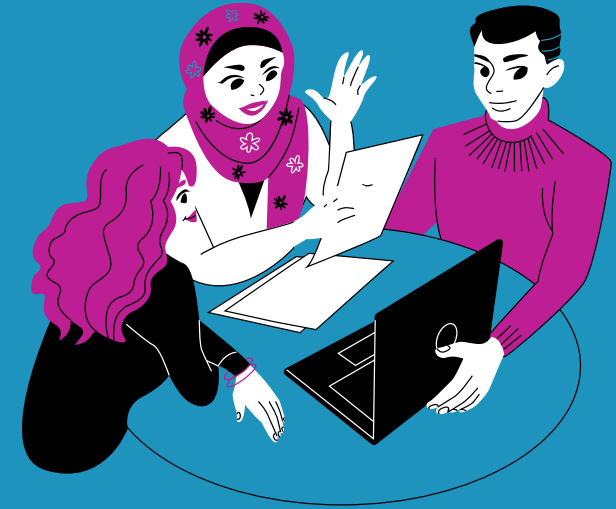


COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS ACTION PLANS



EAST BIRMINGHAM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND, COMMUNITY PILLAR

READY 2 LEVEL PROGRAMME



Funded by
UK Government



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Birmingham
City Council

POWERED BY
**LEVELLING
UP**



ARTS IN THE YARD

OVERVIEW OF THE CAO

For over a decade Arts In The Yard (AITY), a leading community arts organisation, has co-produced art and cultural initiatives alongside and across the communities of the Yardley constituency. This includes community events, collaborative projects and wellbeing sessions such as seated yoga and walking. And so, we work with residents and other local partners to ensure these neighbourhoods are vibrant, inclusive and welcoming places.

AITY is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by a board of trustees who, alongside varied professional roles, have experience as Yardley residents. The delivery team for Arts In The Yard are made up of local residents who care deeply about their communities and those that live there.

ARTS IN THE YARD



CONTEXT

AITY became a charity as residents from Yardley felt they were forgotten and unheard. The Co-op's Community Wellbeing score for Voice and Participation, for the postcode where we are based (B25 8LD), is 34% while the UK average is 49%. The Co-op have highlighted that those in the B25 8DL postcode have significantly below average: "Democratic governance and decision-making mechanisms in place to allow people to express themselves and take either individual or collective action to improve the local community and beyond." Our work aims to amplify the voices and experiences of local people. Without a powerful voice residents cannot expect/demand a levelled community.

AITY trustees/staff live or work within Yardley and are deeply connected to its communities. Many of us in AITY began as participants in the programmes and have lived experience of the need we support in our work; 55+, female, Black, Asian ethnicity, carers, disability, mental health challenges. We know Yardley and know first-hand the lack of life opportunities and services in key aspects of our lives including culture, health, environment, education, employment, neighbourhoods and infrastructure.

We value our direct experiences in Yardley amongst a highly diverse population, but culture seems to have become lost in the East Brum strategy. Birmingham's city centre growth and development was deeply rooted and led by the city's large and medium cultural organisations. The same can happen in East Birmingham and AITY can help EBIGS and the other Community Anchors benefit from the wealth and opportunities culture (and The Arts in general) gives a population.



Leveling Up:

- Improving jobs, pay and living standards: AITY prioritise contracting staff and artists who live in East Birmingham. Artists are usually the people others ask to work for free but we are committed to paying artists like any other profession and take guidance from Arts Council and a-n artists on pay rates. AITY's £200k annual turnover now supports an ecosystem of freelance staff and artists - this didn't exist in Yardley 5-10 years ago.
- Making streets safer: AITY's vision is neighbourhoods that are vibrant, inclusive and welcoming. AITY's street art (including Stechford Art Trail and River Cole Community Commons), art interventions, planting and trees all contribute to safe spaces. We lead our community in accessing parks and green spaces to demonstrate safety (walking groups.)
https://artsintheyard.org/stechford_art_trail/
- Protecting health and wellbeing: WOYU support women's mental health and wellbeing through arts, heritage and wellbeing activities. WOYU reduces isolation and loneliness through arts, heritage and wellbeing activities. WOYU builds confidence through arts, heritage and wellbeing.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS SUMMARY

Definition

Work on the AI process began with an introductory online session (30.1.24) to get to know each other and outline the process for the project. Learning mentors Kathy and Tracey were present with AITY core staff Nicola and Fiona.

The session was used to learn more about AITY; their people, their history, and what they do and deliver in Yardley and the surrounding areas of East Birmingham.

Mission / Vision

For over a decade, AITY, a leading community arts organisation has co-produced art and cultural initiatives alongside and across the community of the Yardley constituency.

We work with residents and other local partners to ensure these neighbourhoods are vibrant, inclusive and welcoming places.

Current projects

- Building Communities Together – Arts Cafes (Acocks Green and Garretts Green)
- Arts Cafes in Shirley and Solihull
- Sheldon Coffee Mornings
- B25 open spaces – men's walking group
- Old Yardley
- WOYU – Women of Yardley Unite



Structure and History

Everyone is employed as a freelancer at AITY. They aim for a flat structure, so that everyone feels ownership and feels empowered to make decisions.

5 trustees, 10 staff (listed below) and 4 sessional workers.

Nicola – CEO

Fiona - Project Manager and Artist

Bano – Project Manager and Artist, and previously managing Memorial Hall

Sharon – Marketing and Comms

Fran – Session Support and Artist

Kelly – Session Leader and Artist

Ann – Finance Manager

Sidra – Walk leader and WOYU Sessional Support

Ambreen – WOYU Session Support

Estelle – Building Community Together Resident Engagement Officer

AITY has been a registered charity for 2 years, having been a constituted group for over 10 years. Their previous chair Yeow was pivotal in making this happen and has been an excellent guiding arm for the organisation. Sadly, Yeow died at the end of 2023 and the position of Chair is currently vacant.

AITY developed out of the city's arts forum network and currently hold the contract with BCC. They have been funded by Adult Social Care for the past 4/5 years – and have now been funded for a further 3. This equates to around £20K per annum. They have also recently been successful in securing a 3 year Reaching Communities grant.

They are also part of wider arts forum network – Number 11 Arts.

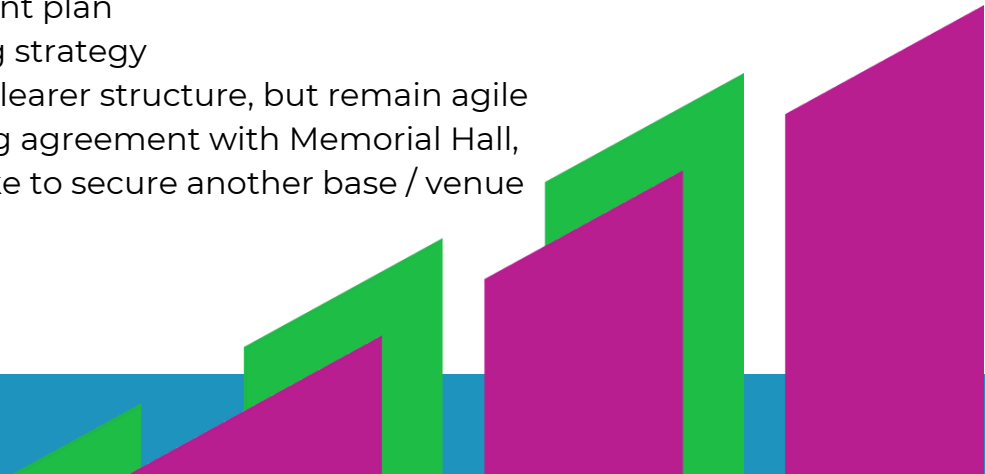
They played a pivotal part of community support during the pandemic and were involved with producing and distributing a newsletter to every household in Yardley constituency (40,000 households) to help people stay connected and engaged throughout the lockdowns.

Values

- Home-grown
- Co-design
- Led by local people

Aspirations for the R2L programme

- Development plan
- Fundraising strategy
- Develop a clearer structure, but remain agile
- Terminating agreement with Memorial Hall, so would like to secure another base / venue



Discovery

The discovery stage of the AI process is to identify and appreciate the best of 'what is'. Learning mentors attended an Arts Cafe session in Acocks Green on 8.2.24 to see AITY in action and to speak to staff members, volunteers, participants and the artist running the session. We then had a focussed workshop with Nicola and Fiona to explore what AITY are good at. Following that, on 13.2.24, we held a session with Nicola, Fiona and Bano (who had been away for the beginning of the project) to ask WHY does AITY exist?



WHY? - Why does AITY do what it does?

SOCIAL

- Enhance neighbourhoods
- Mix cultures and bring people together who are different
- We live in a polarised society – want to combat this and reduce conflict / racism / stereotypes
- Social Cohesion
- Ran first community iftar in response to the death of Jo Cox
- Nothing was happening in Yardley (around 2014) - wanted to prove it's not a 'cultural desert' - challenging assumptions
- Ran 'All you can art' at Hob Moor (funding from BCC and Arts Council) - trialing a lot of different activities that people could try for free



EMPLOYMENT

- Provide easy access work – low barriers to entry
- Sessional
- Particularly important for women who are financially dependent on husband or family – provides some independence / autonomy / power

From the discussions, it is evident that AITY is clear about why it exists; they really know what their purpose is. They are the only neighbourhood level organisation providing community arts in Yardley, as well as expanding to provide health and wellbeing activities as well. They are an Arts Forum PLUS.

Dream

We held two sessions to cover the Dream section of the AI process, where we worked with AITY to imagine the future of the organisation and their aspirations.



One session involved the senior staff team (Nicola, Fiona and Bano – 13.2.24) to look 10 years into the future to imagine what AITY could be delivering, as well as considering what Art In Yardley in general would look like.

The second session involved the whole AITY team (29.2.24), where we looked 5 years into the future and considered what AITY could be delivering at that stage. This involved group discussions and mind-mapping possibilities, before picking out key aspirations and constructing a piece of art to depict this.



Team Dream

5 YEAR ASPIRATION – WHAT COULD AITY LOOK LIKE IN 2029

- 1 Central hub, plus continuing outreach across the constituency
- 2 Clearer staff structure and definition of roles – this gives permission and autonomy for people to get on with things
- 3 Delivering in East Birmingham and Solihull



Art in Yardley - 2034



Design

For the design stage of the process, we worked with AITY (Nicola, Fiona, Bano) to revisit a Theory of Change that they had created in 2021, rather than starting from scratch.

We also identified some of the key themes that came out of previous sessions, such as their location/base, the AITY board and growing their geographic reach, and whether these should be reflected in their ToC. Some of the decisions that need to be made are relatively short-term, so should be prioritised. The implications of not making some of these decisions now could affect their readiness to level up.

Short term goals

- Something around 'culture'
- Needs a specific mention of women
- Talk about wider work outside Yardley?
- Create a separate ToC for WOYU?

Building upon the previous ToC that AITY completed in 2021



INPUTS

- Paid Time – break this down into staff, skilled /experienced / knowledgeable workers
- Add in trustees
- Add in paid experts?
- Earned income – only Memorial Hall to date. Need development work on a fundraising plan?

SERVICES

- Provision of food
- Wellbeing activities as well as art e.g. walking, yoga
- Don't generally provide artists for external events
- Do provide artist development opportunities
- Provide an informal artist directory? Not publicly accessible at present – just internal to AITY?

OPERATIONAL

- Physical office / base

OUTPUT

- Employment opportunities
- Skills to be closer to being employment ready – experience and confidence

For the final stage of the AI process, we held an action planning session (11.3.24) with Nicola, Fiona and Bano to start to pull out some of the key recommendations from the process.

The primary areas that AITY need to consider in terms of short to medium term goals are:

- Location / base (expanded below)
- Providing ESOL / English language skills and other ‘employment-ready’ skills – particularly for women (expanded below)
- Secure contracts with NHS / Public Heath / others? Unlikely to be BCC in the current climate
- Recruit Chair (and other trustees?)

Pros and Cons of having own building

PROS	More family support (holiday activities etc.)	Space for exhibitions
	Reach more people and wider demographics	Allow AITY to support more residents
	Outdoor / green space – could deliver more around wellbeing and sustainability	Could deliver other local / wraparound services
	Generate unrestricted revenue – events, workspace, wealth generation	No landlord restrictions – could have more evening and weekend events
	Incubator for local talent	Option for sports activities
	Stability	Able to have artist in residence
	Trust	Easier to deliver certain projects
	Storage	Permanence
CONS		People want local activities – may have to travel further out of their areas
		Limits your reach (could still do pop-ups though)
		How do you decide where?
		Can be expensive to run, especially if it’s not energy efficient or in poor condition

N.B. Since this session, AITY have secured an office space at the Trust School. This means that they now have a base for team meetings, collaborative working and storage. They will continue to deliver sessions throughout the constituency and beyond, as they have currently been doing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhancing employment opportunities:

- Map the current language skills and gaps with existing women that already work with – AITY and WOYU
- Route or action plan based around language development and other employment skills for women
- Develop a plan to work with local businesses (TEP and others) - building on the conversations at the event on 20.3.24. Potential of local job fairs / recruitment days?
- Ready to work directly with NHS (Health & Wellbeing) partnership could help meet charitable aims and helps reach other residents - ICAN model?

Structure

- Strong board of Trustees/Chair – need new chair/ development of board (April to Sept 2024) with a view to recruiting chair in the Autumn & board strengthened
- To consider the model of AITY going forward – move away from freelance and employ staff directly?

Location

Long term goals explore options for purpose built AITY centre – review of financial feasibility linked to options – mapping existing money coming in for office costs/OD (would ideally require funding/expert to support AITY on feasibility).

Following on from the event that was held on 20.3.24, after the AI sessions had been completed, a strong desire for active travel (particularly for women) emerged, leading to an additional recommendation.

Cycling

- Develop cycling skills training, route planning, led-rides
- Working with Canal and River Trust and TEP



What would make AITY Ready 2 Level?

- Be ready to tender for contracts with NHS etc.
- Increase workstreams and the additional staff/capacity/skills needed for this (operational manager?)
- Develop board of trustees
- Feasibility studies for a base (although have secured temporary space during the course of this project) – costs included in lottery project for office overheads for years 2 and 3
- Difference between a venue for AITY (office/storage) and an Arts venue for Yardley

What would make the community of Yardley Ready 2 Level?

- English language development
- Increased employability – skills and confidence development etc. 'First Level' or 'Level 1'
- Networking throughout the area – increase people's knowledge about what opportunities there are (employment or social)
- Internet access / data
- Think about whether you could / would want to deliver contracts from DWP or Job Centre – AITY has the skills, but does it want to be held to account for targets etc.?
- Develop cycling skills and travel independence in the community



THOUGHTS ON LEGACY

- Opportunities to continue to build network with the 10 CAOs and develop a stronger alliance for East Birmingham.
- In particular, Grand Union and GOAL.
- Development of closer working with TEP and others around employment and cycling initiatives.
- Stronger organisational resilience for AITY.
- Historical Yardley as tourist destination and income generation.



DISSEMINATION

AITY were involved in 3 events on 20th March 2024 to share the learning from the programme, talk to key stakeholders about next steps and to also gather feedback from local residents about their future aspirations for the area.

Community Information Forum

Tyseley Energy Park (TEP) held a community litter pick on the morning of the 20th, with a Community Information Forum held at St Cyprians Memorial Hall during the afternoon.

AITY attended this with an information stand, showcasing the work that had been created by the team in the Dream stage of the Appreciative Inquiry. This piece of artwork was created as a vision for what AITY might look like in 5 years time.

Attendees to the event were told about the Ready 2 Level programme, AITY's involvement in it, the purpose of the collage and the process of creating it, and the aspirations for the future of East Birmingham, in particular Yardley, Hay Mills and Tyseley.



The poster features a central illustration of two large hands holding a globe, with a row of green trees at the base. Logos for TEP, SSE Energy Solutions, and the University of Birmingham Energy Institute are in the top corners. A green banner at the top reads 'Welcome to Tyseley Energy Park Community Clean-Up Day!'. The 'Schedule' section lists a 10:00 am - 12:00 pm clean-up and a forum from 12 onwards. The 'Date and Place' section specifies Wednesday 20th March at St Cyprian's Memorial Hall. A photo shows people in high-visibility vests participating in a litter pick. Social media links and the website are at the bottom.

tep

sse
Energy Solutions

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
BIRMINGHAM ENERGY INSTITUTE

Welcome to
**Tyseley Energy Park
Community Clean-Up Day!**

Schedule

10:00 am - 12:00 pm: Community clean-Up along the River Cole & the Grand Union Canal

From 12 onwards: Engage in our Community Information Forum:

- Meet Councillor Zafar Iqbal
- Discover local changes and activities
- Learn about the River Cole Community Commons
- Learn about Birmingham's Green Energy and Innovation Quarter
- See the latest designs for the National Centre for the Decarbonisation of Heat which will be built at TEP over the next two years.
- Promote your organisation *here*

Date and Place

 Wednesday 20th March

 St Cyprian's Memorial Hall, Fordrough, Hay Mills, B25 8DL

Thank you for joining us for a day of connection, environmental care, and shared efforts.



Connect with us!

 LinkedIn: Tyseley Energy Park

 Twitter: @TyseleyEnergy

 Instagram: @TyseleyEnergy

www.tyseleyenergy.co.uk

Answers were varied, but could be grouped into some key themes, namely:

- Increasing activities for women that are also led by women, particularly cycling (including access to the equipment needed)
- Providing opportunities for training, upskilling and employment for women



Workshop: Levelling Up for Women

Following the Community Information Forum, AITY facilitated a discussion on the future of the area, focussing on what developments are required for women to 'level up', access opportunities and be active participants in the economy of East Birmingham.

Key stakeholders took part in this workshop, including representatives from Tyseley Energy Park, Webster and Horsfall, SSE, the Canal and River Trust, the Environment Agency, the University of Birmingham, the local councillor, staff from AITY and community members and residents. Full details have been logged on the signing in sheets.

Two key themes emerged from the discussions of the afternoon; employment and transport.

Employment

Some of the larger employers present, e.g. TEP, expressed frustration at wanting to recruit for vacancies locally, but didn't seem to successfully attract anyone via the recruitment channels that they're currently using (mainly agencies). There are plenty of people locally looking for employment, so how do we better channel suitable candidates to local employers?

It was noted that some of the smaller local businesses don't generally advertise, but local people approach them looking for work and are hired directly. Many people informally approach AITY staff asking about employment opportunities. It was suggested that some of the larger employers in the area may need to tap into this more informal approach, rather than using city-wide or national recruitment agencies.

Several key stakeholders were keen on setting up a local jobs fair to promote vacancies and attract more local people – possibly at St Cyprians Memorial Hall, as it is somewhere that the community feel comfortable entering (as opposed to Job Centres that can often feel intimidating and unwelcoming).

Discussions also took place around pre-employment support. For example, there may be local people that need some upskilling or confidence building before they would be ready to consider paid employment, such as ESOL, IT skills and form-filling. These individuals would therefore be unlikely to attend a jobs fair and would need some support at an earlier stage. Yardley Job Centre no longer offers ESOL classes exclusively for women as they don't have the space. This is something that could be really valuable to local women in order to help them get a step closer to the job market.



There was interest in the ICAN programme facilitated by CLES in Birmingham, which began with a pilot during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hospitality to Health). This programme worked with the NHS to recruit staff working in hospitality that were at risk of losing their jobs. The Hospital Trust's employment team had little experience of recruiting from other sectors or in delivering targeted recruitment at a neighbourhood level. They therefore worked with a community anchor organisation (Pioneer, a housing association) to reach potential candidates in the local area. After two years, over 550 unemployed Birmingham residents have received job offers. It was felt that there is great potential for AITY and other CAO that have been involved in Ready 2 Level to replicate this model with employers in the East of the city.



