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A scoping review of place-based approaches to community engagement and support

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A scoping review of place-based approaches to community engagement and support

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Glossary

ABIs	Area-based interventions
C2.0	Communities 2.0
CDP	Community Development Project
CDF	Child Development Fund
CF	Communities First
CPPs	Community Planning Partnerships
CRF	Community Renewal Fund
CVCs	County Voluntary Council
DIU	Digital Inclusion Unit
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Funded
EU	European Union
FF	Families First
FRAIT	Family Resilience Assessment Instrument Tool
FS	Flying Start
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFS	Institute of Fiscal Studies
IVAR	Institute for Voluntary Action Research
KAS	Knowledge and Analytical Services
LAs	Local Authorities
LAGs	Local Action Group
LDBs	Lead Delivery Bodies
LDS	Local Development Strategies
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NI	Northern Ireland

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBAs	Place-based approaches
PSB	Public Services Board
RAG	Red, Amber, Green rating
SIF	Social Investment Fund
UC	Universal Credit
VTF	Valleys Taskforce
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office
WIMD	Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
WRN	Wales Rural Network

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report forms part of the evidence base to inform developments on Welsh Government community policy. This work started in 2019 with an initial remit to support Welsh communities through the transition with the UK's exit from the European Union [EU] in January 2020. Following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the focus of the work shifted to take into consideration a broader range of new and evolving challenges facing Welsh communities - including the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate emergency, and the ongoing impact of austerity and welfare reform.
- 1.2 These challenges do not impact everybody equally, with certain communities of place and communities of interest being disproportionately impacted. The Welsh Government's 'A More Equal Wales, The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act, 2010' define Communities of Interest and Communities of Place as follows¹:
- Communities of interest definition: "Those who share an identity are described as 'communities of interest'. For example, these people maybe: lone parents; carers; those who share a common first language; or those who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. In addition, groups of people who share an experience, for example: people who have experienced homelessness; the same local health and social care system; or a local service. Accordingly, it is likely that people will be part of several communities of interest" (p.8).
- Communities of place definition: "Those who share a geographical location, are described as 'communities of place'. For example, these locations maybe where people reside, work, visit or otherwise spend a substantial portion of their time" (p.8).
- 1.3 Place-based approaches [PBAs] enable funding and resources to be targeted at communities most in need of support. Effective community engagement is integral to the success of PBAs
- 1.4 In the broadest sense, PBAs, also known as 'area-based initiatives' [ABIs], can be characterised as *"any intervention, policy, programme, or action that aims to improve health and reduce health inequalities and is delivered at a local- or regional-level, excluding national level interventions."* (p.6)²

¹ Welsh Government., 2021. A More Equal Wales, The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010. Statutory Guidance [Socio Economic Duty - a More Equal Wales - 2021](#)

² McGowan, V.J., Buckner, S., Mead, R., McGill, E., Ronzi, S., Beyer, F. and Bamba, C., 2021. Examining the effectiveness of place-based interventions to improve public health and reduce health inequalities: an umbrella review. *BMC public health*, 21(1), pp.1-17.

1.5 This report aims to:

- (1) Outline the theoretical rationale and empirical evidence underpinning PBAs.
- (2) Identify case studies of PBAs to community engagement and support that have been implemented in Wales.
- (3) Identify themes of facilitators and barriers across these approaches which can be used as a starting point to develop a best practice framework for the use of PBAs in Wales.

2. Report structure

Introduction

- 2.1 This section describes the context to this work and the aims of the report.

Method

- 2.2 This section outlines the search strategy, eligibility criteria for the selection of case studies of PBAs, and the method of data analysis.

Background

- 2.3 This section provides some context to this work in terms of new and evolving challenges faced by Welsh communities and reviews the literature around PBAs - including their characteristics, rationale, evidence-base, and wider challenges.

Findings

- 2.4 This section includes a summary of each case study, including an outline of the context/policy background, budget, aims, and geographical scale targeted. The ways in which PBAs engaged with and supported communities is then described, followed by a discussion of themes of facilitators and barriers across PBAs.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 2.5 This section provides a summary of the key findings, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

3. Method

- 3.1 The purpose of this work is to form part of the evidence base to inform future developments on Welsh Government community policy.
- 3.2 Through discussions with policy and Knowledge and Analytical Services [KAS] officials, a research proposal was developed. This was then reviewed by internal stakeholders from the Communities Division and others within the Welsh Government with expertise relevant to the research topic.
- 3.3 There are two components to this review: the “Background” section provides some context to this work in terms of new and evolving challenges faced by Welsh communities. Key literature around PBAs is also discussed, including their features, rationale, evidence-base, and wider challenges.
- 3.4 Due to time constraints and the wide-ranging focus of this review, scoping review methodology was used to synthesise key literature around PBAs for the “Background” section of this review. A scoping review is defined as:
- “A type of research synthesis that aims to map the literature on a particular topic or research area and provide an opportunity to identify key concepts; gaps in the research; and types and sources of evidence to inform practice, policy making, and research.”* (p.373)³
- 3.5 To identify relevant literature, broad search terms were utilised: ‘Place based’ and related terms e.g., Area Based Initiatives AND communities, ‘community engagement’, ‘community co-production’, ‘community empowerment’, ‘community support’.
- 3.6 Searches were conducted using academic search engines (e.g., Google Scholar), electronic databases (e.g., British Library catalogue, Welsh Government Statistics and Research), hand-searching reference lists of relevant papers and through discussion with internal stakeholders.
- 3.7 The second component of the review aimed to identify case studies of PBAs that have been implemented in Wales and identify common barriers and facilitators to community engagement and support.

³ Pham, M.T., Rajić, A., Greig, J.D., Sargeant, J.M., Papadopoulos, A. and McEwen, S.A., 2014. A scoping review of scoping reviews: advancing the approach and enhancing the consistency. *Research synthesis methods*, 5(4), pp.371-385. [Scoping review of scoping reviews - Advancing Consistency](#)

3.8 The following criteria are used to select case studies:

- Place-based programmes in Wales which have relevance to the challenges outlined in the report.
- Programmes which have been subject to robust evaluation with published reports (including government evaluations and journal articles).
- Programmes with published evaluations that describe and appraise models of community engagement and support.

Charting the data and evidence synthesis

3.9 Case studies of place-based programmes were selected, and evaluations were used to collate qualitative data about community engagement and support, and the barriers and facilitators encountered by the programme.

Analysis of evaluations

3.10 Thematic analysis⁴ was used to generate themes and sub-themes across the different programmes. These pertained to barriers and facilitators to community engagement and support. Themes and sub-themes were used to develop recommendations for the development of a new community policy.

