is currently based. GOAL is at risk of closure if the church closes/sold and lacks security with only a one-year lease. They are unable also to realise the building's potential to benefit the community but also to help generate income for the Not-for-Profit CIC to reduce reliance on grant funding.



The teams' dreams and aspirations for GOAL were largely grounded in the need to gain more security around their service base. We looked ahead to 2034 and imagined a GOAL centred in the current building with either a 25yr lease or community-owned asset. The team felt that this would have huge advantages:

1



To help them expand their current offer with a focus on increasing language support, education and support women set up and run small SMEs/start-ups

2



Lead to further investment and development of volunteers and staff (mainly from the resident community). With a key focus on leadership skills.

3



Development of outdoor green space and links to suitability agenda in East Birmingham

4



Income generation to increase their financial sustainability

5



Offer more employment/educational support services, with potential for partnerships e.g. NHS

Design

We focused on the issue of Buildings for the design phase as this was the key issue as the organisation is currently a strong CIC with over ten years of delivery service. As the potential impact of loss of use of the centre would threaten their ability to deliver services but also limit their work to develop as a community anchor organisation CAO in East Birmingham.

It's recommended that GOAL undertake a feasibility assessment and options appraisal to develop a plan to address the potential organisational risk that the current building lease with the church presents. This work would look in detail at the following:

- 1 Options to buy the building (including funding models)
- 2 Extend current lease (25 year min to open up access to funding to renovate the building)
- 3 Do nothing continue the 1-year rolling lease

The focus we agreed on is to start with an urgent conversation with the Church property manager to engage them in this process and to understand the Methodist Church processes and current position.

Delivery

Following the work above GOAL has begun to address the issue with the Methodist Church as a direct result of our AI sessions and will focus some of their work in their action plan on tackling the issue. It should be addressed as a major organisational risk and further support under the Levelling Up agenda could assist community organisation like GOAL deal with what is a very complex issue, which is impacting other community organisation across East Birmingham given the pressure on community assets.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Community organisations are vital for driving positive change and economic prosperity in neighbourhoods. To lead effectively, it is recommended that GOAL prioritize work around its medium to long-term sustainability and strategic planning to strengthen its position as a community anchor, particularly focused on:

- Undertaking a feasibility study to address premises issues to explore options for developing a community built with long-term sustainability. This aims to create greater opportunities to increase educational and employment opportunities for women and their families, ultimately benefiting the entire community.
- Using the impetus of this program to develop true partnership working within East Birmingham to break the cycle of silo working and capacity building together.
- Explore opportunities for diversifying funding with a focus on income generation to increase sustainability. Develop a grant funding strategy to target work over the medium term, enabling the organization to stay focused on its 'WHY' while innovating to explore new funding avenues, such as community buildings and heritage. Pursue arts council funding linked to helping people seek careers in these sectors, bridging the participation gap in East Birmingham.

- Investing in leadership training for existing staff is a strategic investment in GOAL's human capital and organisational development. By empowering staff members to develop their leadership potential, GOAL is positioning itself for long-term success, growth, and impact within the community.

Recommendations for being Ready to Level

GOAL is well-placed to advance further work in their community under any future Ready to Level Up programs and is positioned to be further developed as a Community Anchor. They have a strong sense of purpose, leadership, and a track record of delivery, which will enable them to assist individuals, SMEs, and smaller community organisations. Additionally, they are well-positioned to play a role in the broader East Birmingham agenda and act as leaders in improving economic opportunities for women.

There is potential for strong links between GOAL and the work at Tyseley Energy Park that could be developed beyond this program, particularly concerning women and girls' involvement in the green economy.

The city's request is to provide capacity building to help support Community Anchor Organisations (CAOs) around community bases and buildings. Supporting GOAL in gaining sustainability in their community is a key focus.



THOUGHTS ON LEGACY

For GOAL, the long-term legacy of the R2L project is essential for ensuring organisational resilience and continued service delivery over the next decade and beyond, up to 2034. By leveraging the resources, knowledge, and partnerships developed through the R2L project.

GOAL can build upon its foundation and further enhance its capacity to empower communities, increase educational and employment opportunities, and drive positive change in East Birmingham.



COMMUNITY ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Introduction

What we have learnt from the Appreciative Inquiry (summary)

Through the Appreciative Inquiry process, GOAL has gained valuable insights into its long-term sustainability, with a particular focus on two key areas: building and leadership. The AI inquiry provided an opportunity for GOAL to take a deep dive into these critical aspects of organisational development and identify potential risks and mitigations.

Building Sustainability

The AI process has highlighted the importance of addressing building-related challenges, such as securing a stable and suitable base of operations. By conducting a feasibility study and exploring options for developing a community built with long-term sustainability, GOAL can mitigate risks associated with premises issues and ensure continuity in delivering services to the community.

Leadership Development

Another key learning from the AI process is the significance of investing in leadership development among existing staff. By undertaking leadership training and nurturing leadership skills within the organisation, GOAL can build a strong foundation for succession planning and ensure a seamless transition when key staff members retire or move on from their roles.

Overall, the AI process has enabled GOAL to collaborate with mentors and stakeholders to explore potential risks and mitigations related to building and leadership sustainability. By addressing these key areas, GOAL is better equipped to navigate challenges, enhance organisational resilience, and continue fulfilling its mission of empowering communities and driving positive change in East Birmingham.



Summary of the Programme delivered

The project focused on fostering the long-term sustainability of GOAL through mentorship and community engagement. GOAL collaborated with mentors with diverse skill sets to analyse risks and devise solutions, guiding GOAL through a step-by-step process encompassing defining, discovering, dreaming, designing, and delivering stages. This approach enabled GOAL to clarify its vision, position, and longevity.

Principal Outputs of the project include:

- **Mentorship Support:** Engaged mentors with varied expertise to aid GOAL in long-term sustainability planning.
- **Step-by-Step Approach:** Utilised a structured methodology involving defining, discovering, dreaming, designing, and delivering stages to guide GOAL's strategic development.
- **Leadership and Capacity Building:** Focused on enhancing leadership capabilities and organisational capacity within GOAL.
- **Community Engagement:** Facilitated two community sessions to increase awareness of the "Levelling Up" initiative, ensuring community aspirations were captured and integrated into GOAL's services.
- **Women's Empowerment:** Ensured women's voices were heard and included in the community engagement process, promoting gender equality and inclusivity.
- **Permanent Display:** Captured community aspirations for the area, to be permanently displayed at the centre, showcasing GOAL's commitment to meeting community needs.



COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
1.	Continue the conversation with the church to ascertain their long-term plans for the center and then start to develop a specific action plan	MARCH - OCTOBER 2024	
2.	Discussion with East Birmingham Partnership in regards to community assets	JUNE - DECEMBER 2024	Birmingham City Council
3.	Discussion with other anchor organisations to look at collaborative work in developing local community assets	JUNE - DECEMBER 2024	- Our Community - Arts in the Yard - Grand Union
4.	Continue delivery of the leadership programme	MARCH - DECEMBER 2024	Hope Inspired CIC

COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
5.	Seek additional leadership training for staff	SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2024	TRAINING AGENCIES
6.	Establish a relationship with Tysley Energy Park to explore opportunities for education and employment for women	MAY 2024	LOCONOMY & BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

DISSEMINATION

Pictures

twitter: goal_info | **facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086513301891> | **instagram:** go_woman_alliance