Transport

The lack of decent transport infrastructure was identified as a barrier to women in the area. If individuals don't have access to a car, they are forced to rely on buses, which is often limiting due to the fact that they can only accommodate 1 or 2 pushchairs or prams. Individuals with children and/or shopping are often left waiting for several buses due to a lack of space on board.

There were many participants at the discussion who would be keen to cycle around the area, but there were barriers to them doing so, such as:

- Not feeling safe or confident cycling on the road (due to traffic)
- Not knowing where suitable cycling routes were
- Not feeling safe to cycle along canals and rivers in the area (due to them feeling like unsafe places for women generally)
- Not having the appropriate level of cycling skills
- Not having access to a bike itself (including cargo bikes for shopping)

It was noted that some members of AITY do cycle and had inspired others to do the same. This highlights the importance of seeing others taking part in an activity and therefore being able to do so yourself.

TEP are keen to get involved and floated the idea of them investing in some bikes that could be used by the local community. This could include electric and cargo bikes to meet the needs of local people.

With access to bikes, AITY would be keen to run cycling activities, in a similar way that they have developed their led walks. Activities could include learning to ride, route planning and led rides. The key to the success of this is consistency as this builds trust in the community. The Canal and River Trust are also interested in supporting this work and have small amounts of funding for community projects.

Community Iftar

To finish off the day, AITY hosted a community Iftar, which was also supported by TEP, National Gas Metering, SSE and the University of Birmingham.



Before fast was broken, Nicola from AITY spoke to welcome everyone to the event, thank the sponsors, introduce the Ready 2 Level project and lastly, to encourage participants to complete the below form that they had been given upon arrival. Information was also provided on the tables in the form of AITY activity flyers and specific information about the R2L programme.

What 3 Words Would You Use to Describe Tyseley and Hay Mills?

1	2	3

1 thing you are excellent at?

1 thing you'd like to do more often?



DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTRE

OVERVIEW OF THE CAO

The Disability Resource Centre (DRC) is a leading Disabled People's Organisation led by, run by and working for disabled people in Birmingham, Solihull and the West Midlands Region.

We work for an inclusive society where disabled people and those with health conditions are empowered to take control of their own lives and achieve their full potential.

The social model of disability underpins all our work, and we recognise that disabled people experience vast and varied barriers. These are frequently compounded depending on their identity. DRC is inclusive to and works for the equality of all disabled people – regardless of their gender identity, race, sexuality, or religion.



We are committed to improving representation across the board within our organisation and aim to take an intersectional approach in all we do. We understand that, although our barriers and experiences may differ, our work for inclusion and equality benefits everyone.

We are also a Community Anchor Organisation rooted in Birmingham and in the local communities of Yardley and Hodge Hill surrounding our Information, Health and Wellbeing Centre. Where we can, we work to build the local community response to address areas of inequality and for the benefit of disabled people and those with health conditions, including those in older age. We also act as a lead provider for funding and contracting opportunities enabling smaller organisations to be able to access funding which they may not otherwise be able to secure working alone.

What We Do:

- We raise awareness and provide insight to effect change.
- We work with Disability Rights UK and the Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPO) Network on national campaigns
- We respond to local, regional and national government consultations
- We work directly with local, regional and national government to shape service design, system change and future policy direction

- We deliver services and programmes to improve outcomes for disabled people, those with health conditions and their support networks.
- Information, advice and advocacy services to enable them to make informed choices and decisions, exercise their rights, get access to services and maximise their income.
- Personal and life skills development to enable them to build confidence, learn skills required to do things for themselves and to live independently and safely.
- Health and wellbeing services to promote healthy living and lifestyle choices and to enable them to better manage their own health condition or impairment. Talking therapy services are also available.
- Social and leisure activities to help improve social skills and combat social isolation.
- Employment and skills services to support them towards economic participation and sustainable employment.



We are a community anchor organisation and work with local communities to develop innovative solutions to local issues.

- We and are the Lead Provider organisation in Yardley for the Neighbourhood Network Scheme (YNNS) where we develop the community response to meet the needs of disabled and older people with low level care and support needs using strengths-based and prevention-first approaches.
- We provide YNNS grants funding to community organisations and groups (known as community assets) to deliver inclusive activities and programmes aligned with adult social care outcomes and priorities.
- From 2024/2025, we will be providing Fairer Futures small grants funding to community organisations and groups to deliver inclusive activities and programmes aligned with health outcomes and priorities.
- e are the East Locality Lead for the Community Care Collaborative and will shortly be developing a community-led investment approach on behalf of the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS) to meet the health needs of particular groups living in East Birmingham.

We deliver bespoke training and consultancy services for business and employers.

- Disability Equality Training
- Safeguarding Training
- Access Audit Support
- Validating the government's Disability Confident Level 3 award
- We also work with employers to better understand and support the needs of women, trans men and non-binary people experiencing menopausal hormonal health issues in the workplace. This is a pilot partnership project funded by Department of Health in partnership with BVSC and Salus Fatigue Foundation.



CONTEXT

We set out to engage 2 interrelated groups through our project: local citizens and local groups/organisations. These are interrelated as due to the nature of community groups in the area, they are most often led by local citizens as well. These groups will engage through our consultation and research phase of our project to ensure that the plan for the area is owned by and reflects what local citizens and groups have told us they need. This will be presented with them at our community event to ensure all views and ideas are reflective of community needs. We will continue to engage with these stakeholders over the life of the project including the implementation of the action plan to ensure their ownership and continued agency within the plan.

Working with the community, we will develop a practical action plan that has clear steps we can take to ensure it is implemented within potential resources available. This might mean changing how we and others deliver services and activities and/or how we use our fundraising resource within DRC and NNS to bring in additional resources to support the implementation of the plan. Where identified within the plan, this will include working with groups to build capacity where required and providing fundraising

support. We recognise elements of our plan will most likely be aspirational and require multiple agencies involvement, particularly around transport. We will be honest about this and use the Levelling Up Zone as a lever to begin these conversations.

Our project will engage and consult local citizens and local groups and organisations and as part of this, we want them to become engaged in, and take ownership of the action plan for the area including becoming involved in delivery and management of the project and action plan implementation in the medium to longer term. The main aim of the action plan development phase will be to engage with and capture residents and groups views, experiences and ideas and continuing this relationship to ensure these remain current and valid. As this project will also link to certain NNS priority activities, we also want to engage the NNS steering group to capture their views and experiences.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS SUMMARY

It was overwhelmingly clear what the passion is within DRC; Improving lives, and in particular disabled people, those with health conditions, mental health, older people and women. The organisation has been in existence for a long-time, and the values are deeply rooted. Over that period the organisation has grown to a significant size, and also has a breadth of experience, capacity, strengths, and has built up a lot of trust with people, with local authority, funders, commissioners and other organisations.

It emerged there are 3 key themes for the organisation:

- 1 Supporting people with complex lives & disabilities
- 2 Older People, and
- 3 Community Development

It feels something unique to have clear specialisms alongside a passion for community development, and a passion to be rooted in Yardley.

Discovery



Dream

In a dream day in 10 years time:

- DRC being in a new venue – hopefully back in Yardley – used by the community, as well as specific groups (disabled people, older people) – bringing together all the strands of our work in one place.
- There are more amazing projects & activities in our new hub, in wider Yardley, and wider across East Birmingham.
- Innovative work is happening to tackle health inequalities - we are working in collaboration with doctors, pharmacies, other organisations across East Birmingham.
- There are improved parks & community places
- There is more of a sense of pride in community and place
- A more connected Yardley and wider East Birmingham – cycling, walking, public transport, roads.
- We are working with smaller assets, groups, organisations – bringing people together and harnessing community activists.
- We are playing a connecting role and an enabling role with assets around Yardley (and wider East Birmingham)
- People are being prepped and prepared for the new employment opportunities and existing employers
- More people have moved from the grey economy into creating small businesses and/or employment
- People are using their potential and unleashing their potential
- The power has shifted into the hands of community, citizens, and local organisations – things are done differently – led by the community – communities and citizens have been empowered and inspired to make change happen for themselves – not reliant on the council



Design

It emerged that DRC could (and already do) play 4 key roles in Yardley, and possibly wider across East Birmingham:

DELIVERY 'OF SERVICES' ROLE



Growing delivery of high quality 'person centred' services for people

Specific specialisms & Passion for:

- Disabled people
- Older People
- Women (e.g. menopause)
- Employment and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing

AWARENESS, ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION ROLE



Focus on equity & inclusion

Having specific specialisms in disability, older people, women's health

Improving services, policy, practice, working environments, local environment

Work in collaboration with other organisations who have other specialisms e.g. race

ENABLING 'COMMUNITY' ROLE



Energy and passion for Yardley – and to support work across East Birmingham (in collaboration/partnership). The NNS type role of connecting assets, supporting and developing assets, growing community activity, responding to ideas and energy & passion

Harnessing community activism, activists, community efforts

Holding funding and distributing funding to smaller assets

STRATEGIC ROLE



High-Level view point – East Birmingham wide

Building consortia

Providing infrastructure and leadership for bigger pieces of work

Established track record of partnership building and collaborative working across East Birmingham

Possible lead role for Employment & Skills and Health & Wellbeing

Delivery

We believe our delivery within East Birmingham, will enable:

AT THE MACRO-LEVEL – HIGH LEVEL ACROSS EAST BIRMINGHAM

- There is a consortia of organisations – the go to people/organisations to make things happen – trusted – track record – well respected
- Being a voice for East Birmingham
- Bigger and Stronger together – collective effort – big and small organisations
- Providing infrastructure, investment vehicle, strategic leadership

AT THE MICRO-LEVEL – NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

- More people are employed
- More people are volunteering, getting involved in community, more community efforts and activities
- People feel connected to their community, to each other, feel proud of where they live and know their neighbour
- We are driving change in the inequalities. People are living longer, better housing, better physical environment, improved health

The Action plan lays out some more specific plans for how we would achieve this.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the CAO by the learning mentor

I believe DRC are in a good position to lead some of the work in East Birmingham, and use their role, position, capacity and relationships to lead on a consortia or partnerships around key themes. I am encouraged by the passion for community development and a rootedness in East Birmingham, and a desire to be back in Yardley (the spiritual home of the organisation). The possibilities that could emerge from a new purpose-built or re-designed space could be a game changer for Yardley and for the DRC offer.

I do believe some further thinking needs to be done about the role that DRC could play in a more 'community' space compared to 'service' delivery space. Wanting to have a blend of service delivery and community development brings a number of opportunities & challenges, including:

- The opportunity to enable people with disabilities/health conditions, mental health, older people and women to be more connected to their wider community and place. Playing a role in supporting people to access activities close to where they live as a way of bridging the services to the community, enabling people to be connected to their neighbours & their community, bringing their gifts and skills to where they live, and also encouraging groups

and places in communities to be more accessible and welcoming.

- Working with community groups to think about how accessible and supportive they are, and whether people who access the DRC service can be involved in community activities that a programme like NNS are supporting. Also helping people to start new projects and activities
- DRC is not well placed to be doing the street level / neighbourhood level community building work that is needed in East Birmingham. When a new building comes this may change, but I also am wondering if still DRC would be the best to lead on community development itself. I do believe they can play a role in the enabling space, helping to bring groups together, providing some capacity building, being able to access bigger funds and re-distribute to smaller organisations, and bring coalitions together for larger contracts (e.g. public health).
- I wonder if the language that is dominant within DRC (Service user, client, and a more needs focused approach) would become challenging and uncomfortable in community space and especially if more work was done to bring the service work and community work together. Within the service delivery I believe this is harder to move away from, although some conversations with users about language could be beneficial.



But I believe in community this language would need to be thought about.

- I wonder if a more partnership approach could be taken to drive this. If DRC focused on it's core service offer and advocacy work, and they either set-up a sister charity or found 1 or 2 community development organisations to lead on the enabling community work.

Recommendations for being Ready to Level Up

We are excited about the possibility of anchor organisations having the opportunity to play a bigger role and a wider role in East Birmingham.

Anchor Organisations being well established in the locality – there is an opportunity for bigger things to be inside-out rather than outside-in (where bigger organisations would come in and dominate). The local knowledge, rootedness and commitment to East Birmingham (and Yardley in particular) being able to drive and enable bigger initiatives.

Possibly lead/co-lead on a consortia/partnership bringing together the anchor organisations. This could be to enable some work across East Birmingham on key themes like Health & Wellbeing, and Employability.

Taking the findings from our project (transport) to effect some change in East Birmingham – growing active travel – change that is influenced (and possibly led) by ourselves & community.

This is with a particular focus on the barriers for people with disabilities, but also the issues faced by all people in East Birmingham.

We want assistance with Community Asset transfer or a purpose built building in Yardley (Poolway/Meadway). We know other organisations are looking for a building. We would be up for talks about collaboration and other organisations working together on a building in Yardley.

Leading on funding applications and tender-bids – recognising the unique value of each anchor organisation – bringing together the organisations – playing to people's strengths – offering infrastructure to manage a programme/tender/contract.

We need to work a bit more on our unique strengths and offers – particular specialisms health and wellbeing & employability, and our skills, knowledge and capacity to work with people with Disabilities, Long-term health conditions, poor mental health and menopause.

To get ourselves ready to level up, we will need to:

- Set aside some resource to do this work – e.g. building a consortium
- Define our offer and also the opportunities we see
- Define who we are, what we want to offer, how we market ourselves
- Feed in the findings of the transport survey to the wider East Birmingham Team
- Think more about the premises – not fit for purpose in modern world (e.g. remote • working), understanding the hub model the council are bringing forward, look at asset • transfer opportunities.
- Identify routes to market – what are the opportunities

THOUGHTS ON LEGACY

We see the legacy of this programme, and the East Birmingham Levelling up zone as:

- Working collaboratively with the other anchor organisations to produce solutions to some of the issues/challenges that East Birmingham is facing. Anchor Organisations have been capacity built and are trusted to lead on key strategic work, and can influence the future of East Birmingham.
- Anchor Organisations are ready and organised (through collaboration / consortia) to receive, access and lead on funding opportunities.
- Genuine collaboration / partnership / born from passion, commitment, rootedness and integrity – with the best placed organisations leading, involved, playing to strengths.
- A continuing & sustainable network, and having the leadership to convene, and have continued dialogue with East Birmingham Team & Loconomy
- The first cohort joining with the second cohort – continuing a growing network
- A mapping exercise of the consortia / anchor organisations to understand if there are any gaps – understand the offers from different organisations – organisations being clear about what they do and building good partnerships based on strengths.



COMMUNITY ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Introduction

What we have learnt from the Appreciative Inquiry (summary)

The Appreciative Inquiry exercise has given us the opportunity to take time out to work on the organisation, identify our key strengths, our vision for the future, and how we can align and best support the aims of the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy.

We used the Appreciate Enquiry process to inform how we can best support East Birmingham as a well rooted Community Anchor Organisation.

More specifically, we have learnt:

- what a Community Anchor Organisation is and the various roles we play, together with the different spaces we operate in
- how we can build on this playing to our strengths working (i) on our own with our unique specialisms and (ii) collaboratively with others
- from people with disabilities/health conditions who currently use our services and existing Information Health and Wellbeing Centre how they see us and what they want from us in the future

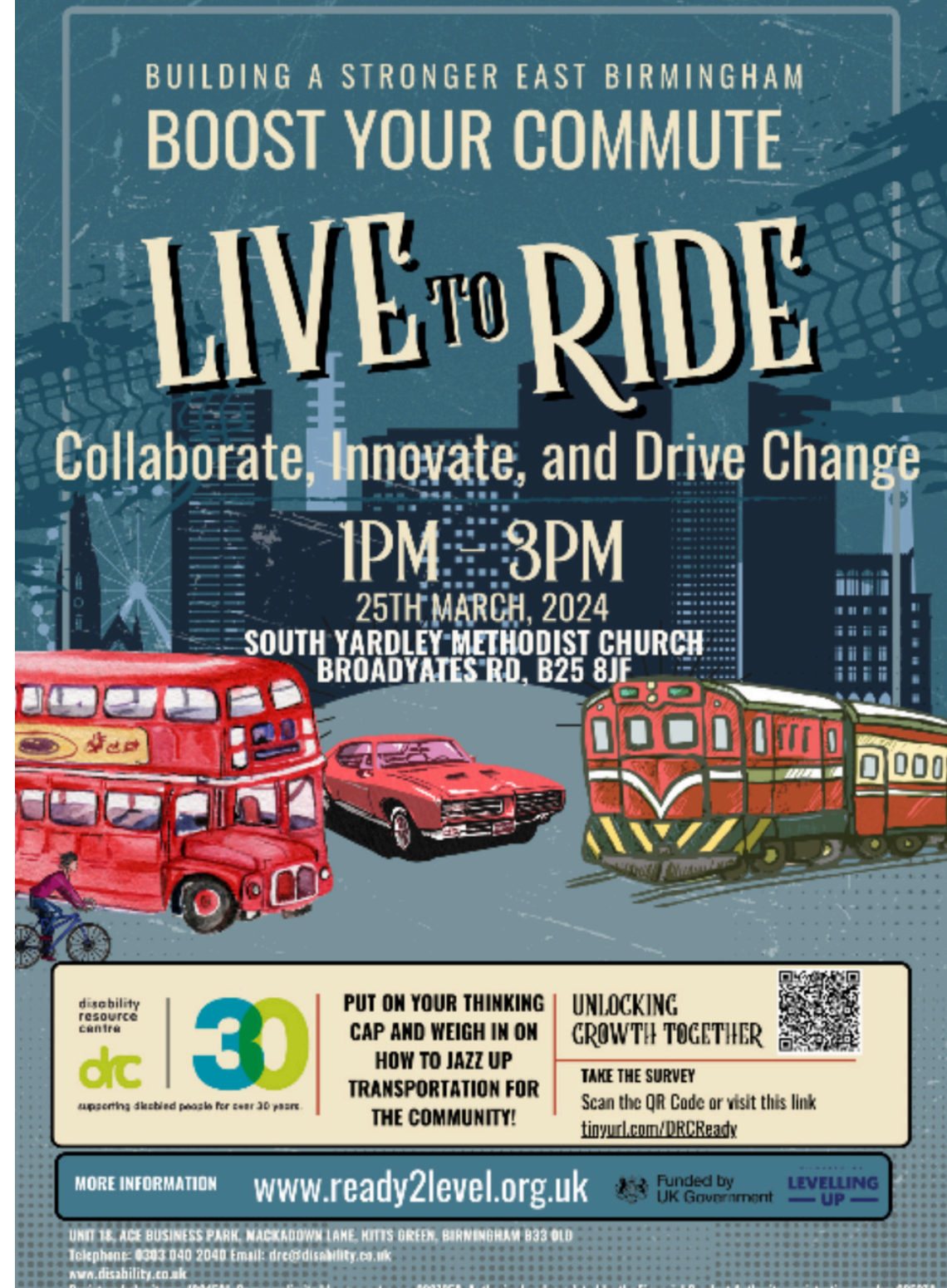


Summary of the Programme delivered

As part of the wider ready the level program which included the collaborative learning for 10 anchor organisations in the east, the disability resource centre conducted a community event, and this event was aimed at mapping transport challenges in east Birmingham, sparking ideas for improvement and creating an action plan to take forward.