⁴ Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), pp.77-101. [Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology](#)

4. Background

Definitions and features of place-based approaches

- 4.1 Before considering PBAs to community engagement and support, it is important to conceptualise what is meant by “place”. It has been suggested that there are three core components to place: location, locale, and sense of place.⁵ “Location” refers to a physically defined geographical area; the “locale” can be thought of as the material setting that influences social networks between people in a place; and “sense of place” describes the ways in which an individual perceives a given area. PBAs, also known as ‘area-based initiatives’ [ABIs], aim to incorporate these three components to address local level issues.
- 4.2 A review by the Institute for Voluntary Action Research [IVAR] for Lankelly Chase (2017) provided the following working definition of PBAs.⁶
- “A range of approaches, from grant-making in a specific geographic area to long-term, multifaceted collaborative partnerships aimed at achieving significant change. In most cases, it is more than just a term to describe the target location of funding; it also describes a style and philosophy of approach which seeks to achieve ‘joined-up’ systems change.”* (p.5)
- 4.3 PBAs vary in terms of their focus – characteristics have been delineated in a framework by the Welsh Government (2015).⁷ In bottom-up (or community-led) approaches, priorities and actions are driven by the community in the targeted area, whereas in top-down PBAs they are specified by central or local government and shaped by pre-determined strategic objectives. Approaches can take a narrow focus with the aim of achieving a specific outcome; alternatively, they can have a broad focus and address a wide range of community issues. Additionally, PBAs can involve revenue or capital funding. For the former, costs of the activities are funded by the programme, whereas for the latter, the costs of purchasing or developing fixed assets are funded by the programme. Finally, PBAs can be people-focussed, meaning they are targeted at people within the spatially targeted

⁵ Cresswell, T., 2009. “Place”. *International encyclopaedia of human geography*, 8, pp.169-177. [Place - Encyclopaedia of Human Geography](#)

⁶ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C., 2017. Historical review of place based approaches. *Institute for Voluntary Action Research: London, UK*. [Historical Review of Place Based Approaches](#)

⁷ Welsh Government., 2015. Process evaluation of Communities First Appendix 1: Theory of Change [Comunities First Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

area, or they can adopt a place-focussed approach, whereby the intervention aims to make improvements to the defined area with the view that this will in turn bring about improvements to outcomes for individuals living there.

- 4.4 PBAs are typically used as a tool to address geographical disparities in poverty and disadvantage. The central premise of the approach being that as *“poverty is spatially concentrated, then so should be the response to poverty.”* (p.3)⁸
- 4.5 The UK Government have implemented spatially targeted interventions for over fifty years,⁹ with the first spatially targeted Community Development Project [CDP] introduced by the Labour government in 1969, running until 1978.¹⁰ Place-based targeting gained more momentum in 1997 in response to New Labour’s target to eradicate child poverty and social exclusion. During this time, the New Deal for Communities [NDC] programme was established, which launched in 1998 and was in operation for ten years.¹¹ The NDC programme established partnerships in thirty-nine deprived areas in England and had a strong focus on community-led approaches to neighbourhood renewal.¹²
- 4.6 Following the global financial crisis in 2008, productivity rates in the UK declined rapidly. However, there has been marked geographical variation in terms of recovery – in London and the surrounding areas there has been strong productivity growth but in other UK regions, including the North of England, the Midlands, Wales, and Northern Ireland, it has remained stagnant.¹³ The Marmot Review (2020) has also demonstrated that socio-economic inequalities between the most and least deprived places in England have widened over the past ten years, with the most deprived areas, which have been described “left behind”

⁸ Scottish Government., 2016. Rationales for Place-Based Approaches in Scotland, What Works Scotland Working Paper. [Rationales for Place based Approaches in Scotland - 2016](#)

⁹ Muscat, R., 2010. Area Based Initiatives--Do They Deliver?. Centre for Local Economic Strategies [CLES]. [Area-Based Initiatives - do they deliver?](#)

¹⁰ Green, J. and Chapman, A., 1992. The British Community Development project: lessons for today. *Community Development Journal*, 27(3), pp.242-258. [British Community Development Journal - Lesson for Today - 1992](#)

¹¹ Batty, E., Beatty, C., Foden, M., Lawless, P., Wilson, I. and Pearson, S., 2010. The new deal for communities experience: a final assessment. [New Deal for Communities - Experience Assessment - 2010](#)

¹² Muscat, R., 2010. Area Based Initiatives--Do They Deliver?. Centre for Local Economic Strategies [CLES]. [Area Based Initiatives - do they deliver? 2010](#)

¹³ McCann, P., 2019. UK research and innovation: A place-based shift. Swindon: UK Research and Innovation. [Research and innovation - a Place Based Shift - 2019](#)

communities, experiencing a greater loss to community assets, and cuts to local resources and services.¹⁴

- 4.7 A study published in 2018¹⁵ which compared the UK with thirty other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] countries, using various indicators of inequality, concluded that the UK is “*almost certainly the most interregionally unequal large high-income country*” (p.263). This claim is also supported by a 2020 study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies [IFS].¹⁶
- 4.8 Marked regional disparities in terms of “*economic performance, productivity, employment rates, and household income and poverty*” are also evident *within* the constituent countries of the UK - England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.¹⁷ (p.1)
- 4.9 McCann (2016) contends that the UK’s highly centralised and spatially blind governance system is unsuitable for the regional heterogeneity observed in the UK, providing a justification for the policy shift towards more place-based ways of working.¹⁸
- 4.10 To address these persistent geographical disparities in the UK, the Conservative government published the Levelling Up White Paper in February 2022.¹⁹ The report outlined actions to tackling inequalities which align with the following six factors: (p.4-5)²⁰
1. Physical capital – infrastructure, machines, and housing.
 2. Human capital – the skills, health, and experience of the workforce.
 3. Intangible capital – innovation, ideas, and patents.

¹⁴ Marmot, M., 2020. Health equity in England: The Marmot review 10 years on. [Health Equality in England - the Marmot Review - 10 years on - 2020](#)

¹⁵ McCann, P., 2020. Perceptions of regional inequality and the geography of discontent: insights from the UK. *Regional Studies*, 54(2), pp.256-267. [Perceptions of Regional Inequality and the Geography of Discontent - 2020](#)

¹⁶ The Institute for Fiscal Studies Green Budget., 2020. [Green Budget 2020 Levelling up](#)

¹⁷ UK Government., 2021. Inequalities of region and place, House of Lords Library Briefing. Debate on 14 October 2021 [Inequalities of region and place - House of Lords Debate - 14 October 2021](#)

¹⁸ McCann, P., 2019. UK research and innovation: A place-based shift. Swindon: UK Research and Innovation. [UK Research and Innovation - A Place Based Shift - 2019](#)

¹⁹ UK Government., 2022. Levelling Up the United Kingdom. [UK Government - Levelling Up the United Kingdom - 2022](#)

²⁰ UK Government., 2022. Levelling Up the United Kingdom (Executive Summary). [Levelling Up the United Kingdom - Executive Summary - 2022](#)

4. Financial capital – resources supporting the financing of companies.
 5. Social capital – the strength of communities, relationships, and trust.
 6. Institutional capital – local leadership, capacity, and capability.
- 4.11 Additionally, the UK Government introduced the Community Renewal Fund [CRF] in 2021 with funding being preferentially allocated to one hundred “priority places” across the UK selected on the basis of an “economic resilience” index. The aim of the CRF is to pilot new community interventions in preparation for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which has been developed to supersede EU structural funds.²¹
- 4.12 The devolved governments have also introduced their own PBAs to tackling poverty. The Scottish Government’s “What Works Scotland” project (2014-2019) built an evidence-base around PBAs and their application in Scotland.²² In Scotland, PBAs are grounded in the Scottish Government’s Community Empowerment Act (2015), which aims to “*empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.*”²³ This requires planning at the sub local authority level – to this end, thirty-two Community Planning Partnerships [CPPs] have been established in Scotland. CPPs take a broad range of approaches to addressing spatial concentrations of poverty, which include local community planning and regeneration.²⁴ Other PBAs have more narrow aims, for example, focussing on supporting families or improving access to services.
- 4.13 In Northern Ireland [NI], the NI Executive introduced the Social Investment Fund [SIF], which has been in operation since 2011. NI was divided into nine investment zones and funding was allocated to the most deprived communities based on measures of multiple of deprivation. The broad aim of the SIF was to “*reduce poverty, unemployment, and physical deterioration.*” (p.2)²⁵ The