We actively engaged a wide range of stakeholders including our NNS partners in Yardley, transport organisations, community groups and organisations as well as citizens. Our initial target for event attendance was 20 participants and we reported 19 participants feed into this transport feedback event. This turnout demonstrates the strong interest in improving transportation options in East Birmingham.

To supplement this in-person event, we designed a comprehensive survey to collect information of transport barriers and ideas for improvement from a broader segment in East Birmingham. In high achieving spirits, we engaged 80 participants to get their feedback.



The poster features a stylized illustration of a city skyline at night with a Ferris wheel. In the foreground, there is a red double-decker bus, a red classic car, and a red and yellow train. A person is riding a bicycle in front of the bus. The text is in various fonts and colors, including yellow, white, and black.

BUILDING A STRONGER EAST BIRMINGHAM
BOOST YOUR COMMUTE
LIVE^{TO} RIDE
Collaborate, Innovate, and Drive Change
1PM – 3PM
25TH MARCH, 2024
SOUTH YARDLEY METHODIST CHURCH
BROADYATES RD, B25 8JF

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www.disability.co.uk

COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

The Goal

Having a new base

What difference / impact

Addressing shortcomings of existing premises

Being back in Yardley

Accessible and open to a wider range of individuals

Serving disabled people & wider community

Sustainable - building and running costs

Lots of activities are going on

Welcoming atmosphere

Improved awareness and visibility for DRC. Physically more present

Short / Medium / Long

1-2 years (don't want to renew lease in existing premises)

What actions can we do ourselves?

Start to actively look at viable options / opportunities

We have a brief of what we want

Identify funding opportunities in readiness and prepare funding applications

What can we do in collaboration?

Talk to other organisations about what they might need / want

Speak to other organisations about possible collaborations

What do we need others to do?

Need to know what buildings could be available / asset transfers

Understand what plans are for council place based services

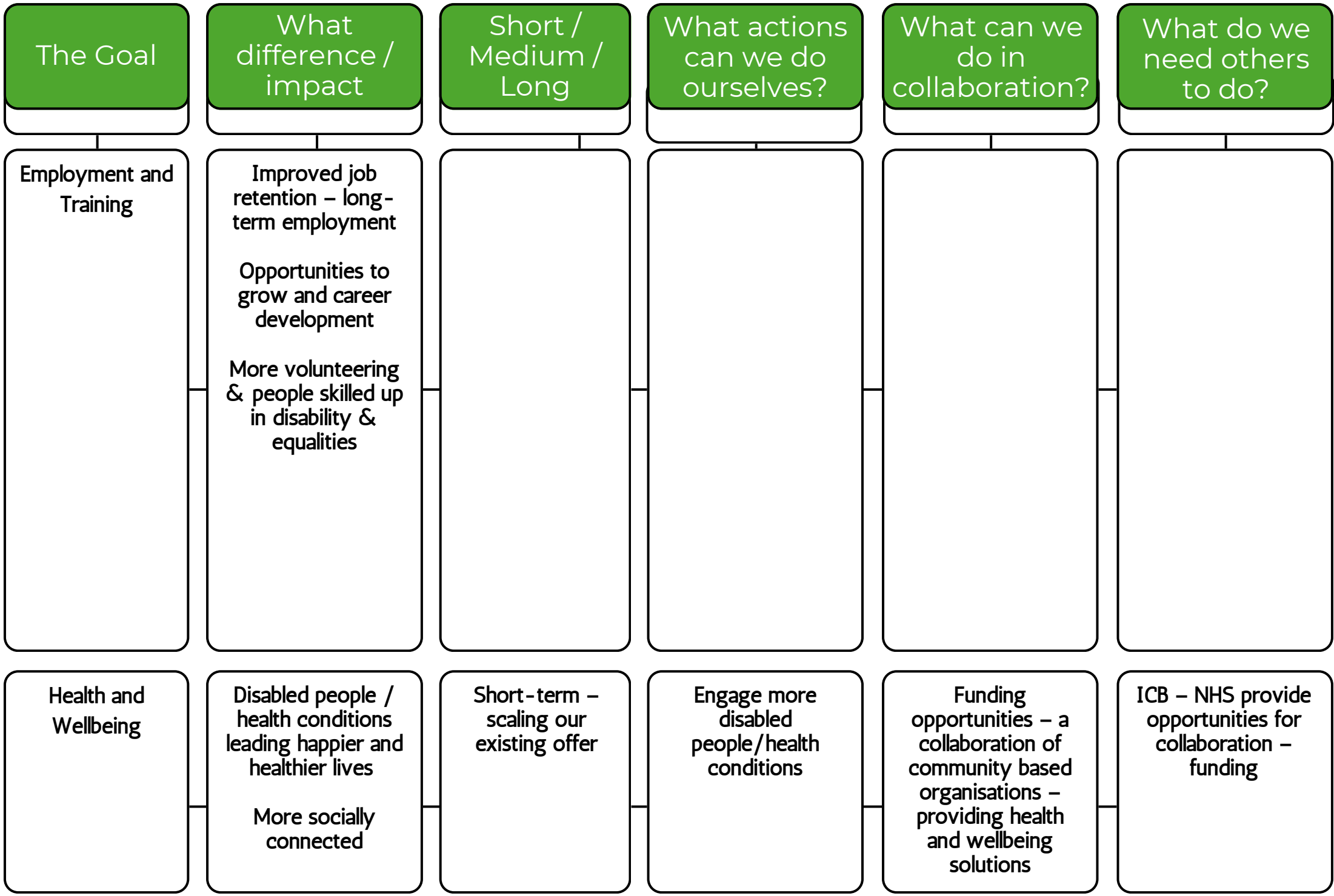
Technical expertise on asset transfers

Surveys & support with fees

What are the plans for the Meadway (Poolway) – could something be purpose-built

The Goal	What difference / impact	Short / Medium / Long	What actions can we do ourselves?	What can we do in collaboration?	What do we need others to do?
Community Development	Creating more inclusive communities for people with disabilities / health conditions / older people Working with other organisations who have specialisms Developing a Universal offer across EB Develop consortia / collaboration / co-creation opportunities		Continue to deliver YNNS ICB NHS consortia opportunity to develop a Business Investment Plan for East Birmingham Working better and more collaboratively with other groups Mapping – with a purpose	Connect with other organisations – finding commonality Nurture Social Innovation – seeking to nurture co-created solutions Training for other organisations – taking on volunteers / volunteering Training for other organisations – disability awareness	Recognising mutual working together Knowing what others can do – being clear about offers from other organisations
Employment and Training	Improving the economic participation of disabled people / health conditions	Short-term – scaling our existing offer	Scaling what we do More funding – engage more disabled people	Work in collaboration with others who have other specialisms More comprehensive offer with other partners who have specialisms	Working with employers to invest their recruitment budgets to support recruitment of local people – disabled people / health conditions

The Goal	What difference / impact	Short / Medium / Long	What actions can we do ourselves?	What can we do in collaboration?	What do we need others to do?
Employment and Training	Financial security / improved financial security for disabled people / health conditions Changing attitudes of employers working with / employing disabled people / health conditions / Menopause – ensuring women don't drop out of the workplace Supporting disabled people and women to set-up their own business Improving confidence, skills (pre-employment) Preparing more people for employment		Job preparation for people Job Match More work with employers Improving knowledge & work environment / practices Volunteer opportunities & volunteering pathways Work experience placements Work with people who are not ready for employment support (pre-work)	Capacity Building – individuals and smaller groups Training for other organisations – taking on volunteers / volunteers Training for other organisations – disability awareness	Funding opportunities / commissioning opportunities that provide an opportunity for collaboration / working together Other organisations being open to collaboration



The Goal	What difference / impact	Short / Medium / Long	What actions can we do ourselves?	What can we do in collaboration?	What do we need others to do?
Health and Wellbeing	Improved health and wellbeing More active physically & mentally Improved resilience to cope with complex crisis Improving the social determinants of poor health & wellbeing People being better able to manage health conditions		Deliver meaningful health and wellbeing solutions e.g. talking therapies, Fit for Life courses, walking groups Linking people into other meaningful activities in the community – being more connected to communities Linking people to other services Pre-work - preparing people to engage in other activities IAG work – building financial resilience and supporting with crisis management	Cross-referring people into our services & also our people/clients to wider community Bridging some of the gaps between NNS & core services	Other services – mental health, doctors, pharmacies Social Prescribers – being open to collaboration & partnership Exploring whether there is a system or model that would bring all this together

The Goal	What difference / impact	Short / Medium / Long	What actions can we do ourselves?	What can we do in collaboration?	What do we need others to do?
Active Transport	Improved social mobility. More accessible transport options More people using public and other transport options		Identification of barriers to accessing/using public transport (survey / focus group / R2L event) Understanding transport barriers for people living in East Birmingham Development and co-production of transport solutions Identification of funding opportunities and preparation of funding applications	Work with larger employers, shopping centre managers and transport providers to develop wider solutions Working with community organisations, TfWM, WMCA, BCC (East Birmingham Growth Strategy) to provide intelligence and solutions for Active transport schemes in East Birmingham	Allocation of Funding to support impactful active travel / transport programmes for East Birmingham

DISSEMINATION

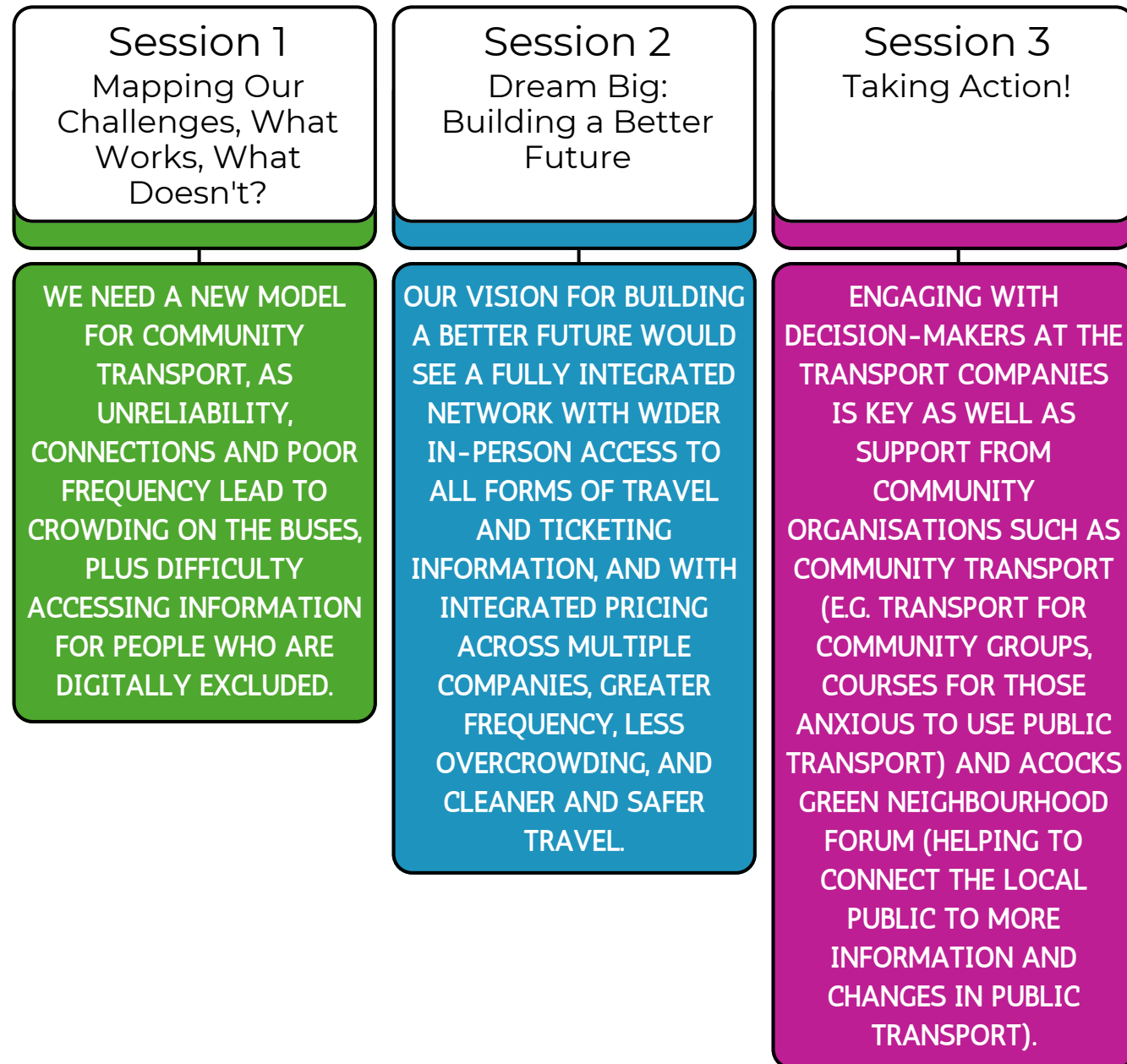
Live To Ride community event was held at the South Yardley Methodist Church to discuss transport barriers and ideas for improvements.

Here is a link to the sponsored Facebook post about the event [\(1\) Live To Ride - East Birmingham Transport Transformation Opportunity! | Facebook](#)

We had a nice blend of residents, Birmingham City Council representatives and various organisations sharing their views.



Here is a summary that ties up the feedback from this event.



We also captured some feedback through an online survey we designed as here is a link to the survey [Ready 2 Level \(office.com\)](#).

What barriers prevent you and/or other local people from accessing public transport to get to where you/they want to go?



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



GRAND UNION

OVERVIEW OF THE CAO

Grand Union is an arts organisation comprising a free public gallery and hired creative studios. It is based at Minerva Works in Digbeth. Through their Collaborative Programme, hyper-local communities benefit from daily creative services. Through trusted partnerships and networks, they draw together local people, artists, curators, ecologists, and activists to discuss and share ideas through free, creative events, activities, workshops, and public exhibitions.

Their priority communities include local people who are experiencing significant deprivation, including those who are vulnerably housed,

experiencing crisis, and who have been marginalised.

The Growing Project, a community-led gardening programme, responds to the needs of this priority group and has been developed in collaboration with partners, including St Anne's Hostel and Spring Housing. It is their flagship creative project, engaging local people in weekly therapeutic gardening and environmental regenerative experiences. The work offers an opportunity to improve social cohesion, mental health and empowerment through communal activity, whilst improving shared spaces.

GRAND UNION



CONTEXT

Working with existing partners across supported housing and crisis support organisations (Spring Housing, St Annes, St Basils, Anawim,) Grand Union planned to use the Action Learning Network to consult with their communities in relation to the levelling up agenda. They proposed to undertake deep listening approaches to understand specific needs and record through discussion style group interviews in order to model solutions for further regenerative community programmes.

The research undertaken and the findings would be presented and shared in an event that uses creative presentation approaches (e.g. film screening, performance etc) This event will positively engage a wide range of people, including communities and networks across public and private sectors, with the levelling up plan and future modelling of community led regenerative approaches.

Their growing project community is already engaged with their work and they planned to incorporate the research and learning into their programme, ensuring that participants understand that their contribution would have

an impact on future redevelopment and decision-making around the levelling up agenda and how this can also affect future approaches we use within The Growing Project.

They will utilise their artistic and creative skills to present the plan so that it is accessible and captivating for a wide range of audiences and can be distributed widely across their community. The consultation and future plans will address social, economic and environmental disadvantages and will suggest future regenerative strategies, some of which have been explored through their current work and some yet to be tested. They will ensure distribution and feedback of the findings and plans to all their partners to ensure future services, activities and opportunities are known.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

SUMMARY

Definition

The first step of the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process was defining the central topics of the inquiry and discussing the engagement process with Grand Union. Learning mentors Alicia Grande Cristobal and Ruth Miller initially met with Jo Capper, Co Programme Director, on 26.1.24 to get to know each other, learn more about the anchor organisation and discuss the AI approach/framework. Through a positive dialogue we explored and learned about Grand Union's purpose and their operating model, including board and staff structure, assets and main projects.

This first meeting enabled us to establish the scope of the inquiry process, discuss who was going to be involved, arrange weekly meetings and agree on other events we could attend to get an insight into the work Grand Union does.

We were introduced to the full-time staff team, comprising in addition to Jo Capper, Hannah Wallis (Co Programme Director), Beth Exley (Programme Assistant) and Cheryl Jones, (CEO). Grand Union also has several part-time staff and works with freelance creative producers and facilitators too. Rebecca Noble is the Minerva Work Support Officer and key worker used on the Ready to Level Programme.

We were taken around their premises, Minerva Works, and shown some of the landscape projects on the Grand Union canalside, including the Bothy, a permanent outdoor installation in the Minerva Apothecary Garden, the Floating Garden and the Common Fields, land adopted from Canal and River Trust. These sites are used to connect people -artists, curators and members of the community – and restorative practices and for public to engage with art.

Lastly, we visited the Junction Works site, a live capital project and the aspiration for which is to transform a former derelict heritage building to be a lively cultural facility that will be their permanent home. The aim for this venue will be to create an accessible cultural space open to all which will include viewing gallery exhibitions, affordable artist studios, meeting and event spaces, a community café and a garden/outdoor space to grow.



Grand Union's work has different strands that are brought together through their collaborative programmes and artwork. Their regenerative thinking approach embraces principles such as soil regeneration, biodiversity preservation, housing justice and social equity to lead and succeed with growing inclusive communities. Their work is constructed and developed through social and cultural interactions, relationships and deep conversations that are conducted by specialist staff using a trauma-informed approach.

Whilst their programmes and interventions are fulfilling the needs of their community and therefore creating value, their distinctive vision is yet to be heard and understood by those who have power and follow their own interest without caring about the needs of the community. There are methods for valuing beyond economic value – social and cultural value can be measured but often loses out to economic value.



Discovery

The discovery session was carried out with Jo and Cheryl but has also elements extracted from the Boot Camp Day organised at Minerva Works on the 02.02.24 where staff and beneficiaries showcased Grand Union's work to artists, urban planners and partners, including University of Birmingham.

This stage was meant to recall and highlight moments of success as well as discover strengths that could help us co-construct new narratives. To help us explore further the organisation, its key achievements and what contributes to its success, we used the framework of The Golden Circle (Simon Sinek). Through the process, Grand Union identified and shared, in a clear and well-articulated manner, the reason WHY they exist, their values and beliefs.

Their vision and purpose are fully embedded in the organisation's culture and are driving factors and the key to their success. Having a well-defined, positive, essential WHY has helped Grand Union to create personal and deep connections with the community and make their services meaningful to the people they work with.



The Golden Circle Workshop Exercise

Why

- Belief that **Culture** has an intrinsic value- culture is vital to society so that it functions properly
- We are all about **Connecting People**
- We are trying to make Birmingham a better place, to tackle some of the social and economic injustices in the world
- To give agency and visibility to those who haven't been given it
- We want to be a mechanism for improvement, to offer pathways to transformation
- Lead change and activate communities

How

- We give space and time to open up art to be more inclusive and accessible
- Making connections / intersections between the world of art and communities
- We draw together local people, artists, curators, ecologists and activists to discuss and share ideas through free, creative events, activities, workshops and public exhibitions
- Our approach is to offer a genuine transformative community programme using art making, gardening, cooking and simply being together as a way of offering support and friendship to people passing through difficult times.
- We facilitate space for artists who help raise awareness and give a voice to the community
- Investing in people first and involving communities in the decisions (growing food, wellbeing, facilitating conversations)

What

- We develop community programmes, working with local people who are experiencing significant deprivation including those who are vulnerably housed, experiencing crisis and who have been marginalised
- Community led garden and green space developments (supported housing and city centre canalside)
- Circular food growing approaches (supported accommodation allotment garden)
- Soil remediation work - canalside
- Alternative city centre growing - floating gardens
- Alternative holistic health & wellbeing programmes (plant based knowledges/ empowerment)
- Community enterprise development (food service/cafe enterprise, herbal tea products, ceramic pot production)

Dream

The Dream phase of the AI cycle followed on from the Discovery session and it aimed at moving the organisation from 'now' to the desired future. Two separate sessions were conducted with Jo Capper and Rebecca Noble, and Trustee Jon Andrews. In addition, SWOT and PESTLE analyses were conducted to help understand the needs at a hyper-local level and monitor external factors and aspects of the macro-environment that could impact their work and affect the project.

To help envision the future, we focused on elements and successful experiences from the past that represented the organisation's strengths when it was operating at it's best and explored with the organisation how to expand on that potential. This planning methodology enabled images of the future to emerge out of grounded examples from its positive past.

The Harvest Dinner held in 2019 was the 'ideal' day in their community, described as the perfect event which reflected what Grand Union seeks to achieve and had accomplished: 'a practical and strategic demonstration of the connections and community that had been nurtured during the Growing Project'. Understanding what was achieved at that event was central and gave us a good foundation to describe what it would be like when the vision is fully implemented.

Key elements of success that highlighted the day:

- 1 Big celebration that brought relevant people together: beneficiaries, city decision makers, financiers, project partners, volunteers, politicians, practitioners
- 2 Meaningful conversations and stories shared in a non-hierarchical way (everyone was considered an equally, useful and respected member of society)
- 3 Visibility about vulnerable housing issues and the part/role that everyone plays in achieving housing justice – a platform used to raise the voice of the most vulnerable
- 4 Circular economy principles for a sustainable future: soil remediation work to provide healthy growing medium, seeds/vegetables planted and grown at St Ann's Hostel, cooked by project beneficiaries and practitioners and served on plates created by the Minerva Garden women group.



Looking back at what was accomplished with limited resources, a temporary space and short-term funding helped the team visualise and articulate the dream/vision of creating long-lasting change in the community in a permanent space where long-term income can be secured, whilst remaining authentic and true to their beliefs. An important element in this future vision/scenario is the empowerment of the community, a holistic approach to social housing for vulnerable people and the creation of community/social enterprises that provide secure employment as a legacy of their existing work; by fostering communities and ensuring that those who live in the area are an integral part of the work and decision-making, Digbeth could become a thriving space for all.

After exploring what the wider picture could look like, we did a more introspective, deeper thinking exercise analysing potential enabling factors needed in place for the anchor organisation to start scaling up.

- Space security – from short-term lease to a permanent home (Junction Works)
- Capacity building – from limited space and resources to increased delivery and impact
 - Increased number and frequency of sessions to benefit more people
 - Resources: increase growing space, employ and train practitioners
 - People-centred approach: existing beneficiaries becoming mentors of the programmes, strengthening communities through identifying and harnessing existing skills, knowledge, experience or enthusiasm already existing in the local community
- Regular and sustainable source of income – from on-going chasing funding to long-term sustainable income
 - Create income-generating projects utilising local people's and land-based skills that will provide long-term sustainability whilst promoting social and environmental justice
 - Commissioning and tendering opportunities for small organisations
 - Strategic thinking to help maximise the scarce availability of financial resources
- Building up further relationships with local authority, private sector and other community anchor organisations



Design

Creating a plan (Building Bridges)

In the 4th step of the AI process we began to assemble together the practical elements of the possibilities described in the Dream stage and start identifying concrete steps that need to be taken to create a plan.

This session was conducted with Jo Capper and uses elements from a Theory of Change exercise that had already been completed as part of another project.

The focus of the action plan was around securing Junction Works. Prior to the R2L programme, Grand Union was already involved in this live capital project and was working on a funding application to extend the lease of the building. The deadline was at the end of February and even if projects, programmes and interventions continued running during this period, there was a shift on staff's work to ensure and support the completion of the deadline.

Another short-term action was to explore new regular and sustainable sources of income. The creation of a community/social enterprise was one of the options considered as a strategy to help increase revenue and diversify income. This business-oriented approach to addressing social issues could enable Grand Union to generate revenue and operate with greater autonomy and sustainability whilst creating social impact and making a difference in the lives of those living in their community and/or directly involved in the project (Minerva Garden Group – making pottery and developing

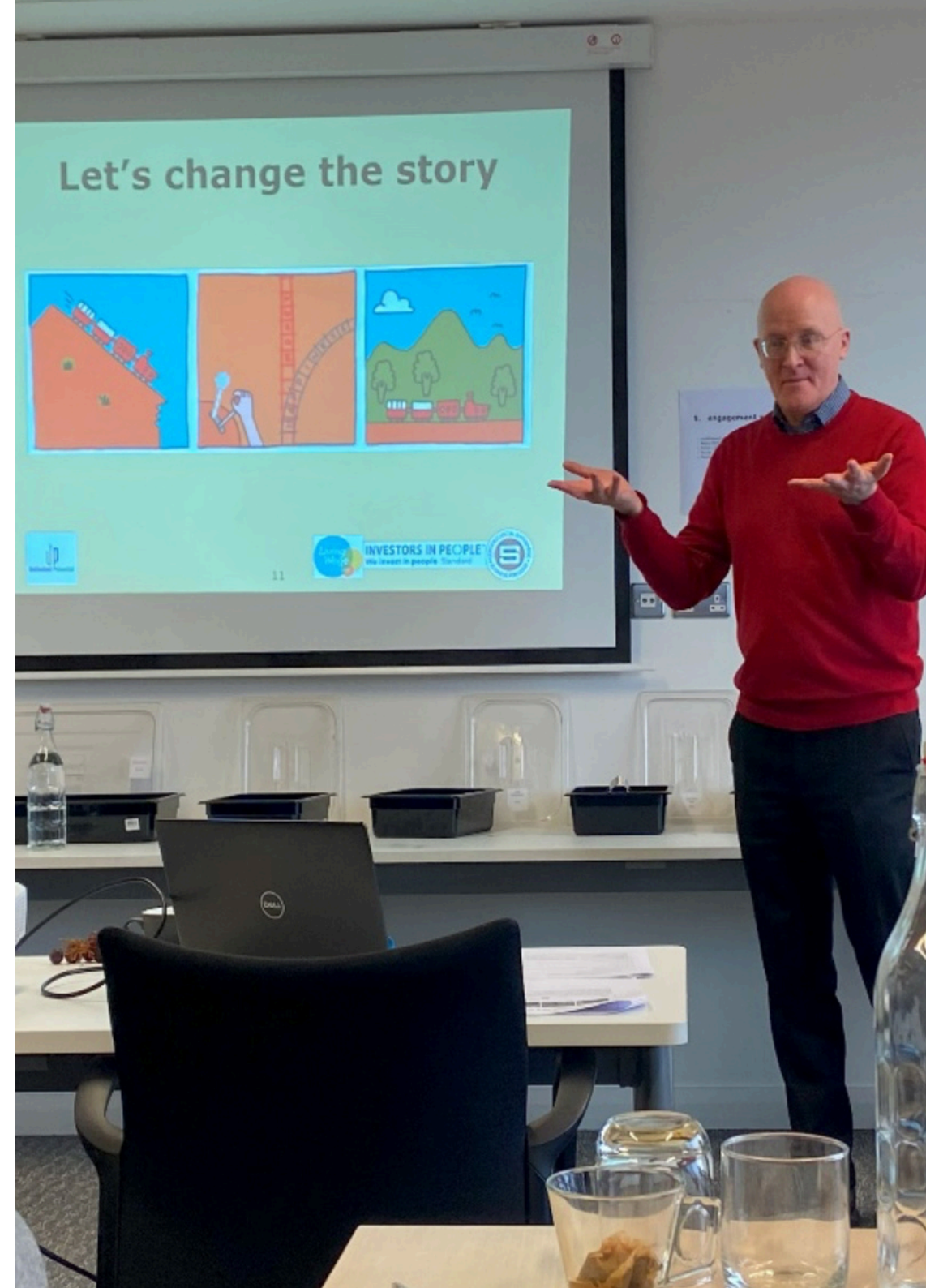
recipes for tea blending). The community/social enterprise will identify and harness existing skills, knowledge and experience from the local community helping to drive sustainable, community-driven development that responds to local challenges. Market research has already been undertaken and a meeting was held with Jo White, Loconomy learning mentor, to have a better understanding on the different legal structures, financial resources needed and all the other essential considerations of starting up a social enterprise.



One of the hallmarks of Grand Union is the emphasis on collaborations for collective impact. As part of their action plan, we discussed the importance of forging alliances with other CAOs to amplify the impact of their work and create a ripple effect of positive change in East Birmingham.

Grand Union will explore how to share the work they do with other CAOs and their respective communities to have a better understanding of potential connections and synergies that will enable future opportunities and help strengthen their practices and work for common purposes. As a well-established anchor organisation, they proposed to share their successful regenerative work and methods and work collaboratively with other organisations in creative, therapeutic focussed activities to support local communities and enhance and promote social and environmental work. They have already discussed and agreed collaborative work with GOAL (Go-Woman! Alliance CIC).

Grand Union recognizes how much work they have done as an organisation to position themselves as a strong resilient community organisation in relation to the Levelling up agenda. They will continue securing resources and generating income to ensure the continuation of their core organisational activities, develop their work and position further. They also acknowledge that a better distribution of wealth and resources and conversations with those anchor institutions and businesses that hold power and resources will be crucial to their sustainability.



Destiny

The Destiny phase represents both the conclusion of the Discovery, Dream and Design phases and the beginning of an ongoing creation of an 'appreciative learning culture'. This very practical stage was conducted with Jo Capper and culminated with the creation of an Action Plan summarised in Appendix 4.

The questions used during the process prompted important reflections for both the anchor organisation and the R2L organisers.

One of the comments and observations that have been recurrent throughout the delivery of the programme is the lack of, mainly but not exclusively, financial resources available for small organisations. In the case of Grand Union, and/or Digbeth, it is also the perceived unequal distribution of those resources and/or wealth which is hindering the economic growth and development of small organisations. Whilst one of the most immediate actions is to establish collaborations with other CAOs, there is a clear message extending that invitation to those powerful and big organisations and institutions where the resources are currently locked.

It is apparent that a new radical approach to support the development of organisations, allocation of resources and recognition of local

skills and expertise is needed to achieve the desired change. R2L is a positive example of how allowing an efficient and equal allocation of resources can untap the potential of organisations.

Grand Union also recognises that there is currently an inflexibility in how work is commissioned and funded and that there are barriers for communities to apply for big funding streams due to the lack of understanding of the process of commissioning. While better access and understanding of infrastructure is key, there is also recognition that there are adjustments the organisation needs and much to learn about the process, but that if help to understand the process is facilitated there will be more chances of success for CAOs in East Birmingham. And its not only help- it's the lack of resources/time to undertake the lengthy complicated processes that is often involved in these partnerships.



Grand Union feels that despite the success of their projects in supporting vulnerable people there is a lack of recognition of their positive impact. Whilst Grand Union's collaborative strategy has continually built in reciprocal actions to help facilitate this- ie harvest dinner- they have come up against bigger institutions business sectors actively not listening or tokenistically offering 'shavings' rather than investment for change. If the GDP of Birmingham was £31billion in 2018 then really if this profit was better distributed, then surely we wouldn't have the social and economic problems. Equally important, it is the understanding needed from the

business and private sector that cultural capital can deliver financial benefits and that culture needs to be valued.

Lastly, there is an interest to explore further what other CAOs are doing, to be more connected to them, to continue the conversations that have started and the possibility of creating and/or being part of East Birmingham Consortium. The information provided during the collaborative sessions has been very useful but now they need more time to assimilate and reflect on their journey.



RECOMMENDATIONS

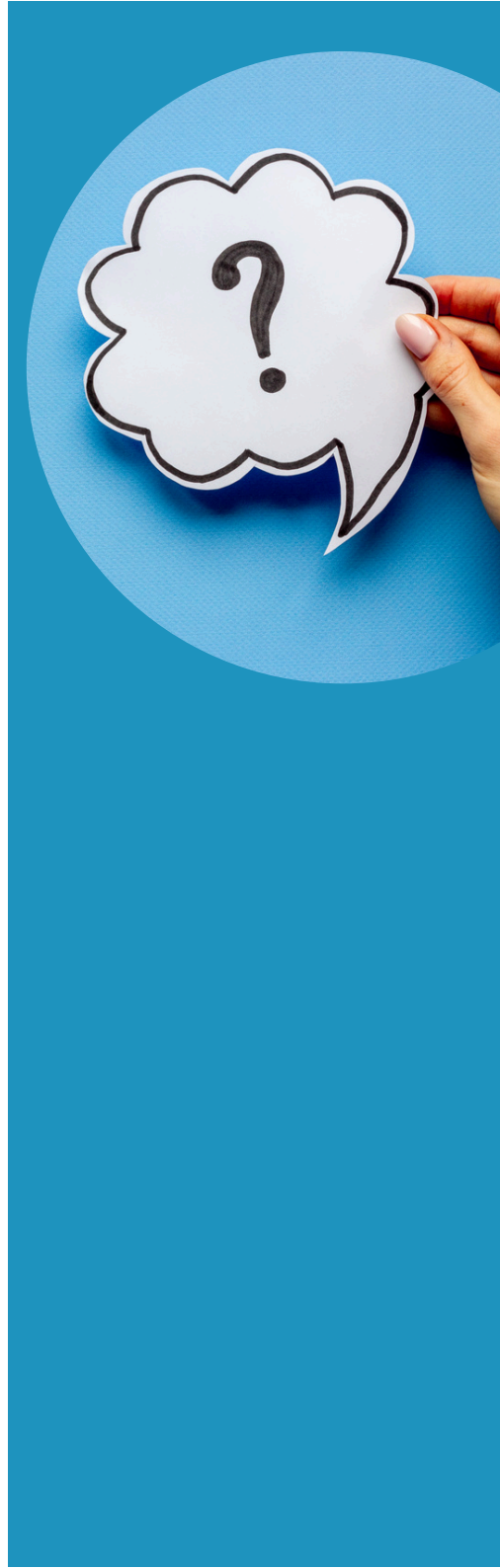
Grand Union is an organisation with a very clear understanding of its strategy and its why, how and what it delivers. It serves a key role as a community anchor organisation in Digbeth and is a credible local brand, responsive and committed to local community and its context; a multi purpose arts organisation and holistic in its concerns with local economy and social capital, local services and partnerships, local environment and sustainable development.

The above all adds to a strong resilient organisation but the lack of a permanent building where they can deliver their programmes, accessible to all, is hindering their potential to develop and thrive.

The findings of these mentoring sessions have yielded a number of suggestions for the community anchor organisation in terms of strategies to ensure long-term financial sustainability and improvement in communicating value and engagement with the private sector.

- To continue the pursuit of a permanent home in the heart of Digbeth that will help anchor them in a place and strengthen their position in East Birmingham
- Develop a long-term strategy for financial sustainability that will enable them to become less reliant on external funding, including the current interest in developing

- a community/social enterprise that combines entrepreneurial approaches with a focus on supporting vulnerabilities and offering long pathways for change.
- Continue to develop partnerships/ collaborations with local partners, organisations and other CAOs to leverage resources which will help provide capacity building as well as help amplify their messages and raise the voices of those who need it the most.
- The current approach to value creation should continue to be pursued as it is fulfilling the organisation's mission and goals whilst covering the needs of their beneficiaries and the wider community. However, there is an element of how the value is communicated that could be explored further should resources and staff capacity allow it.
 - A wider understanding on how businesses perceive social value should be explored to help develop a common language to translate cultural capital and value in a way that it is understood by businesses. Or rather it's the issues around how businesses can claim CSR (corporate social responsibility) with tokenistic behaviours of charity rather than long term strategic investment with vulnerable communities.



- To develop a deeper understanding on how to measure, demonstrate and communicate impact to local businesses and the private sector and develop robust impact measurement frameworks that will enable them to demonstrate social effectiveness and continue improvement of programmes and interventions.
- Positively embrace the opportunities created by the R2L Programme, as an active player in one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe, including any continuation of it, development of partnerships, opportunities to act as mentors, creation of coalition for East Birmingham etc

Recommendations for being Ready to Level Up

Grand Union is a well-established organisation with a robust track record in implementing holistic, nature-based interventions to support the most vulnerable. They have worked hard to position themselves as a strong resilient community organisation in relation to the Levelling up agenda. Their vision of creating social justice and providing voice to marginalised communities, empowering communities to tackle poverty and low productivity matches exactly the vision and outcomes of the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy, and there is the need to amplify this work to help change the narrative of Digbeth.

1

To pursue and develop their nature-based supportive residential space that will help bring long-lasting opportunities to Digbeth and transform and build a new kind of regeneration in East Birmingham.

2

Collaborate with other CAOs and create effective partnerships and consortium models to deliver large contracts commissioned by public sector or anchor institutions.

3

Continue to develop and scale up delivery of transformative engagement sessions that centre around the natural world and its processes, such as the very successful Growing Project.

4

Sharing their regenerative practices/ creating a voice for communities

5

Seek new business opportunities/ embrace new market opportunities that will emerge as part of the regeneration of Digbeth around health, film, environment, clean energy

THOUGHTS ON LEGACY

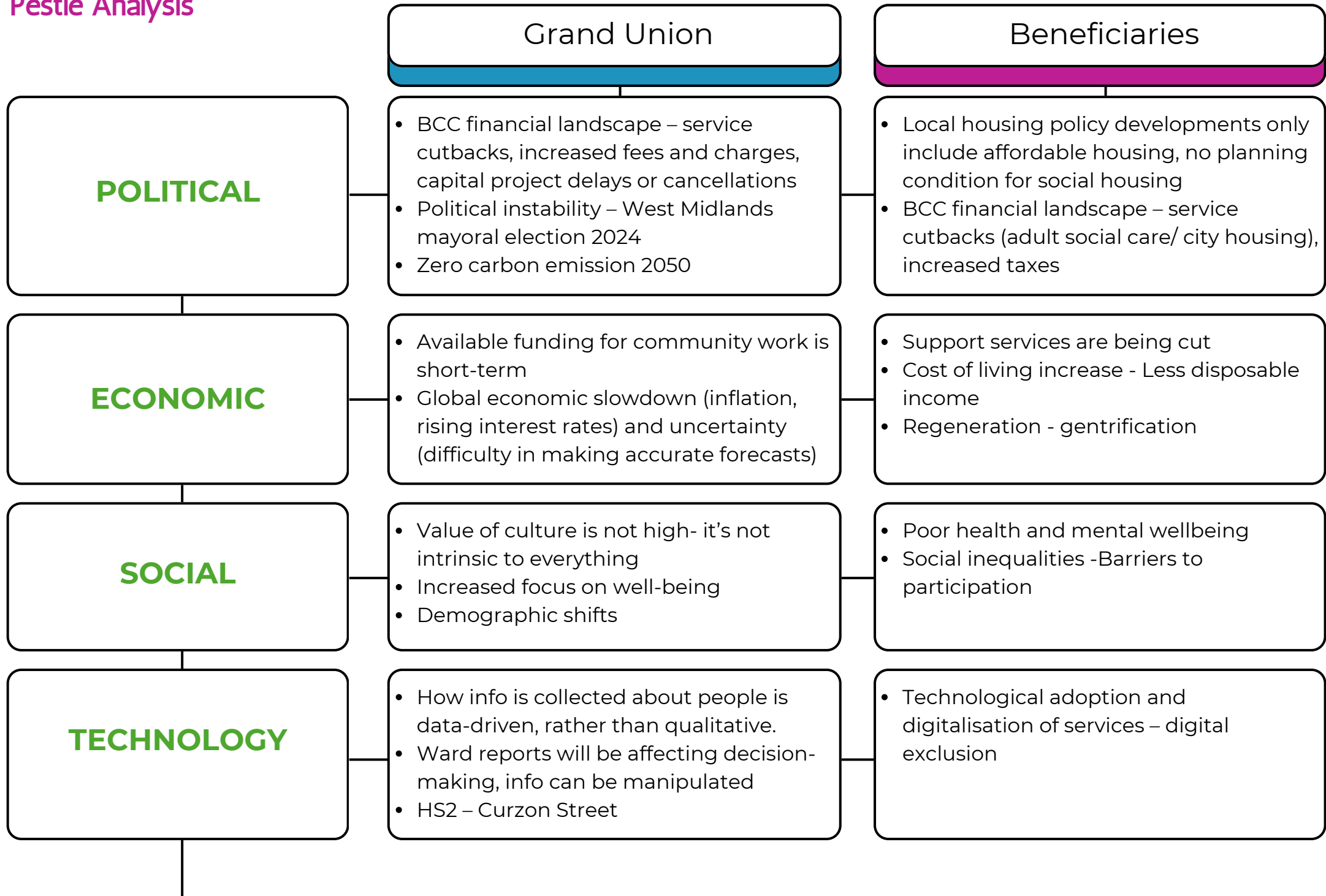
For Grand Union, involvement in the R2L Programme has enabled them to raise their profile as a community anchor organisation in East Birmingham, working in partnership with other community anchor organisations as well as large public sector anchor organisations – BCC, BCU, Aston University and NHS.