²¹ UK Government., 2021. The Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund in Wales [The Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund in Wales - 2021](#)

²² Scottish Government., 2019. What Works Scotland – Place-based approaches [What Works Scotland - Place Based Approaches - 2019](#)

²³ Scottish Government, 2017. Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act: summary. [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act - Summary - 2017.](#)

²⁴ Scottish Government., 2016. Rationales for Place-Based Approaches in Scotland, What Works Scotland Working Paper. [What Works Scotland - Rationales for Place based Approaches in Scotland - 2016](#)

²⁵ Northern Ireland Executive., 2018. Northern Ireland Audit Office: The Social Investment Fund (2018) [Northern Ireland Audit Office - The Social Investment Fund - 2018](#)

programme had four strategic objectives linked to 1) improving employment by focussing on education, skills, job access, and attracting business to areas, 2) addressing systematic factors related to deprivation including mental and physical health, antisocial behaviour, and helping communities to work together more effectively, 3) improving community services by investing in new facilities or improving existing ones, and 4) making improvements to the physical environment to bring in investment and make areas more attractive places to live.

The Welsh context

- 4.14 PBAs aimed at tackling poverty in Wales include Communities First [CF] (2001 - 2018) and Flying Start [FS] (2006/07 - present). These programmes, along with other examples of PBAs that have been implemented in Wales, will be discussed in detail later in this report.
- 4.15 The purpose of this section is to highlight key challenges faced by Welsh communities and provide a rationale for the use of PBAs to community engagement and support in Wales.

Poverty and deprivation in Wales

- 4.16 According to official statistics, just under a quarter of the population of Wales (23%) live in relative income poverty, compared to 22% in England, 19% in Scotland, and 18% in NI. In Wales, this percentage has remained largely the same from 1997 to 2020.²⁶
- 4.17 There are marked geographical disparities in deprivation rates in Wales. The most recent Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation [WIMD] Results report²⁷ demonstrated clustering of high relative deprivation in the South Wales cities and the valleys, and in some parts of the North Wales coast and the surrounding areas. This pattern of deprivation has remained similar over time - the ten most deprived areas in 2014 were still considered the most deprived places in 2019. The analysis also highlighted twenty-six areas located in ten Local Authorities [LAs] with “*deep-rooted deprivation*” (p.8) meaning that they have placed in the top fifty most deprived areas for the past fifteen years of WIMD analysis.

²⁶ Welsh Government., 2021. Welsh Government Statistics, Relative income poverty: April 2019 to March 2020 [Welsh Government Statistics - Relative Income Poverty - April 2019 to March 2020](#)

²⁷ Welsh Government., 2019. Welsh Government Statistics for Wales, Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) Results report [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 Report](#)

Policy context in Wales

- 4.18 While not exhaustive, this section aims to outline some of the key legal and policy developments which might be considered to have a bearing on the use of PBAs to address geographical disparities in Wales.
- 4.19 To bring about lasting improvements to the “*social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being*” of people living in Wales, the Welsh Government introduced The Well-being of Future Generations Act in 2015²⁸ which requires public bodies to address the seven well-being objectives in their decision making: “*A prosperous Wales, A resilient Wales, A healthier Wales, A more equal Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities, A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and a globally responsible Wales*” (p.3). The Act requires each LA to establish a Public Services Board [PSB] which is responsible for “*Assessing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area; and setting objectives that are designed to maximise the PSBs contribution to the Well-being goals*” (p.11).
- 4.20 Additionally, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014²⁹, which came into force in April 2016, set out a framework for improving social services. The Act has four principles linked to 1) improving well-being, 2) putting individuals and carers at the centre of the decisions about the support that they receive 3) putting preventative measures in place in communities to address people’s problems before they reach a critical stage, and 4) strengthening partnership working across organisations.
- 4.21 The Welsh Government are also currently in the process of bringing in a new Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill³⁰ which will “*1) strengthen and promote consistency in social partnership in Wales, 2) deliver fair work outcomes, and 3) achieve socially responsible public procurement.*”
- 4.22 In March 2021, the Welsh Government brought in The Socio-economic Duty statutory guidance which aims to reduce inequalities of outcome arising from

²⁸ Welsh Government., 2015. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Essentials [Future Generations Wales - A guide to the Well Being and Future Generations Act - 2015](#)

²⁹ Welsh Government., 2019. Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, The Essentials [Social Services and Well Being Wales Act 2014 - The Essentials - 2019](#)

³⁰ Welsh Government., 2021. Draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill [Draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Bill - 2021](#)

socio-economic disadvantage,³¹ and in June 2021 (updated in December 2021), the Programme for the Sixth Senedd term outlined ten well-being objectives³² (p.8):

1. *Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare.*
2. *Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise.*
3. *Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people.*
4. *Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms.*
5. *Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future.*
6. *Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports, and arts industries to thrive.*
7. *Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation.*
8. *Make our cities, towns, and villages even better places in which to live and work.*
9. *Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do.*
10. *Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage.*

Challenges facing Welsh communities

Austerity and welfare reform

- 4.23 There are a series of new and evolving challenges to fulfilling these aims in Welsh communities. Following the global financial crisis of 2008/09, the UK Government introduced a policy of austerity in order to reduce the budget deficit.

This policy of austerity led to extensive cuts to public sector and local government budgets – resulting in strain on the voluntary and community sectors' ability to deliver services.³³

- 4.24 Additionally, given that people in Wales have lower incomes on average and a higher proportion of the population are in receipt of social security benefits

³¹ Welsh Government., 2021. A More Equal Wales, The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010. Statutory Guidance [Socio Economic Duty - A More Equal Wales - 2021](#)

³² Welsh Government, 2021. Programme for Government: Update [Wales Programme for Government - Update December 2021](#)

³³ Downe, J. and Taylor-Collins, E., 2019. At the tipping point? Welsh local government and austerity. June 2019. [At The Tipping Point - Welsh Local Government and Austerity - 2019](#)

compared to other UK/GB nations³⁴, the roll-out of Universal Credit [UC] is likely to disproportionately affect Wales.³⁵ This is reflected in research by the Trussell Trust that found 30% increases in food bank usage in areas where UC had been rolled out for six months or longer compared to a 12% increase in non-UC areas.³⁶

- 4.25 These challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic – from early 2020 to mid-2020, a 63% increase in UC claimants was observed in Wales and the removal of the £20 uplift to UC and Working Tax Credit announced in October 2021 had further negative impacts on disadvantaged households in Wales.³⁷

Digital exclusion

- 4.26 Access to the internet is becoming increasingly essential to fully participate in society, even more so since the COVID-19 pandemic – there is now greater reliance on online platforms for accessing public services and information and claiming welfare benefits, as well as maintaining social connection. An estimated 7% of the population of Wales are digitally excluded (do not personally use the internet), a higher proportion than in the rest of the UK.³⁸ Certain groups are more likely to experience digital exclusion, for example, older adults, people with lower incomes, and disabled people.

EU exit

- 4.27 The UK's exit from the EU following the referendum in 2016 also introduced uncertainties for Welsh communities. Wales received approximately £400 million a year of European Structural and Investment funding from 2014-2020 – which amounted to higher funding per capita compared to the other UK nations. Communities in Wales will therefore be disproportionately affected if equivalent funds are not received from the UK Government to support Welsh communities. To date, the UK Government have introduced the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the CRF to address the loss of EU funding.