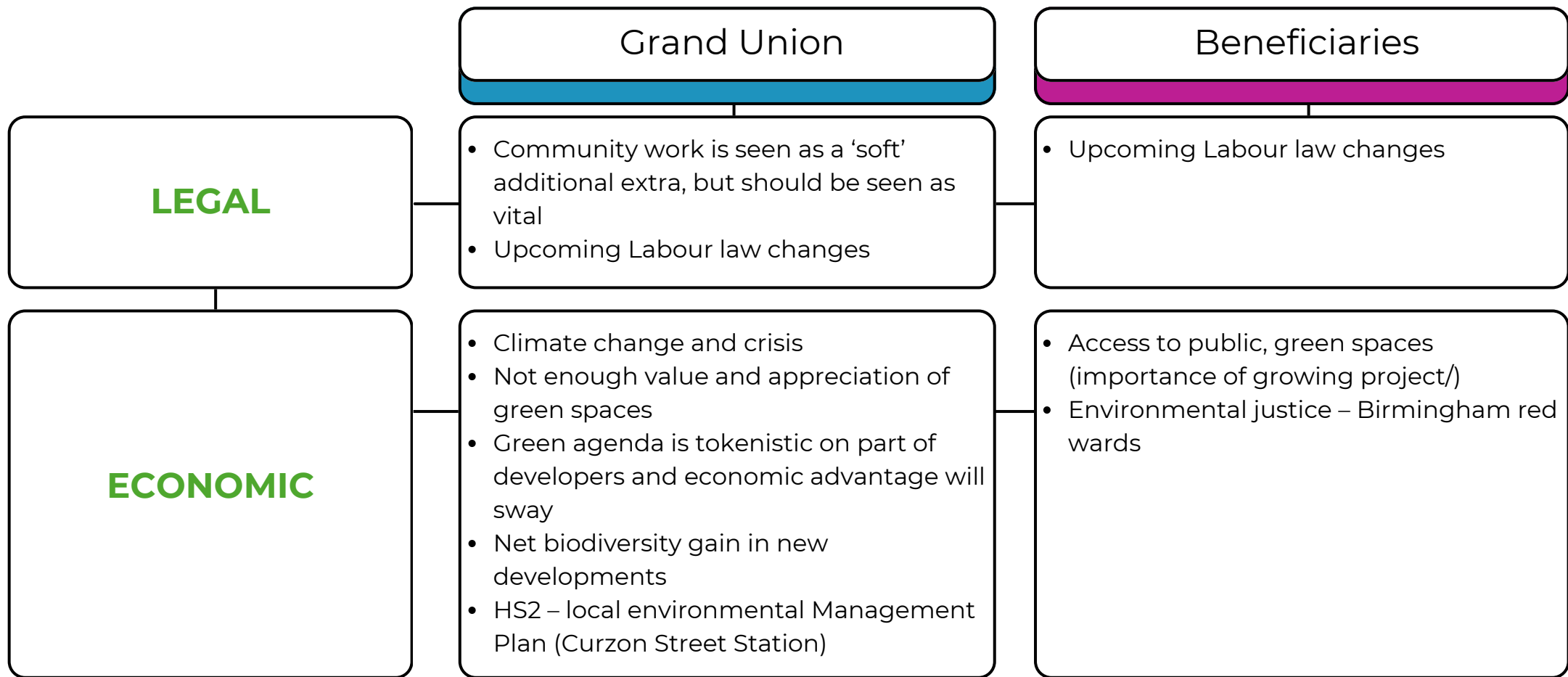
This should provide a platform and network for access to information and opportunities early- to shape the place making work, as part of an East Birmingham impact coalition.



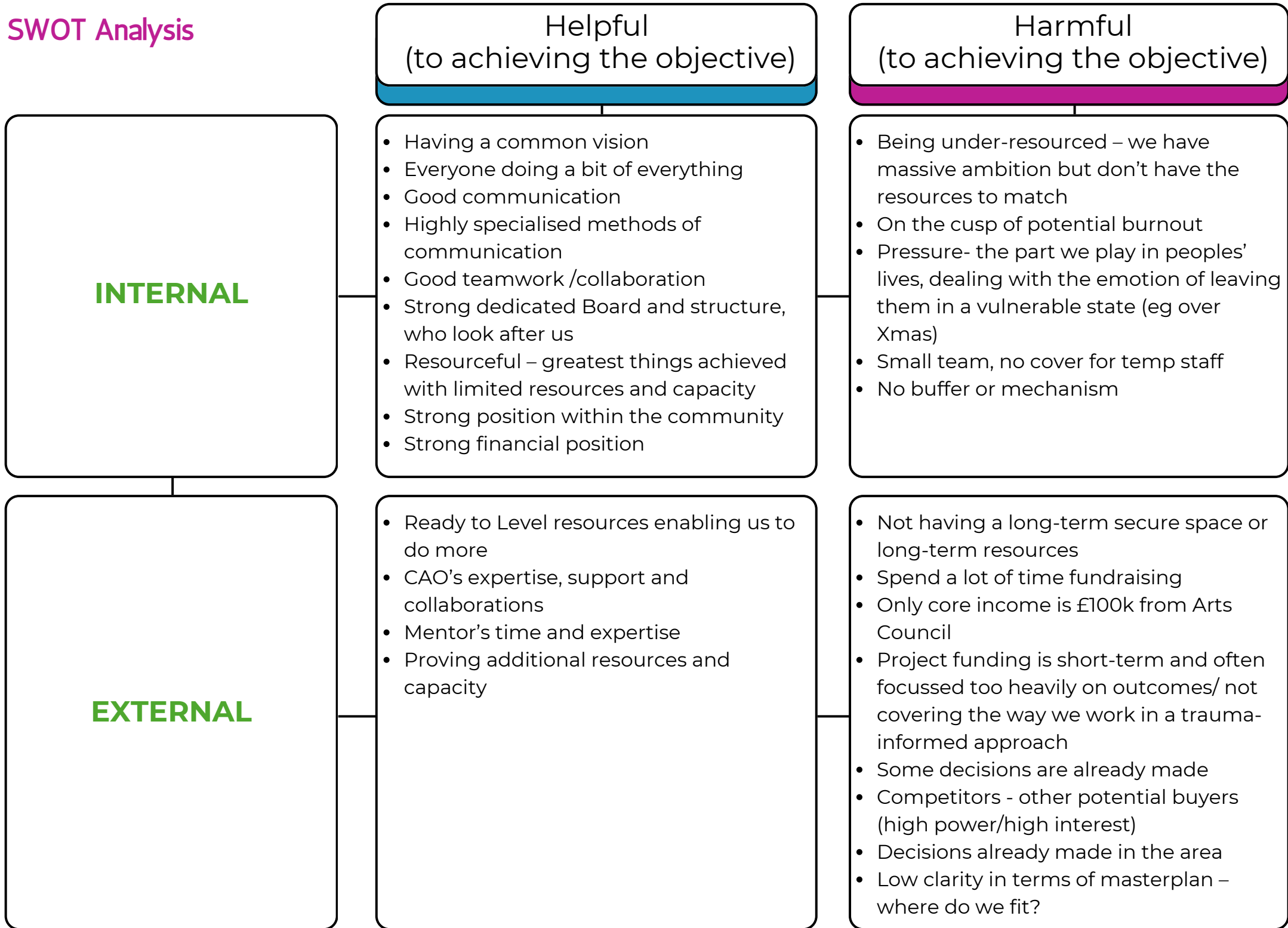
DISSEMINATION

Pestle Analysis





SWOT Analysis



Theory of Change

What is the impact you expect to make?

1. Support art-making, keeping art and artists at the core of our activity and facilitating community-led programming.
2. Create welcoming artistic spaces, working to improve the accessibility of all the spaces we present and make art in. Set firm our foundations, creating a venue that is accessible, welcoming, income generating and gives the organisation a long term base.
3. Be a considerate/welcoming/helpful neighbour, working with our local communities and landowners to improve the area socially and environmentally.
4. Create the best working culture, ensuring it is supportive and nourishing for all who work with our organisation. This includes taking proactive steps to ensure the whole organisation, including board members, staff, freelancers, studio artists and collaborators, reflects the population of Birmingham. It also means ensuring that we are sustainable and independent, resourcing ourselves properly in order to do our work well and look after the people delivering it.

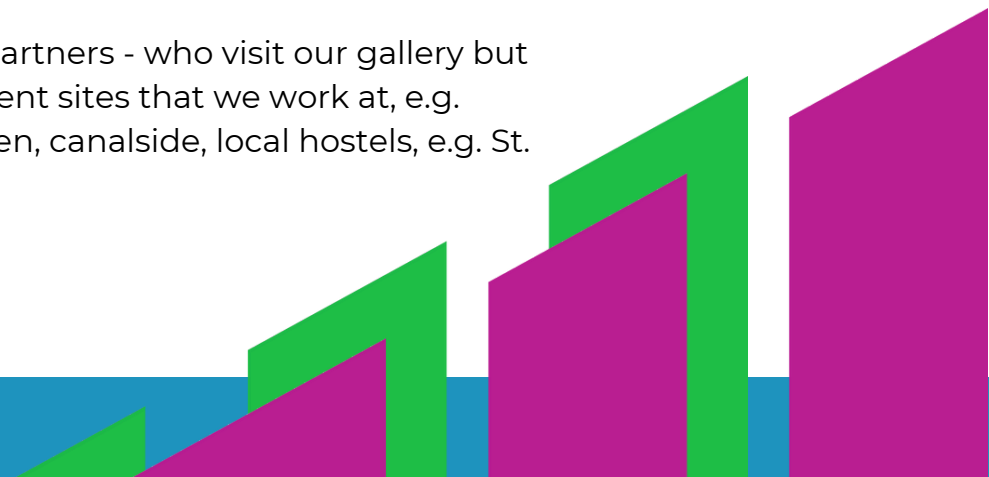
Who is your key audience?

1. Grand Union connects people across sectors, experience and background. It's our ability to find connections between different people, organisations and sectors that create and facilitate new opportunities for art making and programming.

This means our key audiences are wide ranging, e.g: - Local Community, e.g. Minerva Group, Cultivators, Third Sector organisations e.g. Anawim, Crisis, St. Anne's Hostel, St. Basil's, Spring Housing, Canal & River Trust; Artists; Curators and Arts Professionals; Arts and culture organisations; Universities, Students and Lecturers, e.g. UoB partnership, BCU; Relevant businesses, e.g. Bruntwood, Stoford; Governing bodies e.g. Bham City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority; Funders e.g. ACE, NL Communities Fund, T&Fs, GBSLEP.

2. Gallery visitors - we want to increase our in person visitors and create as accessible a space as possible.

Community partners - who visit our gallery but also the different sites that we work at, e.g. Minerva Garden, canalside, local hostels, e.g. St. Anne's.



Artists and arts professionals - we want to increase the amount of people from this audience that visit in person and create as accessible a space as possible. We provide studios for artists which are only accessible currently to people who can manage a flight of stairs.

3. Local people, community groups, land owners, organisations and governing bodies.

4. Staff team, studio artists, board members, freelancers and collaborators.

What is your entry point to reaching your audience?

- Our artistic programmes enable us to develop relationships with different people, groups and organisations, e.g:- The Growing Project connects us with Third Sector Organisations such as Crisis and Anawim.
 - Gallery Programme connects us with the arts community and professionals.
 - The artistic programme enables us to develop relationships with artists operating on an international level with high profile, e.g. Cooking Sections, Alberta Whittle.
 - Our team are proactive in developing strategic relationships, e.g. joining boards and networks such as WMCA Cultural Leadership Board, IntoArt, More Than A Moment, Culture Central, New Art West Midlands, Birmingham Slow Food.
 - We develop partnership projects, e.g. with Uni of Bham, Canal & River Trust, Bham 2022 Festival, engaging with them directly and their wider networks and audiences.

- Our capital project work has enabled us to create relationships and partnerships with developers, governing bodies and the property and planning sector.
- Effective communications about our current spaces and their accessibility, or lack of outdoor space has become increasingly important to our programme which enables a different type of access. Digital media is becoming increasingly important as a way to access programmes, through our website, social media and a new podcast series and films.
- Existing networks through activities we are involved in, e.g: Artistic programmes such as The Growing Project, The Field Commission and Ed Webb-Ingall's Housing Activism programme. Continue to build relationships with key stakeholders in the area across sectors, e.g. local residents, third sector organisations, landowners and governing bodies. Building partnerships such as with Stoford to develop art strategies for local development (Typhoo/BBC). Involvement in Digbeth BID (e.g. Director is currently on the board) and Digbeth Access Group, working collectively to improve the area.
- Opportunities for feedback and critique through:
 - open conversations; anonymous surveys collecting monitoring data and feedback; staff appraisals; equity & inclusion working group activity. Joining wider networks e.g. Culture Central's More than a Moment pledge. Regular training for staff and board members.

What steps are needed to bring about change?

1

Demonstrate the impacts that art and culture can have in different sectors, e.g. effecting social change.

Demonstrate the economic value of art and artists work.

These can be done by GU to its audiences through different types of comms:

- storytelling
- qualitative and quantitative evaluation
- filmmaking
- digital and social media

We can also do this by continuing to develop strategic relationships to be able to influence the artistic and cultural activity of governing bodies and policy.

Continue to develop community partnerships for collaboration and co-programming that is relevant and effective for everyone involved.

2

Improve our venue for staff, resident artists and visitors.

GU has become a vital space for congregation for many different people and we have become known for our quality studios which are professional and enable a sense of community, however our current venue is no longer fit for purpose.

Finding a new venue which GU can sensibly invest in is vital. (We are part way through Junction Works capital development which could be the solution, however still needs significant funding and resourcing before completion therefore carries risk for the organisation.)

3

Recognise our interdependence on other organisations, communities and the local environment.

Work with artists who are socially and politically engaged, that can help give confidence, voice, and agency to our local community in order to work up new solutions for local social and environmental change, for example Resolve collective, through The Field Commission programme and Ed Webb-Ingall's Housing Activism programme.

Ensure partners, local community and stakeholders are involved in our projects, such as the Junction Works capital project, so they have agency in the design and buy into this local facility and resource.

4

Board and SMT to find space and resource to:

- train and educate themselves and the team
- respond positively and effectively to criticism
- create space for feedback and open discussion

Equity & inclusion working group to lead on monitoring working culture and researching best practice that can influence positive change at GU.

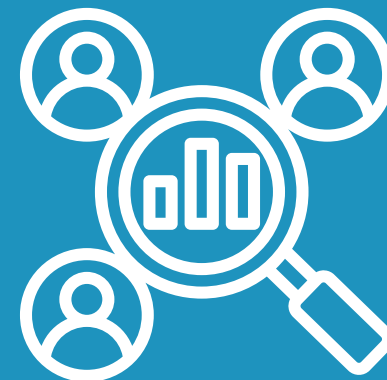
What is the measurable effects of your work?

- 1.** Number of commissions and projects GU creates and facilitates increases.
Number of opportunities for artists in the city/connected to GU has increased.
Artistic projects created in collaboration achieve their aims, e.g. Growing Project creates new green spaces, opportunities for participants to learn new skills and develop socially, communities have agency in their local environment.
- 2.** GU is able to operate in spaces that are more accessible to a wider range of people.
GU runs more strands of programme that do not rely on physical attendance.
- 3.** GU's participation in collaborative ventures, e.g. Digbeth Access Group and Digbeth BID and the successful impacts of those groups on the local environment and economy.
Through regular independent evaluation, we will measure if:
 - GU is a valued member of the community
 - GU has instigated projects that benefit people locally
- 4.** Staff and board team is representative of the diversity of the city and region.
GU's programme is diverse and reflects a wide range of voices, perspectives and experiences.
Longer term tracking of previous staff and artists (studio and who have worked with us in significant ways), try to measure impact of GU's

support on flourishing careers (e.g. Previous programme director Judge for Turner Prize; studio artists in national surveys such as British Art Show).

What are the wider benefits?

- 1.** Arts & Culture policy is improved. The social value of arts and culture is communicated effectively and recognised by governing bodies.
- 2.** Artists have long term, secure and productive spaces in which to develop flourishing careers. Increased and more professional profile for artists and artistic work in the city. Wider economic benefit to the area, attracting people to GU's spaces and artists gaining new work based on increased profile.
- 3.** Improved environment, more opportunities and local community has more agency over its own locale.
- 4.** More investment is attracted into the local area. Art and culture is a valued part of the local ecology. More talent is attracted to GU. Everyone that comes into contact with GU feels welcome and catered for.



What is the long- term change you see as your goal?

- 1** Art is valued as a key part of creating the connections that enable solutions to be found for a variety of social and environmental issues. Proper investment is made into artists and grass roots arts organisations.
- 2** GU runs fully accessible spaces to create and present artistic work in, that are also active social hubs for a wide range of people.
- 3** Social and environmental change is enacted, through new systems, policies and activity that is created collaboratively with local people, groups and governing across sectors.
- 4** GU becomes a leader in field of equitable working best practice.



ACTION PLAN

Action	Detail of actions	Now/so on/ later	Difference outcomes, impacts	Can we achieve this?	What we need to make it happen	First steps
Securing the lease of Junction works	Successfully raise funds for the lease	Now	Secure position in Digbeth	Yes	Advocacy and support for the work across businesses, sectors and institutions (BCC)	Application has been submitted (waiting for panel decision end March-April)
Articulate – community needs for vulnerable people (Community voice and needs)	Deep conversation with communities (active listening) Distil the information and share it, challenge institutions with what their current offer is.	Now	Create meaningful change for vulnerable communities to enable them to achieve long-term change as opposed to quick short-fix	Yes	Showcase successes and articulate them (cultural capita and community approach) Take the risk to show how GU initiatives work	Deliver the research process and communicate it Tailor a programme (future)
Continue to develop the regenerative projects (vehicle used to deliver all the work)	Move from recovery position to prevention From short-term fixes to long-term solutions Continue to build circular economy processes (social enterprise, commercialised activity)	Now	Health and wellbeing of vulnerable people Reduce NHS cost Positive impact on confidence Improved education, better communities	Yes	Raise funds Continue conversations and collaborations with partners and institutions	Inclusive communities fund Continue working with other organisations to expand programme Recovery services provide referral

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF AI SESSIONS



OUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

OVERVIEW OF THE CAO

Our Community Foundation (OCF) are a charity dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged young people and families, with a particular focus on East Birmingham. They began as a Community Organisation in 2006 and have now evolved into a CIO (founded 2020).

They focus on improving health and wellbeing through sports programmes in a variety of

settings. They also tackle unemployment by providing support services for EET and NEET young people to gain skills, experience and qualifications. They do this through sport, youth social action and digital media programmes.

OCF are primarily based at the Naseby Youth Centre in Alum Rock, as well as having a podcast studio in Digbeth.



CONTEXT

Their idea was to engage with their primary audiences through workshops, surveys and an event at the Naseby Centre. They wished to seek views from local young people and families on how best to tackle the issues of skills development, and health and well being in Alum Rock.

Through the AI process this evolved into engaging with their community on two areas:

- Looking to develop a venue/community facility for multiple uses in the area
- Developing a strategy to 'grow your own' OCF youth and community workers



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS SUMMARY

Definition

Initial introductory meeting set out expectations of Ready 2 Level programme and AI process. As part of this is the understanding OCF will deliver a Ready 2 Level event to engage with their community and stakeholders.

Discussed history of OCF, and their achievements and aims as an organisation. They are embedded in their local community for over 17 years and have grown rapidly over the past couple of years.

Discovery

The 'why' of the organisation is clear and at the heart of all they do. The importance of making a positive difference to young people's lives and their stories- including their families and communities. Basharat and team passionate about supporting young people into employment and creating a different narrative for them. They have worked with thousands of young people. Challenge is to maintain their 'DNA' during growth of organisation.

SWOT

STRENGTHS

- **Passion, Charisma and Drive of OCF founder, Basharat**
- **OCF success built on strong relationships**
- **OCF are locally embedded and has a large 'reach'**
- **17 year track record of delivery**
- **Good blend of expertise and skills in the team**
- **Responsive and creative**
- **Positive partnership and collaborative work**
- **Basharat very clear on 'why' OCF exist, and this transmits to the team**

WEAKNESSES

- **OCF dependency on Basharat and his time and energy. There is a need to 'spread the load'**
- **The OCF team are inexperienced or are likely to be working for them in the short term**
- **Policies and procedures could do with a clearer system and structure**
- **Funding is project based**
- **With an emphasis on delivery, reflective practice can be overlooked at times**
- **Finding the right people for the team is challenging**

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Looking to recruit a Programme Manager to oversee logistics of projects**
- **This would enable Basharat to move to CEO role, to concentrate on securing long term funding**
- **Possibility of moving to social enterprise model**
- **To look at how to 'grow your own' potential employees**
- **Improve and refine supervision and reflective practice**
- **New premises or securing asset transfer of Naseby Centre**

THREATS

- **Anything that could happen to Basharat that impairs his ability to manage OCF**
- **Lack of long term core funding**
- **Staff not being the 'right fit' for the organisation as they employ more people**
- **Losing the Naseby Centre due to city council Section 114 notice**

Dream

The vision is for thousands of young people to be made work/university/apprenticeship ready by developing what OCF does best- sports activities, youth social action, mentoring and digital media programmes.

This will require the staff team to grow to at least 10 strong. Roles will include:

- Sports Engagement Coordinator
- Business Development Manager
- Social Media and IT Lead
- Fundraiser
- Learning Mentor Project Coordinator
- Administration Assistant
- Youth workers and mentors

Basharat's aim is to have a venue for OCF that has:

- Indoor multi-sports hall
- Boxing gym
- Gym
- Podcast Studio
- Mentoring Room
- Offices
- Breakout rooms for other organisations
- Youth Social Action base

Design

Can Ready 2 Level Programme help to make dream a reality by providing support, collaboration, expertise and partnership- especially with developing a venue? This will include connecting with the council, Loconomy and Ready 2 Level organisations.

Helpful discussion had with OCF trustee based on learning from AI and Collaborative Learning sessions. Shared SWOT analysis. This will assist in OCF developing a strategy for growth that is enabled and empowered by their board.

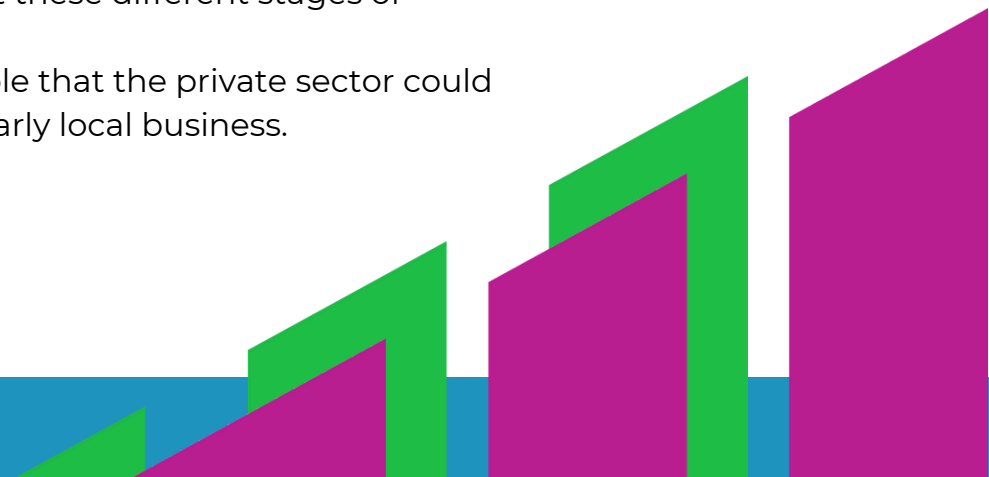
Delivery

Develop the vision and strategy to work towards having an asset in the local community- possibly the Naseby Centre.

For OCF to put the organisational foundations in place to have the capacity to enable this to happen.

Further work needed to engage with the community at these different stages of development.

Explore the role that the private sector could have, particularly local business.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the CAO by the learning mentor

- OCF to develop a strategic plan for growth, that includes how to sustainably embed their DNA
- OCF to look at how they will grow and develop their staff team. To look at what approach they will use to do this and how to effectively use reflective practice
- To develop a short, medium and long term vision and plan, particularly related to having a long term asset
- Work on building foundations for sustainability, particularly with the team of trustees, to increase their effectiveness
- Continue with community consultation and engagement around the possibility of 'taking over' the Naseby Centre. To do this with using a strengths-based approach
- To collaborate with the Save Birmingham campaign
- To seek advice from organisations who have been through the CAT process, eg Norton Hall. To help assess OCF readiness to take on a building such as the Naseby Centre
- Thinking how to mature as an organisation, particularly around how to 'make the most' of Basharat, to utilise his strengths and build overall capacity
- To utilise training such as 'Using a Solution-Focused Approach' for the staff team

- To rethink their mission statement to reduce youth unemployment by 10% as this is difficult to measure. To utilise the example of Unlimited Potential of having a broader mission statement

Recommendations for being Ready to Level

- To collaborate with other Ready 2 Level organisations around youth unemployment
- To use Loconomy and other outside input to help develop a sustainable business plan for OCF and revisit Theory of Change
- To harness the momentum from the Ready 2 Level programme to garner support for the possibility of having the Naseby Centre as an Asset Transfer
- To collaborate with other youth and community organisations around 'growing your own' staff members
- Taking the steps as outlined in the recommendations to OCF will assist in their readiness to level up
- To collaborate with other Ready 2 Level organisations in developing relationships with large institutions such as NHS, Tyseley Energy Park etc, as well as with local (anchor) businesses



THOUGHTS ON LEGACY

- Continue to collaborate with Ready 2 Level Organisations, particularly in relation to developing a community asset and garner further support with action plan
- Basharat to be involved in citywide youth work discussions with the Safe Spaces for Young People network
- To consider using the community engagement/building model such as employed by Open Door to unlock skills, talents and gifts from within the community
- -For this process to enable OCF to become the lead youth organisation in East Birmingham



COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

ACTION PLAN

Introduction

Through the Ready 2 Level Programme and the Appreciative Inquiry process OCF began to focus on how they could move towards having a community asset of their own.

They began to consider how to engage with the local community to ascertain their thoughts, wishes and feelings about a potential Hub/Centre and what it should be used for.

As part of this they held their event at the Naseby Centre in partnership with Inspiring Sisters to have input from girls and women in the community. Initially this used a questionnaire to look at what they identify what services they would like to see offered and how they would like to receive information. In reviewing the event OCF recognised they could use a 'strengths based' approach in future engagement with different sections of the community.

The outputs achieved were:
Number of people reached 43
Number of local events were 1

What we have learnt from the Appreciative Inquiry (summary)

See below, feedback from our consultation:

1. Age (top 4 responses):

- 11-18
- 36-45
- 56-60
- 60+

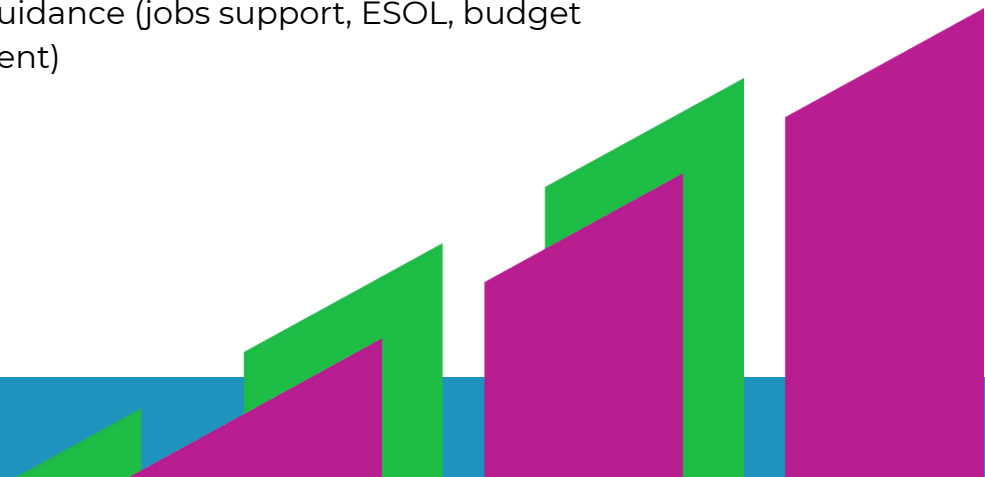
2. Do you currently reside in Alum Rock, Birmingham?

- Yes 90%
- No 10%

If not what is your post code?__B8, B9,B10, B28, B33, B34__

3. What services would you like to see offered at the community centre? (top 4 responses)

- Sport/ Health & wellbeing programmes
- Mental health support
- Activities which bring communities together/ reduce isolation
- Advice & guidance (jobs support, ESOL, budget management)



4. How frequently would you utilise the services offered at the community centre? (top 4 responses)

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Several times a month

5. How do you prefer to receive information about the community centre's services and events? (top 4 responses)

- Flyers and posters
- Social media platforms
- Email newsletters
- WhatsApp group

6. Are there any specific concerns or challenges you face that you believe the community centre could address? (Please specify)

- Lack of interaction between elders and the youth (communities)
- Lack of day trips/ outdoor excursions for women only (i.e. swimming) and families
- A need for more ESOL classes
- A need for Urdu reading and writing classes
- A free car park please!

4. Additional comments or suggestions for improving the community centre's offerings? (direct quotes & statements)

- *"Staff have been supportive, provided a family type atmosphere"*
- *"Amazing place and staff"*
- *"Please continue holding these very important and valuable workshops and community events"*
- *"...Summertime and festival events"*
- *"Have workshops which cater for different age groups"*



COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
1. VISION	To be the lead youth organisation in East Birmingham. Revisit theory of change, develop a strategic growth plan outlining sustainable growth and embedding OCF's DNA.	SHORT-TERM: 0-6 MONTHS; MEDIUM-TERM: 6-12 ONGOING; LONG-TERM: ONGOING	Collaboration with stakeholders, including staff, trustees, and community members, is essential for input in defining strategic goals and objectives.
2. RESOURCES	Identify and allocate resources for staff development, asset acquisition, and implementation of strategic growth plan.	SHORT-TERM: 0-6 MONTHS; MEDIUM-TERM: 6-12	Input from Birmingham City Council, Ready To Level, Loconomy will be crucial to ensure adequate resources are available for implementation
3. RESEARCH	Conduct research on the potential of 'taking over' the Naseby Centre via CAT process and/ or other long-term assets and put together community engagement strategies.	SHORT-TERM: 0-6 MONTHS; MEDIUM-TERM: 6-12	Connect with BCC, NSDU, Ready To Level teams and develop dialogue. Understand current situation and put together business case. Complete ACV nomination for Naseby Centre. Support Save Birmingham Campaign and liaise with Norton Hall to and others for best practice.

COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
4. IMPLEMENTATION	Implement strategies outlined in the growth plan, including staff training, trustee effectiveness, and community engagement activities.	MEDIUM-TERM: ONGOING; LONG-TERM: ONGOING	Collaboration with community members, partner organisations, and stakeholders is required for effective implementation and to ensure alignment with OCF's mission and objectives.
5. COMMUNITY ASSET	Engage in community consultations and engagement activities regarding the potential takeover of the Naseby Centre.	SHORT-TERM: 0-6 MONTHS; MEDIUM-TERM: 6-12	Input from the local community, stakeholders, and organisations involved with the Naseby Centre will be critical to assess feasibility and garner support for the takeover.
'GROW OUR OWN'	Collaborate with other organisations to develop strategies for growing and developing staff members internally.	MEDIUM-TERM: ONGOING; LONG-TERM: ONGOING	Input and collaboration with partner organisations, safer spaces, ABCD programmes, especially those experienced in staff development and training, will be necessary to identify best practices and implement effective strategies.

COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
4. READY 2 LEVEL	Gain ongoing support from Loconomy to put action plan ideas into action, through skills, expertise, connections and support in developing a business case for the Naseby Youth Centre and/ or other assets in East Birmingham. Collaborate with other Ready 2 Level anchor organisations around creating new opportunities for young people & families and tackling youth unemployment.	SHORT-TERM: ONGOING; MEDIUM-TERM: ONGOING; LONG-TERM: ONGOING	Ongoing support from Loconomy, BCC and partners as part of the Ready To Level programme will be essential to develop business case for Naseby Youth Centre. Input and collaboration with other Ready 2 Level organisations will provide opportunities for sharing resources, experiences, and strategies to address common challenges related to youth unemployment and organisational growth.

DISSEMINATION

We carried out the below community consultation:

Dear Participant,
Thank you for taking the time to provide your input. Your feedback is invaluable in shaping the services offered at the community centre in Alum Rock. Please take a few moments to complete this consultation form.

1. What is your age?

- 11-18
- 19-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-60
- 60+

2. Do you currently reside in Alum Rock, Birmingham?

- Yes
- No

If not what is your post code?

3. What services would you like to see offered at the community centre? (Please select all that apply)

- Reduce isolation
- Games/ activities
- Heritage programmes
- Health & wellbeing programmes
- Mental health support
- Sports activities
- Bringing communities together events
- Advice & guidance sessions
- Cost of living crisis assistance
- Help with bills and benefits

4. Are there any specific services not listed above that you would like to see offered? (Please specify)

5. How frequently would you utilise the services offered at the community centre?

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Several times a month
- Once a month
- Occasionally
- Rarely



6. How do you prefer to receive information about the community centre's services and events?

- Flyers and posters
- Social media platforms
- Email newsletters
- Word of mouth
- Community events
- Other (please specify)

7. Are there any specific concerns or challenges you face that you believe the community centre could address? (Please specify)

8. Additional comments or suggestions for improving the community centre's offerings?

Thank you for your participation.

Here is a summary of the responses:

1. Age (top 4 responses)

- 11-18
- 36-45
- 56-60
- 60+

2. Do you currently reside in Alum Rock, Birmingham?

- Yes 90%
- No 10%

If not what is your post code? B8, B9, B10, B28, B33, B34__

3. What services would you like to see offered at the community centre? (top 4 responses)

- Sport/ Health & wellbeing programmes
- Mental health support
- Activities which bring communities together/ reduce isolation
- Advice & guidance (jobs support, ESOL, budget management)

4. How frequently would you utilise the services offered at the community centre? (top 4 responses)

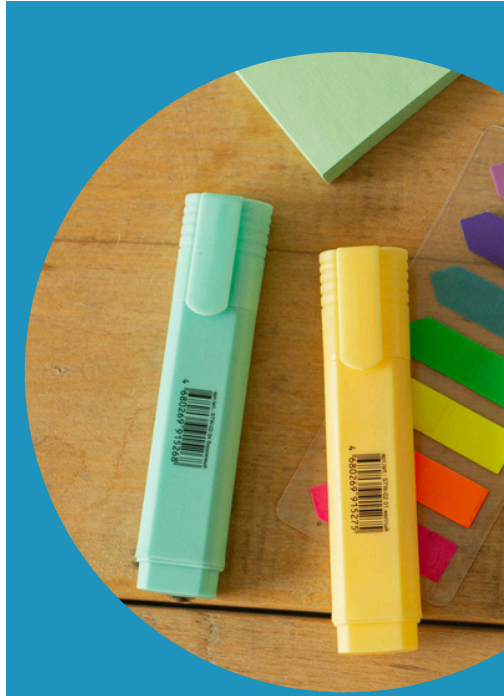
- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Several times a month

5. How do you prefer to receive information about the community centre's services and events? (top 4 responses)

- Flyers and posters
- Social media platforms
- Email newsletters
- WhatsApp group

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- Lack of interaction between elders and the youth (communities)
- Lack of day trips/ outdoor excursions for women only (i.e. swimming) and families
- A need for more ESOL classes
- A need for Urdu reading and writing classes
- A free car park please!



7. Additional comments or suggestions for improving the community centre's offerings? (direct quotes & statements)

- *"Staff have been supportive, provided a family type atmosphere"*
- *"Amazing place and staff"*
- *"Please continue holding these very important and valuable workshops and community events"*
- *"...Summertime and festival events"*
- *"Have workshops which cater for different age groups"*



Consultation Event 7th March 2024

ST MARGARET'S COMMUNITY TRUST



OVERVIEW OF THE CAO

St Margaret's Community Trust is a community development charity which works to care and support all residents of Ward End, Birmingham and they are at the heart of our local community. As an asset-based charity, they facilitate residents to find solutions to individual and community challenges by sharing their skills, gifts and talents to benefit the wider community and make Ward End a better place to live for all. They facilitate a number of events and activities identified by, and led by where possible, local people. These include:

- Community allotment project and outdoor meeting space where people grow and share seeds, produce and skills.

- Women's groups where women of all ages and backgrounds come together for peer support and friendship and learn and share new skills such as carpentry, handicrafts and cooking
- Men's groups, particularly for older men, who have been significantly impacted by loneliness and isolation during the pandemic
- Community celebration events and activities such as joint Eid and Christmas celebrations
- Activities that improve the local environment
- Intergenerational and intercultural arts-based projects



CONTEXT

The project was an action research project with female residents to understand and research the barriers they face in setting up their own business and provide a programme that will build their confidence, develop their skills in areas such as finance, administration and selling and provide advice and support in them starting trading, either as an individual or group/s.