³⁴ Source: DWP StatXplore, March 2022 provisional data

³⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation., 2020. Briefing - Poverty in Wales 2020 [Poverty in Wales Report 2020](#)

³⁶ Bevan Foundation., 2018. Universal Credit: Implications for devolved policies and services [Universal Credit Implications for Devolved Policies and Services - 2018](#)

³⁷ Joseph Rowntree Foundation., 2020. Briefing - Poverty in Wales 2020 [Poverty in Wales Report 2020 - Briefing](#)

³⁷ Joseph Rowntree Foundation., 2020. Briefing - Poverty in Wales 2020 [Poverty in Wales Report 2020 - Briefing](#)

³⁸ Welsh Government., 2021. Digital inclusion in Wales [Digital Inclusion in Wales - 2021](#).

COVID-19

- 4.28 As noted above, COVID-19 has aggravated existing disadvantage in Wales - the pandemic has had a greater negative impact on individuals with a lower socio-economic position, who have experienced excess risk to their health, employment, living standards, and education.³⁹ The Welsh Government have introduced measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on children and families, for example, the Child Development Fund [CDF] (October 2020 – March 2022).
- 4.29 Thirty-one percent of jobs in Wales were furloughed at the start of the pandemic and certain areas - commonly places already facing economic hardship, were at significantly higher risk of furlough or permanent job loss due to their higher proportions of individuals in precarious employment and at-risk industries.⁴⁰
- 4.30 Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic individuals, older adults, women, and children experiencing domestic abuse, and people with existing mental or physical health difficulties also have experienced excess risk to their health and financial security as a result of the pandemic.⁴¹

Climate change

- 4.31 Finally, the climate and ecological emergency presents a universal threat. The Welsh Government plans to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 as per advice by the UK Climate Change Committee (2019).⁴² The consequences of climate change already present major challenges for some Welsh communities, notably those which have undergone repeated floods in recent years. With the risk of further flooding, coastal erosion, and extreme weather set to increase over

³⁹ Welsh Government., 2020. A More Equal Wales: the Socio-economic Duty Examples of inequalities of outcome due to socio-economic disadvantage and COVID-19 [Examples of Inequalities of Outcome - Socio Economic Disadvantage and Covid 19 - 2020](#)

⁴⁰ Joseph Rowntree Foundation., 2020. Briefing - Poverty in Wales 2020 [Poverty in Wales Report 2020 - Briefing](#)

⁴¹ Welsh Government., 2020. A More Equal Wales: the Socio-economic Duty Examples of inequalities of outcome due to socio-economic disadvantage and COVID-19 [Inequalities of Outcome due to Socio Economic Disadvantage and Covid 19 - 2020](#)

⁴² Climate Change Committee., 2020. The path to Net Zero and reducing emissions in Wales. Executive summary [The Path to Net Zero and Reducing Emissions in Wales - 2020](#)

the next ten years, many more will be directly affected, and it will be essential to work with Welsh communities to mitigate risks as far as possible.

Rationale behind place-based approaches

- 4.32 In terms of the rationale for the use of PBAs in Wales, there is clear evidence that these challenges do not impact all communities equally, with certain communities of place and communities of interest being disproportionately affected.
- 4.33 Based on evidence supporting the central role that communities and place have in shaping health and well-being, the Marmot reviews^{43,44} have recommended that policy should focus on “*Creating and developing healthy and sustainable places and communities*”, which includes “*mitigating the impact of health inequalities and climate change*” and “*improving community capital and reducing social isolation across the social gradient.*” (p.93)
- 4.34 The spatial targeting of support provides the opportunity to address socio-economic, cultural, and environmental conditions that are associated with inequalities of outcome.⁴⁵
- 4.35 Macintyre et al., (1993)⁴⁶ outlined five components of place that local government has the potential to influence through the use of PBAs.⁴⁷
1. Physical characteristics of the local area including air and water quality.
 2. Access to health promoting factors including good quality housing, safe and secure employment, nutritious food, and recreational facilities.
 3. Public or privately owned services such as education, transport, community organisations, and health and welfare services.

⁴³ Marmot et al., 2010. Fair Society Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) [Fair Society Healthy Lives \(The Marmot Review\) 2010](#)

⁴⁴ Marmot et al., 2020. Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On [Health Equity in England - The Marmot Review - 10 Years On - 2020](#)

⁴⁵ Welsh Government., 2021. A More Equal Wales, The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010. Statutory Guidance [Socio Economic Duty in Wales - Statutory Guidance - 2021](#) “*Inequality of outcome relates to any measurable difference in outcome between those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and the rest of the population*” (p.8)

⁴⁶ Macintyre, S., Maciver, S. and Sooman, A., 1993. Area, class and health: should we be focusing on places or people? *Journal of social policy*, 22(2), pp.213-234. [Area, Class and Health Research - 1993](#)

⁴⁷ McGowan, V.J., Buckner, S., Mead, R., McGill, E., Ronzi, S., Beyer, F. and Bambra, C., 2021. Examining the effectiveness of place-based interventions to improve public health and reduce health inequalities: an umbrella review. *BMC public health*, 21(1), pp.1-17. [Examining Place Based Interventions to Improve Public Health and Reduce inequality - 2021](#)

4. Socio-cultural features such as the political, economic, ethnic, or religious history of a place. This also includes other characteristics like community safety, integration, and networks of support.

5. Sense of place or the internal and external perceptions of the area.

4.36 PBAs differ in terms of their underpinning theory of change which is based on assumptions about the underlying causes of poverty. A review by IVAR for Lankelly Chase (2017)⁴⁸ grouped these assumptions into three categories:

1. *Communitarian*: the assumption that the causes and solutions to disadvantage are rooted in the characteristics of the local area and its residents. To address this, PBAs might focus on community development and capacity building.

2. *Systems*: Poor integration and responsiveness of local systems and services drive disadvantage. PBAs might therefore focus on improving public services, community asset transfer, or helping residents to have a greater input into local decision making.

3. *Structural*: The causes of disadvantage are structural in nature and stem from economic change and fluctuations in the labour and housing market. To address this, PBAs concentrate on economic and physical regeneration. This might include working with local businesses or taking actions to bring in more jobs to the local area.

Community engagement

4.37 Evidence suggests that effective community engagement is integral to the success of PBAs.⁴⁹ There is a clear rationale for engaging community members at a local level - physical location connects people and in doing so provides a foundation for collective action.^{50,51} The common identity fostered by a shared

⁴⁸ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C., 2017. Historical review of place based approaches. *Institute for Voluntary Action Research: London, UK*. [Historical Review of Place Based Approaches - 2017](#)

⁴⁹ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C., 2017. Historical review of place based approaches. *Institute for Voluntary Action Research: London, UK*. [Historical Review of Place Based Approaches - 2017](#)

⁵⁰ Scottish Government., 2019. What Works Scotland – Place-based approaches [What Works Scotland - Place Based Approaches - 2019](#)

⁵¹ Lowndes, V. and Sullivan, H., 2008. How low can you go? Rationales and challenges for neighbourhood governance. *Public administration*, 86(1), pp.53-74. [Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance - 2008](#)

sense of place helps to mobilise the assets of the community - members of the community are incentivised to engage in place-based work because decisions about policy and public services in their local area affect them on a personal level.^{52,53} Local people are also well placed to provide feedback on the issues at hand - this experience can be used to improve service delivery by more effectively co-ordinating or “joining up” public services, reducing duplication, and informing preventative and early intervention measures in the area, in turn improving the economic efficiency of local services^{54,55} Finally, it is suggested that the outcomes of decisions made at a local level are more visible - making it easier for community members to hold leaders to account.^{56,57} This also has the additional benefit of community members feeling that they have a stake in the work that has been done in their local area.

⁵² Scottish Government., 2019. What Works Scotland – Place-based approaches [What Works Scotland - Place Based Approaches - 2019](#)

⁵³ Lowndes, V. and Sullivan, H., 2008. How low can you go? Rationales and challenges for neighbourhood governance. *Public administration*, 86(1), pp.53-74. [Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance - 2008](#)

⁵⁴ Scottish Government., 2019. What Works Scotland – Place-based approaches [What Works Scotland - Place Based Approaches - 2019](#)

⁵⁵ Lowndes, V. and Sullivan, H., 2008. How low can you go? Rationales and challenges for neighbourhood governance. *Public administration*, 86(1), pp.53-74. [Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance - 2008](#)

⁵⁶ Scottish Government., 2019. What Works Scotland – Place-based approaches [What Works Scotland - Place Based Approaches - 2019](#)

⁵⁷ Lowndes, V. and Sullivan, H., 2008. How low can you go? Rationales and challenges for neighbourhood governance. *Public administration*, 86(1), pp.53-74. [Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance - 2008](#)

Evidence base for place-based approaches

- 4.38 A number of reviews have found evidence to support the use of PBAs. Crisp et al., (2014)⁵⁸ reviewed people- and place-based approaches in terms of five outcomes: health, education, community participation, housing, and crime and the physical environment. Overall, it was suggested that PBAs were more effective than people-based approaches in bringing about improvements to non-material (as opposed to material) dimensions of poverty. The review suggested that PBAs focussed on the physical environment, housing, and crime yielded positive results for outcomes relating to place satisfaction, safety, health, and well-being.
- 4.39 A recent umbrella review⁵⁹ of thirteen systematic reviews, comprising fifty-two studies across seven countries,⁶⁰ tentatively concluded that PBAs focussing on physical regeneration (such as of housing provision, transport, and public spaces) were efficacious in terms of health and social determinants of health outcomes. Thirty-seven studies with this focus reported positive results. This is consistent with an earlier review by Matthews et al., (2012)⁶¹ which provided evidence that PBAs focussing on physical renewal are effective in terms of improving well-being and place satisfaction. However, it was also suggested that PBAs focussing on improving the physical environment might not benefit everybody equally – with evidence indicating that closer proximity to the intervention was associated with better outcomes.⁶²

⁵⁸ Crisp et al., (2020) Regeneration and poverty: evidence and policy review Final Report [Regeneration and Poverty - Evidence and Policy Review Report 2020](#)

⁵⁹ McGowan, V.J., Buckner, S., Mead, R., McGill, E., Ronzi, S., Beyer, F. and Bambra, C., 2021. Examining the effectiveness of place-based interventions to improve public health and reduce health inequalities: an umbrella review. *BMC public health*, 21(1), pp.1-17. [Examining the Effectiveness of Place Based Interventions to Improve Public Health and Reduce Health Inequalities - 2021](#)

⁶⁰ USA, Canada, Australia, UK, New Zealand, and Sweden.

⁶¹ Matthews, P., Netto, G. and Besemer, K., 2012. 'Hard-to-Reach' or 'Easy-to-Ignore'? A rapid review of place-based policies and equality. [Hard to Reach or Easy to Ignore? Review of Place Based Policies and Equality - 2012](#)

⁶² McGowan, V.J., Buckner, S., Mead, R., McGill, E., Ronzi, S., Beyer, F. and Bambra, C., 2021. Examining the effectiveness of place-based interventions to improve public health and reduce health inequalities: an umbrella review. *BMC public health*, 21(1), pp.1-17. [Examining the Effectiveness of Place Based Interventions to Improve Public Health and Reduce Health Inequalities - 2021](#)

- 4.40 A review of ABIs conducted by the “What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth”⁶³ found evidence of positive effects in terms of employment and regional Gross Domestic Product [GDP]. The review included fifty-eight evaluations of ABIs conducted in the UK and other OECD countries. For EU programmes, just under half reported positive effects on GDP and half demonstrated positive results in terms of employment. For Enterprise Zones, just over half of the evaluations reported advantageous effects for employment and half found positive results related to poverty. Finally, in other ABIs, more than a half had positive effects in terms of employment, and all three studies considering unemployment yielded positive results.
- 4.41 A review of ABIs implemented in Wales, the UK, and internationally that was conducted as part of the evidence base for CF⁶⁴ found evidence of that PBAs had been advantageous across a range of outputs, including employment, housing, establishing small- and large- scale community-led projects, and health-related outcomes.
- 4.42 Finally, a review of place-based working targeting individuals and children in disadvantaged areas concluded that PBAs were effective in terms of “1) *Engaging disadvantaged people in programmes and services*, 2) *Building supportive communities*, and 3) *Building an infrastructure and creating the conditions for impact.*” (p.2)⁶⁵

Wider challenges of place-based approaches

- 4.43 This section discusses some of the wider challenges related to PBAs. An extensive discussion of the assumptions of PBAs and their underpinning empirical evidence is beyond the scope of this review, but this has been discussed in detail elsewhere.⁶⁶

⁶³ What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth., 2016: Evidence Review: Area-based Initiatives: EU Structural & Cohesion Policies [Evidence Review: Area-based Initiatives: EU Structural & Cohesion Policies - 2016](#)

⁶⁴ Welsh Government., 2015. Process evaluation of Communities First Appendix 1: Theory of Change, online: [Process Evaluation of Communities First - 2015](#)

⁶⁵ Crew, M., 2020. The Effectiveness of Place-Based Programmes and Campaigns in Improving Outcomes for Children: A Literature Review. A National Literacy Trust Research Report. [National Literacy Trust Effectiveness of Place-Based Programmes and Campaigns in Improving Outcomes for Children: A Literature Review - 2020](#)

⁶⁶ Theodos, B., 2021. Examining the Assumptions behind Place-Based Programs. [Examining the Assumptions behind Place-Based Programs - 2021](#)

- 4.44 One overarching challenge reported by reviews of place-based interventions is that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the overall effectiveness of PBAs due to inherent issues in terms of “*attribution, timescale, complexity, and external factors.*”(p.1)⁶⁷ Place-based working encompasses a wide range of approaches and as a result, the breadth of evaluative methods, and the availability and the quality of the evidence have been highlighted as common challenges in comparing and evaluating PBAs. This is particularly the case for bottom-up approaches that address a wide range of local issues, presenting difficulties in specifying the outcomes/impacts needed to evaluate their effectiveness.⁶⁸
- 4.45 Another key challenge of PBAs relates to how place is defined. A common criticism of place-based working is the extent to which spatial targeting is warranted in terms of reaching the target population – the concern being that PBAs can exclude individuals in need of support if they do not fall within the specific catchment area(s).
- 4.46 Spatial targeting can also present challenges in terms of delivery – boundaries commonly do not align with those of local government or community services.⁶⁹ Similarly, data needed for monitoring and evaluation may not be available at the geographic unit of the PBA.
- 4.47 PBAs are typically targeted at deprived communities of place and interest. There is evidence that residents of neighbourhoods with higher rates of deprivation and increased social fragmentation (e.g., higher residential turnover, fewer homeowners, higher proportions single person households, ethnic minorities and migrants) report lower levels of social cohesion and a reduced sense of attachment to their area.⁷⁰ As such, characteristics of the types of areas targeted