Working with an existing group of women mentoring sessions were provided to identify and work to remove any final barriers they feel they are facing to start their business/enterprise.

A community event, held at the Unity Hubb Centre, to which local women who had an idea or a hobby that they might want to turn into a business were invited. At the event, the existing group of women entrepreneurs shared their experiences, and the opportunities and barriers to setting up businesses were explored.

All sessions were delivered within the context of levelling up so participants became aware of the potential future opportunities and the action plan being developed will be the delivery of this programme within the community both to more women but also other groups who could potentially benefit from the Levelling Up Zone.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS SUMMARY

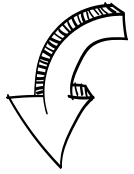
Definition

- Action learning project on women into enterprise
- Building on the work that has been happening over the previous 6 to 12 months with a group of women who are close to setting up their businesses.
- Looking at the barriers local women have in generating an income from their hobbies or interests.
- Explore what the local need is for support services.
- Work towards sustaining the delivery of business support in the future.



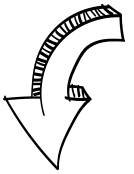
Women into Enterprise – Golden Circles Exercise

WHAT



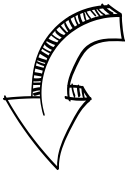
- Regular in-person business support sessions for women to overcome the barriers to self-employment.

HOW



- Small groups
- Mutual support network
- Individualised support from someone who has done it before
- Based in the community

WHY



- Everyone has talents that can be supported to grow. (Feedback from group)

Feedback

What difference has it made to the current participants. – 19/02/2024

- More positivity
- Guidance
- How and where
- Able to tap into an available resource
- Dependable access
- Encouragement
- Showing people it can be done
- Someone who knows what they are talking about
- Confidence
- Consistency
- Team working
- Working with each other
- Kemi has been through it.
- People around each other – supportive
- Uplifted that it can be done
- Kemi has kept it focussed
- Clarity/clear advice and guidance – if need to go back and ask again that's ok
- Location/venue

Dream

What we want to do

- A BUSINESS SUPPORT HUB TO HELP PEOPLE INTO ENTERPRISE
- DIFFERENT BUSINESS TYPES – PRIVATE BUSINESSES, SELF-EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL ENTERPRISES, COMMUNITY BUSINESSES, COMMUNITY GROUPS, CHARITIES
- EXPLORE THEIR IDEAS AND HELP THEM MAKE INFORMED CHOICES
- PROVIDING SUPPORT AND REASSURANCE
- TRAINING
- SIGNPOSTING/ NETWORKING/MARKETING

Why we will be good at it

- RECOGNISING PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS AND TALENTS
- WORKING WITH PEOPLE FROM WHERE THEY AT
- NURTURING
- UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITY
- TRUSTED SPACE
- TAKE AWAY THE FEAR
- SOMEONE TO TALK TO
- SHARING WITH OTHERS
- TRAINING EXPERTS
- SIGNPOSTING – LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Design

Theory of Change – Ward End Business Hub

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

There isn't access to appropriate business support for members of our community, especially women.

Assumptions:

There are people in community who want to set up their own businesses including self-employment.
Current provision doesn't deliver what is needed.

Who is your key audience?

Residents who want to explore their ideas and the requirements and implications of setting up businesses but face challenges that traditional business support services cannot assist with.

Assumptions:

There are people in community who want to set up their own businesses including self-employment.
Current provision doesn't deliver what is needed.

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

There isn't access to appropriate business support for members of our community, especially women.

Assumptions:

There are people in community who want to set up their own businesses including self-employment.
Current provision doesn't deliver what is needed.

What is your entry point to reaching your audience?

Based in the heart of the community – local/walking distance.

Safe and trusted space.

Established relationships.

Already in regular communication with some people in the community.

Assumptions:

The people we are already in contact with are the people who want to set up businesses.

The message that the support is available will be spread through our existing contacts.

What are the steps needed to bring about change?

Being clearer about what a business support hub might look like

- What services does it deliver?
- How are they delivered: 1-to-1, mentoring in small groups, open access advice and guidance?
- Who is it for?

Identifying resources to deliver:

- People
- Money
- Spaces
- Partners

What is the measurable effect of your work?

The creation of locally owned businesses.

People are able to make informed decisions and choices about the route they want to take.

Assumptions:

There are sufficient enquiries that can become viable businesses.

What are the wider benefits of your work?

Inspiration to others.

Setting up businesses is more accepted as an option.

Perception of how the neighbourhood is seen, a place to 'do business'.

What is the long term change you see as your goal?

Increased economic activity in the community.

More income generated to spend locally.

A more confident community – 'we can do it'.

Local businesses are more visible.

Assumptions:

The businesses created will keep the money and wealth created locked in to the local economy.

Delivery

Develop the vision for the business support hub. Further work needed to understand the support requirements of people at the different stages of development; idea/hobby, early first steps, new starts, existing.

Identifying resources to implement.

Explore the role of the existing private sector.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the CAO by the learning mentor

Visioning exercise with the staff/board to explore what any business support hub will look like now and in the medium to long term. To include:

- Who is it for? People with an idea, people with a product, people already trading, women only, everyone.
- What type of businesses? Social enterprises, private businesses, sole traders, voluntary organisations that want to trade.
- How is the support delivered?

Look at other examples of community business support services, such as Centre4 in Grimsby <https://centre4.org.uk/services/community-business-hub/>, what they deliver and how it is resourced.

Carry out more research into the business support needs of the community.

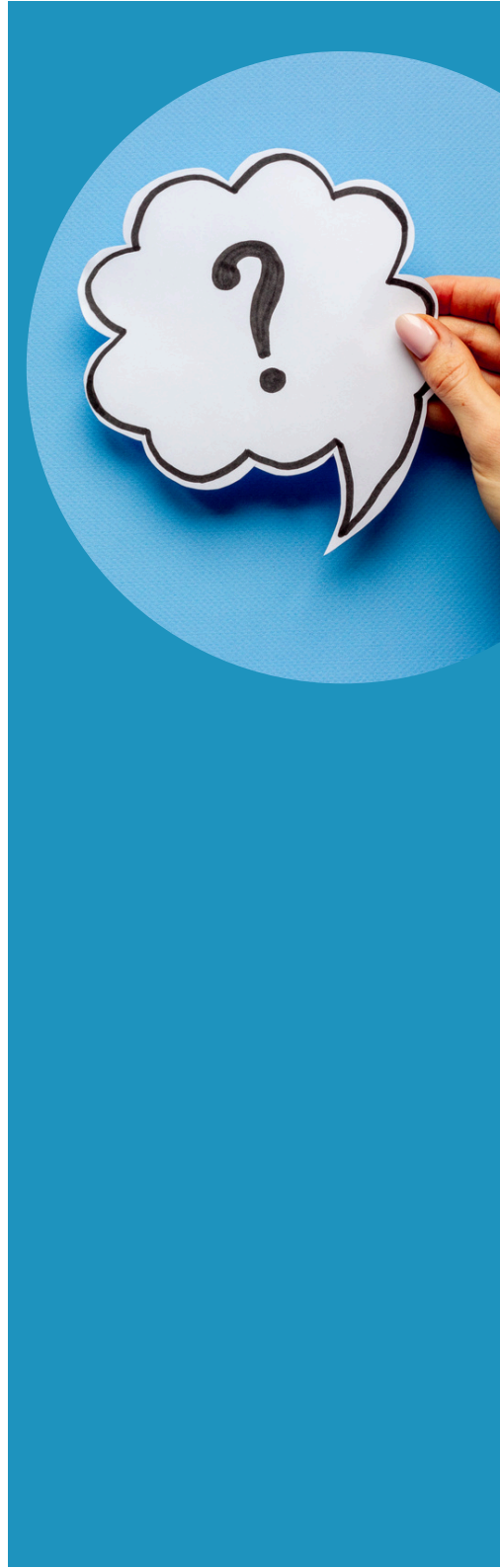
Collaborate with other CAOs to explore the development of a network of business support services across East Birmingham.

Develop networks with anchor institutions and private businesses to build routes to market for the emerging businesses.

Recommendations for being Ready to Level

For St Margaret's CT's business support hub to play a role in the levelling up opportunities locally it needs to be able to utilise the organisation's position in the community. It could do this by:

- Creating the links with the large anchor organisations to create a route to market for the goods and services being delivered by the new businesses (eg culturally appropriate and specialist catering services for hospital, businesses on the energy park).
- Develop relationships with local (anchor) businesses:
 - what is the business hub offer to them
 - what support can they provide to the business hub and/or the emerging businesses
 - can the emerging businesses be part of their supply chain
- Have a better understanding of the aspirations of the other CAOs for the delivery of business support – create a network of business support hubs – each with their own geography or specialisms?



THOUGHTS ON LEGACY

A more viable, vibrant, and inclusive business community in Ward End and East Birmingham.

Opening up opportunities to explore the potential for setting a business to residents who wouldn't otherwise consider it.

Creating a mutually supportive network of businesses in Ward End.

Being part of the existing and any emerging business support services networks in East Birmingham.



COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The project was initiated to find out what skills, crafts and experience local women have and to identify any barriers they face and support they would need in setting up their own business.

Local women who had an interest in starting their own business were invited to a community event, held at the Unity Hub. The event was split into three sections. We began with working in 2 groups to explore what their skills or hobbies are, what barriers they face and what support they believe they need to take their ideas to the next level. After this was fed back to the wider group we had a panel where the existing group of women entrepreneurs shared their experiences, and the opportunities and barriers to setting up businesses were explored. We also brought in women who operate businesses within different legal structures for example CIC's, Co-op's and private Ltd company to talk about their experience and answer questions. The last section was a chance to network and speak to people one on one.

The outputs achieved were:

Number of people reached 22.

Number of local events were 1

What we have learnt from the Appreciative Inquiry (summary)

From the event we hosted we learnt that the skills within the community are vast.

The questions we asked has given us a framework to work within should the Unity Hub wish to continue to work with these women. We now know some of their key barriers and fears that would need to be addressed in order for them to grow and sustain any business or ideas they have. We also uncovered how important it is for those who are in the early stages of business to have a space or community of peer support. We have seen that this for some women can be the difference in continuing or giving up.

We also identified that the time of day we held the session perhaps defined the local women we attracted. Which could mean women who work but also wish to start a business may have been excluded from attending.

How to identify need and whose need are we going to support at what level. From idea/hobby to trading or already have a product to ready to trade.



COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
1. RESOURCES	Identify what resources are available to take the action plan forward.	SHORT TERM	Information about available funding
2. VISION	What do you want to see happening? Clarify the approach that wants to be taken forward. Is it to create a business hub or provide business support?	SHORT TERM	
3. RESEARCH	Who is the target group? Which types of business are going to support? What is the current make-up of the business sector in Ward End? Other examples nationally, how are they resourced? Find out what the aspirations of the other anchor organisations are? Explore if and how the private sector can support local businesses.	MEDIUM AND LONGER TERM	Mapping information from partners. Details of resources.
4. IMPLEMENTATION	Actions depend on outcomes of vision and research.	LONG TERM	Partners Resources/funding

DISSEMINATION

Narrative summary of each community dissemination made, evidencing the numbers in attendance, feedback received and with photographic and social medias.

A 'Women's Enterprise event was held at St Margarets on 7th March, local women were invited to share what crafts, skills or hobbies they have. Workshops were facilitated with a key focus on:

- What skills, crafts, hobbies women have
- What support women would need to set up a business?
- What barriers may be in the way.

Please see attached flyer.

The event was advertised via BVSC, Community WhatsApp groups and through the circulation of a flyer.

Professionals representing different types of business were invited, they took part in the workshops and a panel discussion.

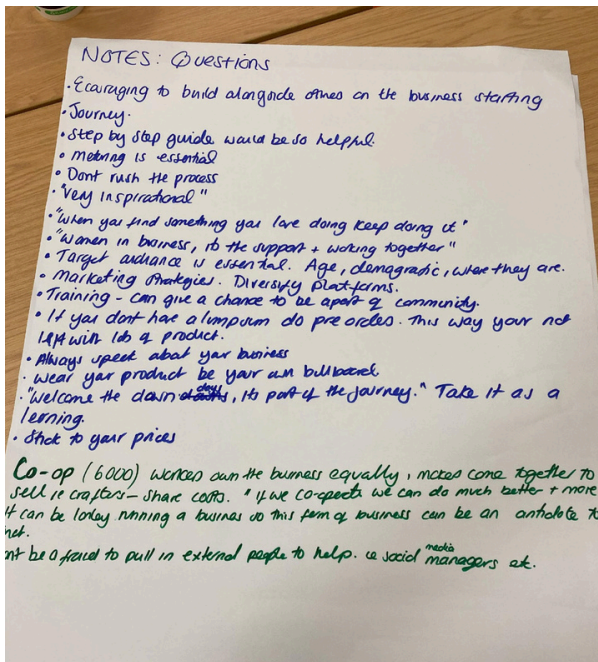
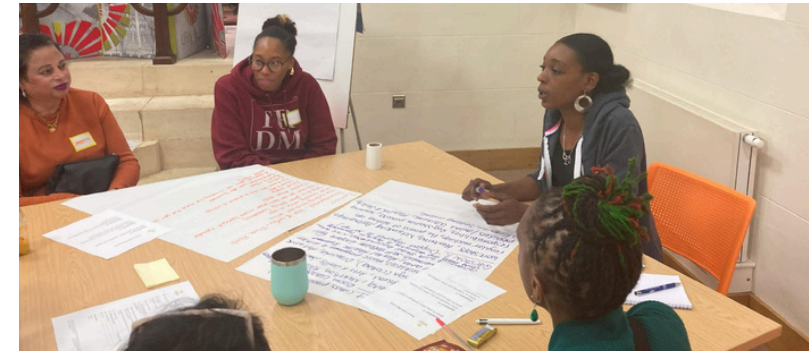
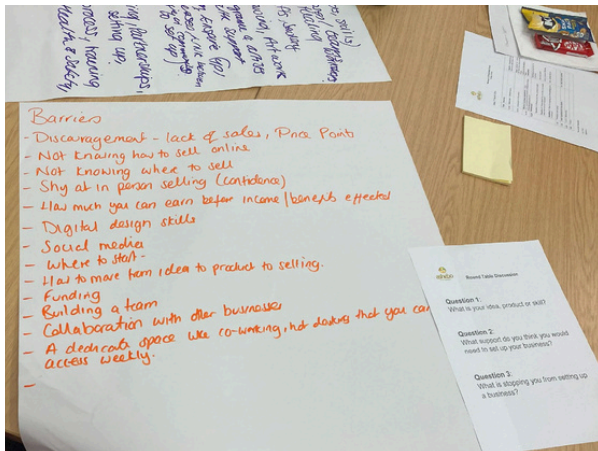
Out of 30 women that pre-registered for the event 22 attended.

The feedback from the event:

- What skills hobbies did women have:
Women had a range of skills and hobbies Sowing, painting, Upcycling, Knitting, Flower arranging, Jewellery making, Henna, community development and coaching.
- What support they would need to set up a business?
Mentoring, training, policy information, networking opportunities, regular meeting, business start up information, how to sell online, what is needed in relation to – insurance, legal documentation, tax, qualifications
- What barriers may be in the way.
Venue, space, time, is the product right to sell, fear of the unknown and failure, marketing, promotion, how it affects benefits collaboration.



PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF AI SESSIONS



WOMENS ENTERPRISE

Thursday 7th March 2024
12:00pm - 3:00pm

You are invited to the Unity Hub's **FREE** women's enterprise event.

Join us to find out how you can make money from your hobbies, crafts and skills.

Local women will be sharing their products and experiences of how they have turned their passions into businesses.

An opportunity to network and a Free lunch will also be provided.

●●●●●

Book your place [HERE](#)

Or call 07930856817 for more information

URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

OVERVIEW OF THE CAO

The Urban Development Foundation (UDF) was established in 2004 as a charity (1105249). UDF focuses on serving the communities in and around East Birmingham.

UDF's mission is to create resilience in the communities of East Birmingham by nurturing and incubating grassroots organisations.

The Foundation has brought together professional volunteers and people from all walks of life. Their contribution has developed into community

projects that have been identified and used by people in need. UDF's role has widened to include research, training, dissemination, consultancy and the innovation of new concepts.

UDF has set out to support members of the community through grassroots infrastructure to take responsibility for their community. Empower them with skills and confidence to tackle complex issues, and in defined areas of deprivation and/or need.



**Urban
Development
Foundation**



CONTEXT

In the context of the Levelling Up programme, UDF recognises the paramount importance in addressing multifaceted challenges, our focus lies on implementing comprehensive transport and infrastructure improvements, aligning with the new HS2 line, to unlock economic potential. Simultaneously, we actively support community-led initiatives to enhance local centres and green spaces, nurturing the heart of urban life. UDF prioritises health and wellbeing by collaborating with the medical sector, introducing innovative solutions such as social prescribing to bridge health disparities. We believe that our approach, grounded in collaboration and sustainability, aligns with the broader goals of the Levelling Up programme, fostering equitable development and improving the overall quality of life for residents in East Birmingham.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

SUMMARY

Definition

VISION

- Incubating other organisations
- Become a community anchor with a base/asset in Small Heath
- Develop income generation
- Provide services to communities across all of East Birmingham, including Bangladeshi, Kashmiri and refugee communities
- Become a 'One Stop Shop' for residents and community organisations
- Develop Halal mortgage options / housing association model

Discovery

Our purpose to exist is to 'Support grass roots organisations become resilient and self sufficient'

WHY DOES UDF EXIST?

- Came from the SRB1 programme
- Small Heath Forum was also a precursor
- Established after this in 2004
- Established to meet the needs of the BAME community – specifically Bangladeshi, new arrived communities from Eastern Europe for example, Italian Bangladeshis and Somalian from Horn of Africa.
- Offered access to mainstream services that were not otherwise being accessed by these groups

- At this time, there was a lack of voluntary sector support organisations working with these communities
- Offered assistance in integrating into local communities and UK life
- Currently has 4 trustees, 7 volunteers and sessional staff

GOALS

- Capacity building – for both UDF and other third sector organisations in the area
- Diversify income stream so that not reliant on grants
- Want to be in a position to tender for larger contracts
- Want to have a building that can generate income
- Model that Small Heath Forum used – they bought a church building and then incubated other voluntary organisations
- Short term – find a building / base in Small Heath
- Medium term – make the asset self-sustaining
- Medium term – house / incubate other organisations – one stop shop model
- Long term – self sustaining and not reliant on grants
- Managed growth



CURRENT SERVICES

- Capacity building – governance support to other orgs., developing financial policies and procedures, compliance with charity commission rules etc.
- More trusted than BVSC as they are local and embedded in the community – BVSC are sometimes viewed as being too close to the council
- Employs sessional staff and volunteers to run the services
- Offered telephone support during covid
- Information and Guidance services – a core part of what they do, but not always funded. Takes lots of volunteer hours. Users referred locally and through the mosque.
- Support mosques in the area, particularly in terms of governance and diversifying and income generation
- Offers mediation support for couples pre-divorce – there is a cultural understanding
- Work with social services around child protection and domestic abuse cases
- Service gap – a need to develop more services for women in the community

WHAT ARE YOU REALLY GOOD AT?