⁶⁷ Crew, M., 2020. The Effectiveness of Place-Based Programmes and Campaigns in Improving Outcomes for Children: A Literature Review. A National Literacy Trust Research Report. *National Literacy Trust Effectiveness of Place-Based Programmes and Campaigns in Improving Outcomes for Children: A Literature Review - 2020*

⁶⁸ Welsh Government., 2015. Process evaluation of Communities First Appendix 1: Theory of Change, online: <https://Communities First Process Evaluation - 2015>

⁶⁹ Theodos, B., 2021. Examining the Assumptions behind Place-Based Programs. [Examining the Assumptions behind Place-Based Programs - 2021](#)

⁷⁰ Curtis et al., (2019) Individual and local area factors associated with self-reported well-being, perceived social cohesion and sense of attachment to one’s community: analysis of the Understanding Society Survey [Factors Associated with Self-reported Well-being, Perceived Social Cohesion and Sense of Attachment to Community - 2019](#)

by PBAs might introduce challenges in terms of residents' confidence, trust, and motivation to engage in community development activities.

4.48 Finally, whether place-based or “spatially blind” approaches should be taken to address disadvantage is subject to extensive debate.^{71,72} It has been argued that PBAs neglect to take into consideration the structural causes of poverty and, alone, they are unable to bring about lasting improvements.⁷³ To be effective, it has been suggested that PBAs are considered in the context of wider regional and national issues⁷⁴ and used in tandem with “*wider investment and poverty reduction strategies if they are to make a significant contribution.*”⁷⁵

⁷¹ Barca, F., McCann, P. and Rodríguez-Pose, A., 2012. The case for regional development intervention: place-based versus place-neutral approaches. *Journal of regional science*, 52(1), pp.134-152. [Case for Regional Development Intervention: Place Based Versus Place Neutral Approaches - 2012](#)

⁷² Griggs et al., (2008) Person- or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works [Person or Place Based Policies to Tackle Disadvantage? 2008](#)

⁷³ Theodos, B., 2021. Examining the Assumptions behind Place-Based Programs. [Examining the Assumptions Behind Place Based Programs - 2021](#)

⁷⁴ Theodos, B., 2021. Examining the Assumptions behind Place-Based Programs. [Examining the Assumptions Behind Place Based Programs - 2021](#)

⁷⁵ Scottish Government., 2014-2019. What Works Scotland Place-based approaches Resources about place-based approaches, a holistic approach that can cross policy sectors and silos, and links to key resources [What Works Scotland - Place Based Approaches Resources - 2014 to 2019](#)

5. Findings

5.1 Six PBAs to community engagement and support in Wales were selected as case studies (1) Communities First [CF], (2) Valleys Taskforce [VTF], (3) Flying Start [FS], (4) Skyline, (5) LEADER, (6) Communities 2.0 [C2.0] and are summarised in this section.

Communities First

5.2 CF was a “tackling poverty” programme that ran from 2001-2018, costing £432 million.⁷⁶ At the peak, the annual programme budget was around £40 million, with significantly smaller budgets in the early and final years.

5.3 CF aimed to address the geographical variations in deprivation rates observed in Wales by focussing on the social determinants of poverty. The programme supported the main aims of the Welsh Government’s Tackling Poverty Action Plan (*preventing poverty, helping people into work, and mitigating the impact of poverty*).⁷⁷

5.4 The 2001 WIMD was used to spatially target the programme at the most deprived communities in Wales. In 2002, 142 community regeneration partnerships were established: 100 in the most deprived electoral wards in Wales; 32 in sub-ward areas; and ten in communities of interest. Over time the coverage of the programme was adjusted to reflect new iterations of WIMD and, in 2012 the targeted areas were reorganised into fifty-two CF ‘clusters’ which covered larger geographic areas.

5.5 Initially the aims of CF were wide-ranging and focussed on collaborating with the local community to improve the local area and prospects of residents. The aims were later refined following the restructuring of the programme in 2012. Community interventions were then designed to correspond to three main thematic areas: (1) *Prosperous communities* (e.g., investing in local businesses and interventions focussed on improving access to employment), (2) *Learning communities* (e.g., activities to improve educational attainment), and (3) *Healthy communities* (e.g., alcohol reduction and smoking cessation interventions, and activities to encourage active living).

⁷⁶ National Assembly for Wales., 2017. Communities First Lessons Learnt [Senedd Business - Communities First Lessons Learnt - 2017](#)

⁷⁷ Welsh Government, 2013. Written Statement – Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2013 [Welsh Government Written Statement Tackling Poverty Action Plan - 2013](#)

(2) Valleys Taskforce

- 5.6 VTF ran from 2016-2021 with a broad remit of improving the prosperity of communities in the South Wales valleys. The cost of the programme was £309,000 in revenue funding for community engagement activities, communications, and resources, £25 million in capital funding between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, and £7 million in capital funding over the same period which was invested in developing the Valleys Regional Park.⁷⁸
- 5.7 VTF was delivered at the Local Authority [LA] level, initially in Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and parts of Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend. Two additional areas were incorporated into the programme in 2019 – the Gwendraeth and Amman valleys, however these were discrete additions and not done at the LA level.
- 5.8 The programme aimed to reduce the socio-economic gaps observed in the South Wales valleys compared to the rest of Wales. To this end, the programme identified three main objectives: (1) *Create more quality job opportunities locally, and address temporary, and zero-hours work (e.g., supporting local entrepreneurship and business through resources such as Business Wales)*. (2) *Improve public services, particularly transport and affordable housing (e.g., improving public transport links and refurbishing empty homes through investment in an Empty Homes Scheme)* (3) *maintain and make greater use of the local natural environment and cultural heritage to promote healthy lifestyles and well-being for local residents as well as to encourage visitors to the area (i.e., investing in a ‘Valleys Regional Park’)*.⁷⁹
- 5.9 The VTF was also designed to link in with local activities and scale up good practice across the valley’s footprint, to evaluate existing schemes and join up initiatives to maximise potential and investment.

(3) Flying Start

⁷⁸ Welsh Government., 2019. Freedom of Information Request Budget information on record for the Valleys Task Force, including the overall budget envelope and a breakdown of that budget by project, sector and location [Freedom of Information Request Budget information on record for the Valleys Taskforce - 2019](#)

⁷⁹ Welsh Government., 2021. The Valleys Taskforce, 2016 – 2021: a final report [Valleys Taskforce Report 2016 to 2021](#)

- 5.10 FS, first introduced in 2006/07, is a current programme which aims to improve the life chances of children under four living in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. Between 2007-2018, the Welsh Government provided over £600 million of funding for FS. When the programme was first implemented, this amounted to approximately £2,000 per child (aged 0-3) in FS targeted areas, increasing to £2,100 from 2009-10.⁸⁰
- 5.11 FS used indicators of relative deprivation (WIMD, free school meals, and families who receive income related benefits) to identify areas that would receive services. The programme is spatially targeted at the most deprived LSOAs within LAs. In 2014, an outreach arrangement was incorporated into the programme which meant that local authorities were required to identify and extend support to families in need who were living outside of FS areas, within an agreed budget limit. In 2017, guidance was updated, stating that children moving out of FS, children outside of FS areas, and communities of interest are eligible for outreach. In March 2022, the Welsh Government announced the expansion of FS to provide childcare for all two-year-olds in Wales.⁸¹
- 5.12 The programme aims to identify need and intervene early to *“improve children’s language, cognitive, social, and emotional development, as well as their physical health.”* (p.1)⁸² To achieve these aims, families are offered four main entitlements: 1. an intensive health visiting service, 2. fully funded part-time high-quality childcare for children aged between two and three, 3. parenting support, and 4. access to speech, language, and communication services.

(4) Skyline

⁸⁰ Welsh Government., 2011. Evaluation of Flying Start Findings from the baseline survey of families - mapping needs and measuring early influence among families with babies aged seven to 20 months Main Report [Evaluation of Flying Start Findings from the baseline survey of families - 2011](#)

⁸¹ In its updated Programme for Government, the Welsh Government has committed to continue support for its flagship Flying Start programme and, in line with the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, has extended this commitment to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision. From September, the Flying Start programme will be expanded to reach up to 2,500 more children aged 0 to 4 by increasing the Flying Start target areas in every local authority in Wales. This is the first phase of expansion of childcare for all two-year-olds in Wales.

⁸² Welsh Government., 2013. National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area case study synthesis report [Evaluation of Flying Start: Area Case Study Synthesis Report - 2013](#)

- 5.13 Skyline was funded by the Friends Provident Foundation and took place between July 2018 to May 2019. The project was a feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales valleys.
- 5.14 Skyline was carried out in three former coal mining villages in the South Wales Valleys - Caerau, Treherbert, and Ynysowen. The Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Welsh Governments National Resources Policy provide the policy context for this work. Evidence from projects that have been implemented in Scotland suggests that community land ownership can facilitate *“a heightened sense of identity; greater financial viability; improved levels of activity and access to services; increased opportunities for training, jobs and business development; a better physical environment, and enhanced credibility with local authorities and outside agencies...”* in turn improving the well-being and prosperity of communities.(p.10)⁸³
- 5.15 Skyline’s feasibility study aimed to answer four questions: *“1. Do communities want to be stewards of their landscape? 2. Are there sustainable business models that would allow communities to break free from a culture of grant dependency? 3. Is it possible for communities to manage the landscape in a way that benefits nature? 4. Can these landscape-scale projects be governed well?”* (p.8)⁸⁴
- 5.16 Following Skyline’s feasibility study, in April 2021 work began on three projects in collaboration with the Welsh Government and National Resources Wales. The first project “Future Forest Vision” is a forest plan which is being developed in Treherbert by community members and National Resources Wales. The second project is developing a community owned social enterprise, and the third is exploring ways that community delivery of social value can facilitate community asset transfer.⁸⁵

⁸³ The Green Valleys CIC., 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

⁸⁴ The Green Valleys CIC., 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

⁸⁵ Ellis., 2021. Skyline – the next steps [Skyline-the-next-steps - 2019](#)

(5) Arloesi Môn LEADER programme

- 5.17 Arloesi Môn LEADER is a six-year rural development programme which was in operation in Ynys Môn (Anglesey) from 2015 to 2021. The programme was funded by the EU (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), the Welsh Government, and the Isle of Anglesey Charitable Trust.
- 5.18 The programme had a total budget of £3.3 million and 76% was assigned to funding projects on the island. At the time of the programme's mid-term evaluation in 2019, Arloesi Môn had funded 54 projects (ranging from £1,500 – £33,500) and the average funding allocated to each project was approximately £11,500.
- 5.19 Arloesi Môn aimed to develop innovative pilot projects which had the potential to benefit Ynys Môn's economy. The scope of the programme was therefore very broad and involved testing novel projects with the aim of developing and implementing successful projects in the future or making use of the lessons learned from less successful aspects of projects to inform future work.
- 5.20 The programme had twenty-nine objectives - details of which can be found in appendix 1 of the mid-term evaluation.⁸⁶ The following four themes were selected from the five themes available under the national LEADER scheme and summarise the main aims that the programme sought to achieve in Ynys Môn by 2020: *"1. New economic potential with more and better employment opportunities, 2. Residents are better connected physically, digitally, and socially are able to access the amenities and services that they need. 3. Residents better capitalise upon the area's cultural, historical, recreational, and natural assets to improve the visitor experience, visitor numbers and spend, and local skills and employment in tourism. 4. Ynys Môn and Gwynedd will have established THREE inter-territorial cooperation projects and ONE transnational cooperation project that, through innovation, networking, and knowledge exchange, contribute to meeting the objectives of the LDS themes and associated priorities"* (p.6).

⁸⁶ Wavehill: social and economic research (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey: Arloesi Môn [Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey - 2019](#)

5.21 Some examples of activities included a digital inclusion project which provided one-to-one training on how to use digital services to older adults in their homes. Other projects sought to attract tourism through improved transport links and increasing awareness of the local built and natural environment.

(6) Communities 2.0

5.22 C2.0 was a digital inclusion programme which ran from April 2009 to March 2015 and was funded by the European Regional Development Fund [ERDF] and the Department for Social Justice and Local Government. Funding for the project was just under £20 million, with £8.9 million of this provided by the ERDF.

5.23 C2.0 initially adopted a spatially targeted approach, focussing on the most deprived 30% of LSOAs as per the WIMD (former CF areas). At the start of the second phase of the programme in April 2012, delivery was extended, and covered the whole of Wales from January 2014. Other changes included a greater focus on working with individual beneficiaries, especially those from the four target groups - older people, individuals with disabilities, those living in social housing, and unemployed people.

5.24 The Business Plan set out the following objective of the programme: *“through community groups, voluntary sector organisations and enterprises, including social enterprises, to engage people with technologies by breaking down barriers, and supporting them to exploit technologies for economic outcomes.”*(p.9)⁸⁷

5.25 Programme aims included facilitating digital inclusion in individual beneficiaries and providing training and support to community groups and voluntary sector organisations to improve their members access and engagement with technologies. C2.0 also aimed to train community organisations to capitalise on technologies to benefit them financially.

⁸⁷ Welsh Government., 2011. An Evaluation of Communities Two Point Zero - Initial Process and Scoping Report [Evaluation of Communities Two Point Zero - Initial Process and Scoping Report - 2011](#)

6. Community engagement and support

(1) *Communities First*

- 6.1 CF can be described as having been a broad, community-led programme. The programme incorporated community engagement into the planning, delivery, and monitoring of the programme. To achieve this, a multi-agency partnership structure was adopted which comprised representatives from the local community, statutory, private, and voluntary sectors. Community members were involved in identifying needs and designing activities to address local issues. This aimed to empower the community to collaborate with service providers and promote a “bending” of the resources and activities of mainstream service providers.⁸⁸
- 6.2 In terms of governance and delivery of CF, in the early phase of the programme over 140 local partnerships were managed by a range of local authorities and third sector agencies, with small staff teams for each partnership led by a CF Coordinator. Following the 2013 reorganisation, the fifty-two CF clusters were managed by nineteen Lead Delivery Bodies [LDBs] and each cluster was managed by a Cluster Manager. Coordinators/Cluster managers and their supporting teams were responsible for working with local communities, ensuring that effective models of community engagement were employed, including the targeting of ‘hard-to-reach’ groups
- 6.3 Clusters developed Community Involvement Plans to set out actions that could be taken to ensure community members contributed to the design, delivery, monitoring, and oversight of the programme activities.⁸⁹

(2) *Valleys Taskforce*

- 6.4 Like CF, VTF was a broad, community-led, and place-centred programme. A series of engagement events were organised by the Welsh Government which were used to inform programme’s actions.⁹⁰ VTF also predominantly focussed on “programme bending” which involved identifying successful projects already in