- Helping grassroots organisations
- Family support
- Bid writing and making connections – have secured a number of small grants over the years and are well known in the community and sector
- In depth understanding about the charity sector and governance

TRUSTEES

- 1 with medical background
- An accountant
- Young person who works for Amazon
- Kabir gives the most time to the org
- Used to have a woman on board, but not any more – would like to recruit
- Would like someone with a disability also represented on the board



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

(Internal) Focus on your positive personal attributes and those of your staff, eg adaptability or scalability

- Financially sustainable
- Structured and well managed
- Competent management
- Openness & transparent
- Ability to write bids & raise funds - recently secured £50K from lottery
 - Have a fundraising plan and target for next year
 - Good relationship with funders
- Wealth of knowledge in the sector
- Well connected with the communities
 - Good at collaborating
- Known within the voluntary sector
- Ability to nurture grassroots organisation
- We are accessible & Multilingual
- Ability to engage with diverse community
 - Honesty – often use external consultants to carry out evaluations of their programmes
 - Don't compromise on their values and beliefs
 - Aware of what's happening in the city
 - Very place-based
 - Focussed and forward thinking
 - Strategic
 - Trusted

WEAKNESSES

(Internal) Concentrate on the negative internal aspects of your charity, eg lack of adequate skills or cash

- Management diversity
- IT skilled staff (would like to digitise everything)
- Needs & Interest analysis of Vol Sector
- Community asset base
- Creating resilience in East Birmingham
- Lack of surplus funds
- Funding dependency – need an asset to be able to generate income
- No core funding
- No core staffs
- Lack of office space
- No meeting area
- Toilet facilities
 - Kabir writes all bids currently
 - Organisation in general is very reliant on Kabir's input
 - Need a volunteer training programme to upskill and build a strong base of people to take on some of the work of Kabir
 - Not a particularly diverse board



OPPORTUNITIES (EXTERNAL)

List what external opportunities exist for the benefit of your company, eg: untapped markets

- Establish our sense of belonging
- Meeting the needs of BAME Community
- To be self-sufficient and self-sustainable – do not want to be dependent on just 1 individual
- To improve Information technology
- Collaboration & partnership work
- Community Cohesion
- Develop Community Hub / One Stop Shop
- Infrastructure creating Opportunity
- Best Practise
- Create work Culture
 - Significant opportunity tied to securing a base / premises within Small Heath
 - Being part of the R2L programme is an opportunity in itself – recognition as an anchor org, connections with others, relationship with BCC
 - Potential of being involved with the creation of a business improvement district on the Coventry Road
 - Opportunity to incubate and nurture other groups – help them with funding, HR and governance
 - Rental income from buying residential properties
 - Create a subsidiary to generate income
 - Create a pipeline of talent – nurture young people in the community

THREATS (EXTERNAL)

List what external factors may have a negative impact on the growth of your enterprise, eg your competition

- Competition - need to turn this into collaboration
- Community politics
- Exploitation
- Accusation
- Local politics
- Competing with larger organisation
- Divide and rule
- Manipulation
- Dishonesty Lack of transparency
- Bitter Relationships
 - Anything to harm Kabir's own personal reputation would have an impact on the whole organisation



PESTLE

Political:

- Government Policies and Regulations: Charities are influenced by political decisions. Changes in government policies, tax laws, and regulations impact their operations. For instance:
- Tax Deductions: Alterations in tax deduction rules affect donor behaviour. Charities must adapt fundraising strategies accordingly.
- Funding Availability: Government funding programs may fluctuate based on political priorities. Charities need to stay informed about available grants and subsidies. If there is a change of Government at the next election, will Levelling Up finance remain available?
- Advocacy and Lobbying: Charities engage in advocacy work to influence policies related to their cause. Political support or opposition affects their ability to drive change.

Economic:

- Donor Behaviour: Economic conditions directly impact charitable giving. During economic downturns, donations may decline as individuals prioritise personal finances.
- Fundraising Strategies: Charities must diversify funding sources. Economic stability affects corporate sponsorships, individual donations, and grant availability.
- Cost Management: Economic fluctuations impact operational costs. Charities need financial resilience to weather economic challenges.

- Due to the position that BCC finds themselves in, funding for third sector organisations will be extremely limited over the coming years.
- What economic opportunities might there be from private sector redevelopment investment in the city?

Social:

- Community Engagement: Charities play a crucial role in community development. Their programs address social issues, promote inclusivity, and enhance well-being.
- Demographic Trends: Understanding population dynamics helps charities tailor their services. Ageing populations, urbanisation, and migration patterns influence their focus areas.
- Public Perception: Charities rely on public trust. Social awareness campaigns and transparent communication build credibility.



Technological:

- Digital Transformation: Charities should embrace technology for efficiency and outreach. Key areas include:
- Online Fundraising Platforms: Leveraging digital platforms for donations.
- Data Management: Efficiently tracking donor information and impact metrics
- Social Media: Engaging with supporters and sharing success stories.
 - Storytelling is really important – particularly around the raised profile of E Brum organisations through the R2L programme itself.
- Cybersecurity: Charities handle sensitive data; safeguarding it is critical.

Legal:

- Compliance and Governance: Charities must adhere to legal requirements
- Reporting: Regular financial reporting ensures transparency.
- Employment Laws: Proper management of staff contracts, wages, and workplace safety.
- Charitable Status: Maintaining tax-exempt status requires compliance with legal norms.
- Environmental:
- Sustainability: Charities can promote environmental consciousness:
- Green Practices: Implementing eco-friendly policies within their operations.

- Climate Change Initiatives: Addressing environmental challenges aligns with their mission.
- Community Resilience: Charities contribute to disaster preparedness and recovery.
 - Likely to be a greater need for community organisations to set up and fill the gaps where cuts in BCC budgets are reduced.

Design

Theory of Change

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

What will you solve by having a base in Small Heath?

- Will create a community hub that will act as a once-stop-shop (for the needs of both individuals and businesses)
- Will give the organisation financial sustainability by being able to generate revenue

Who is your key audience?

Grass Root Organisations

Voluntary organisations

Based Groups

Diverse Community

Funders

Statutory organisations: Seen as a negative thing to engage with social services / police– therefore a one-stop-shop would make access easier, as no-one else will know what you are entering the building for, and what services you are accessing. Important to bring the services to the community, reducing travel for individuals to access support.

Potential collaborators – have a list of 30ish organisations that they have already worked with.

Who are your stakeholders?

Clients and services users

Volunteers

Voluntary groups

Women's groups

Faith Based Organisations Mosque / Madrasa

Local Business

Organisations with a social purpose – including some private enterprises?

What is your entry point to reaching your audience?

- Needs to be in the heart of the community – local / walking distance (particularly women)
- Services available in community languages to allow access
- UDF already have a record of delivery, established relationships and a database of contacts
- Needs to be seen as a safe space

What steps are needed to bring about change?

- Securing a site (will rent in short term if necessary)
- Business development to generate income – particularly around the asset (conferences, events, training space, meeting rooms, offices, kitchens etc.)
- Identify potential partners who could use the space – need to do an analysis of both collaborators and potential competitors
- Need to move away from service delivery themselves - want to enable others to do so
- Need to be innovative
- Need to upskill volunteers and increase paid staff – too much reliance of Kabir at the moment, which is a significant risk

Delivery – need to provide the following from the base: advocacy, cllrs surgeries, IAG

What is the measurable effect of your work?

- To become the incubator and facilitator of the frontline services – enabling other organisations to deliver
- Upskilling partner organisations and helping them with business development, fundraising and HR etc. Want to empower others and help them access funding
- Act as an umbrella organisation

What is the long-term change you see as your goal?

Increased capacity.

Smaller organisations growing and then 'fleeing the nest'.

UDF to cast themselves in the community and grow, developing others with them.

Delivery

Action Planning – securing an asset

1. Identify potential premises and locations.
2. Shortlist the criteria required for a building. Important to include the potential to generate income to ensure financial sustainability.
3. Carry out feasibility studies for individual sites once identified. May need to secure funding to pay for this?
3. Fundraise for a deposit. UDF has individuals who are willing to invest money or provide a loan. Need to decide whether a separate entity is established to purchase a property, and whether the charity then buys it back or simply rents it from the private investor/owners. Need to explore the legalities of this and ensure it is transparent for investors and future funders. Some scoping work is required around the legal structure of a separate organisation that will purchase the building. Advice from the Community Land Trust?



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the CAO by the learning mentor

Short term

- Secure a building/asset (either as a purchase, community transfer or lease). Key requirements are an accessible location for the communities that UDF serves and the ability to generate income from the building.
- Fundraising / securing finance for investment into a building/asset.
- UDFs ability to scale up to meet increasing demands by service users ('customers').

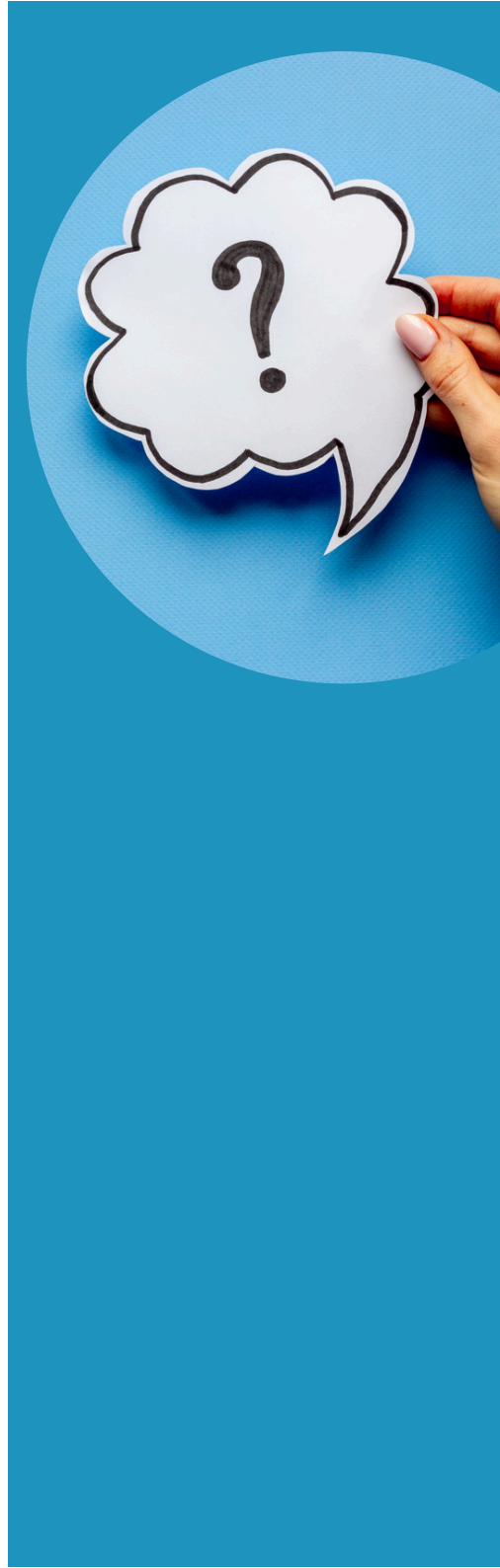
Long term

- Upskilling and training of volunteers and securing income for more paid opportunities. Important to mitigate against the risk of Kabir doing the majority of the work at present. Needs a skilled team to ensure the sustainability of the organisation.
- Identifying partners and collaborators to deliver direct services to individuals, so that UDF can focus on supporting emerging organisations. Also important for these partners to potentially be fee-paying tenants.
- Exit strategy for existing chair/trustees.

Recommendations for being Ready to Level

- Use the organisation's influence to advocate for policies and practices that benefit the community, such as improved infrastructure

- and better public services. An example of this can be to spearhead conversations about establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) on Coventry Road.
- Collaborate with other local community organisations, schools, statutory agencies, and other businesses to address community needs collectively. This could involve joint initiatives, resource sharing, or sponsoring community events.
- Creating awareness that you are an anchor organisation/incubator and have in place access to relevant stakeholders ('access to markets') so that you have the ability to, whether through introductions to potential funders/stakeholders or guidance on market entry strategies, can significantly accelerate their growth.
- Offering workshops, seminars, and training sessions on various aspects of charity, such as business development, marketing, finance, and legal matters, can help grass roots organisations develop their skills and knowledge base.
- Widening UDFs trustee group – skills audit (IT, Commercial business background, HR, Sector knowledge, Funding, MarComms)
- Existing policy gaps e.g. Environmental Policy, Building management ISO9001?
- Create HR Portal – others can access/recruitment.
- Funding unit - bespoke



THOUGHTS ON LEGACY

1. Emergence of small grass roots org – incubating/supporting.
2. Continued engagement - collaboration with the other 9 orgs – meet quarterly, UDF are happy to draft terms of reference if all agree.
3. Work on joint funding opportunity.
4. Peer to peer support.
5. Sharing good practice – study visits.
6. Inspiration for future projects - reflect on the lessons learned from the programme and how they can inform future initiatives.
7. Call to action - getting involved in related efforts by BCC should there be a follow up on the R2L programme.



COMMUNITY ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Introduction

What we have learnt from the Appreciative Inquiry (summary)

The appreciative inquiry allowed us to explore and at times challenge what the purpose of UDF is and what role we need to play to provide meaningful contribution as an anchor organisation.

The SWOT and Golden Circle helped us realise our strengths and the opportunities available to us.

The Theory of change session helped us think through what we want to achieve, and we need to get there and the resources we need.

The overall process has helped us understand our key focus and services but most importantly our USP and how we differ from other organisations that are operating within the same areas.

Our main takeaway from the sessions has been we need to:

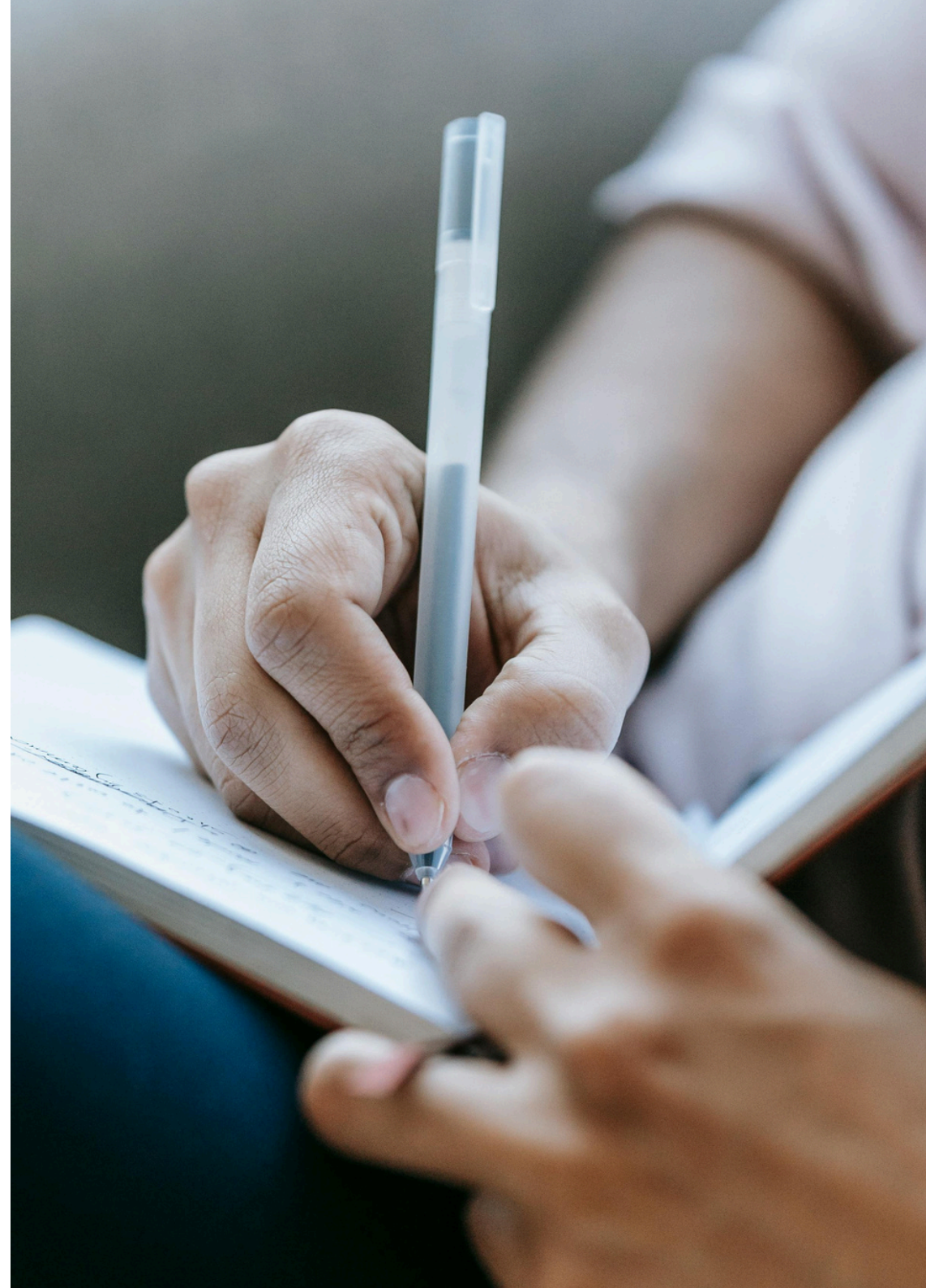
- Be focussed on our services and try not be everything to everyone, we have our unique USP we need to leverage our strength.
- We are more of a b2b organisation and that become clear during the AI process, we will be position ourselves accordingly.
- Engage in more collaboration opportunities across the city and in East Birmingham.
- Upskill our staff and volunteers.
- Undertake a skills analysis and identify gaps and try and recruit a small cadre of trustees.



Summary of the Programme delivered

We have fulfilled all the key items as we have listed in our project application. These are as follows:

- Arranged Action Learning Network events, (ALNE) sharing experiences, and collaboratively learning. The event aims to contribute insights, foster collective advancement, and drive positive change, aligning with the Levelling Up agenda for the community's betterment.
- Produced digital material for UDF (i.e. roller banner) and improved our website.
- Attend 4 Collaborative sessions on:
09/02/24, 23/02/24, 15/03/24, 25/03/24
- Attend the Look and Learn Visit on: 01/03/24
- Engage with 9 AI sessions with our Learning Mentor's Kathy Hopkin and Mashkura Begum
- Organised a local event on Monday 25th March 2024 that was attended by over 30 people. Keynote speakers included Assistant High Commissioner from Bangladesh, Karolina Medwecka (BCC), video message by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street.
- Produced a realistic action plan that will help UDF progress and play a key part in future Ready 2 Level initiatives.



COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
1.	Scan what is available in terms of suitable BCC assets that we can apply for as part of asset transfer. This would also be looking at potential private sites.	MARCH - MAY	BCC
2.	To draft a criteria list for the type of venue we are looking for that would be suitable for us.	APRIL - MAY	UDF
3.	To draft a brief for feasibility study	MARCH - JUNE	UDF
4.	Explore and understand the right legal structure for UDF that is needed to take on a physical asset (i.e. is a charity suitable or should think about becoming a CIO or another alternative.	MARCH - JULY	UDF Birmingham Community Matters

COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

Action Area	Description	Timeline	Where we need input from other partners
5.	Enhance existing database of stakeholders working with and would like to work in the future especially if base is secured who would UDF like to partner with?	MARCH – JULY 2024	UDF
6.	Explore the potential funding opportunities for capital work	MAY – AUG 2024	UDF Get Grants
7.	Training Plan for Volunteers and Trustees (Undertake Skills gap analysis – see what skills are necessary within the leadership to take the organisation through the next period of growth)	APRIL – JULY 2024	UDF

DISSEMINATION