⁸⁸ Adamson, D. and Bromiley, R., 2008. Community empowerment in practice. *Lessons from Communities Community Empowerment in Practice: Lessons from Communities First - 2008*

⁸⁹ Welsh Government., 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First: a Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

⁹⁰ Arad Research., 2017. Talk Valleys: Engagement Programme. Commissioned from Arad Research by the Welsh Government [Talk Valleys: Engagement Programme - 2017](#)

operation in the area and expanding and replicating this work across the Valleys to with the aim of making the greatest impact within the time frame of the programme.⁹¹

- 6.5 Community engagement activity included public events (where local people could highlight any issues to the taskforce), themed meetings (where topics derived from the public events discussed in greater detail), focus groups working with particular interest groups (including those with disabilities, children and young people, single parents and older people) and Welsh Government staff engagement sessions across 4 offices including 3 in the valleys (which included group discussions and an online forum).⁹²
- 6.6 Welsh Government also launched a social media campaign to engage valleys communities, which included “Talk Valleys” Twitter and Facebook accounts.
- 6.7 Further community engagement work was conducted by Arad Research. This included focus groups and an online survey with residents and businesses from the Valleys.
- 6.8 The programme’s governance and delivery arrangements consisted of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, who were responsible for the overall management of the programme and working groups were established for each of the priority themes developed from the community engagement activities. The VTF was supported by a Programme Board comprised of Welsh Government officials and theme experts (housing, education, skills, and transport) and was responsible for the delivery of the programme⁹³. Throughout the programme there was continual involvement of community stakeholders to inform and co-develop VTF’s actions and policies.

(3) Flying Start

⁹¹ Welsh Government., 2021. The Valleys Taskforce, 2016 – 2021: a final report [Valleys Taskforce Report 2016 to 2021](#)

⁹² Arad Research., 2017. Talk Valleys: Engagement Programme. Commissioned from Arad Research by the Welsh Government [Talk Valleys: Engagement Programme - 2017](#)

⁹³ Welsh Government., 2021. Valleys Taskforce Stakeholder Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

- 6.9 FS can be typified as a top-down, and people-focussed programme - interventions are not shaped by members of the community but are pre-determined by central government based on evidence of what works with specific outcomes and impacts in mind. The focus of the intervention is on people within defined places rather than allocating resources to change the characteristics of a specific area.
- 6.10 FS is delivered by LAs working alongside health boards. A FS co-ordinator oversees local teams which includes, for example, health workers, speech and language therapists, childcare workers, and family support workers.
- 6.11 FS is based on progressive universalism, meaning that there is universal access to the FS programme of interventions for families in FS catchment areas, but the intensity of support provided is gauged by families' assessed level of need.
- 6.12 Support requirements are assessed by FS health visitors using the All Wales Health Visiting Family Resilience Assessment Instrument Tool [FRAIT].⁹⁴ This is used to identify whether families should be offered “universal”, “enhanced” or “intensive” health visitor support. Bespoke support is offered which takes into consideration the diverse needs of families, including developing best practice for effective engagement and building trust.
- 6.13 FS focusses on early intervention and preventative measures to improve the health and social outcomes of children later in life. To engage families with the programme, FS are notified of eligible pregnant women in their catchment area and an initial home visit is arranged to assess the families' needs and inform them of the services offered.

(4) Skyline

- 6.14 Skyline can be characterised as a narrow, bottom-up, and place-focussed approach – activities were concerned with community ownership of land but co-developed through engagement with local communities.

⁹⁴ Guidance for Family Resilience Assessment Instrument and Tool [FRAIT] [Guidance for Family Resilience Assessment Instrument and Tool \[FRAIT\]](#)

- 6.15 Community partnerships included residents, artist facilitators, and technical experts – which included individuals with expertise in forest management, business, and land law.
- 6.16 Skyline began with a project scope meeting with an anchor organisation from each community. Community engagement activities were informed by McIntosh’s *“rubric of community regeneration.”* (p.37)⁹⁵ This process comprises three stages, *“remembering that which has been dismembered; re-visioning how the future can be; and finally, re-claiming what is needed to bring it about.”* (p.37)⁹⁶
- 6.17 Community meetings involved mapping of potential land ownership, discussing business models from other community land ownership projects, scoping potential projects for each community, team visits to an established community-managed forest project in Scotland, and setting out and disseminating a long-term plan for community stewardship.

(5) Arloesi Môn LEADER programme

- 6.18 The Arloesi Môn LEADER programme adopted a broad, bottom-up, and place-focussed approach.
- 6.19 The programme was managed by a Local Action Group [LAGs] which comprised twenty-two people who have expertise in public, private, and voluntary sectors who were recruited through an open selection process. LAGs were responsible for implementing Local Development Strategies [LDSs] which are designed in collaboration with members of the local community. This includes monitoring and evaluation of projects and setting out the procedures that need to be undertaken to ensure that activities are in line with the programme aims. Menter Môn adopted the role of “the Lead Body” and were responsible for administrative and financial operations on behalf of the LAG.

⁹⁵ McIntosh, A. and Jeanrenaud, J.P., 2008. *Rekindling Community: Connecting People, Environment and Spirituality*. UIT Cambridge Limited.

⁹⁶ The Green Valleys CIC., 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

- 6.20 The LEADER approach is described as a “Community-Led Local Development initiative”. The community engagement component of the programme is known as “animation”, which refers to capacity building in the local community to empower local people and organisations to work collaboratively to address community challenges through facilitating networking, cooperation, and providing the resources required to participate in community development activities. Wider aims of the LEADER methods include improved local governance, social capital, and enhanced results (including more innovative community projects).
- 6.21 The first step to community participation set out by LEADER guidance is forming a small group of local informants who can provide advice on the challenges and opportunities in the local area. This also brings attention to local people who could potentially support the LDS or become a LAG member.
- 6.22 Developing the LDS involves the following stages: *“information gathering, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats [SWOT] analysis, prioritisation, setting objectives and the basic intervention logic, designing delivery, securing support, and agreeing the final submission.”*⁹⁷ (p.7)
- (6) *Communities 2.0*
- 6.23 C2.0 can be typified as a narrow and top-down programme - the objective of the programme is pre-specified rather than developed through engagement with community members. The programme can also be thought of as people-focussed approach in that it is primarily focussed on reaching community organisations and four target groups who are more at risk of digital exclusion, namely, older people, individuals with disabilities, those living in social housing, and unemployed people.
- 6.24 The staff responsible for delivering C2.0 included “Brokers” whose role was to engage with local stakeholders to identify the needs of community organisations and social enterprises to determine how best to provide digital initiatives (e.g., website design, financial or technical support). Technical support was also provided by “Circuit Riders”. Outreach workers used community development

⁹⁷ European Network for Rural Development., 2016. LEADER Local Development Strategies (LDS) Guidance on design and implementation [LEADER Local Development Strategies \(LDS\) Guidance on design and implementation - 2016](#)

techniques to engage people with ICT, and finally there were staff responsible for project management and administration.

7. Themes of barriers and facilitators to community engagement and support

7.1 Five main themes and eleven sub-themes were derived from the thematic analysis of programme evaluations. Themes can be defined as the “Five Cs” and pertain to common barriers and facilitators to community engagement and support across the six PBA case studies. Main themes are:

1. Community inclusion
2. Capacity building
3. Community assets and local characteristics
4. Communicating aims and expected outcomes
5. Collaborative working.

7.2 Main along with sub-themes are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

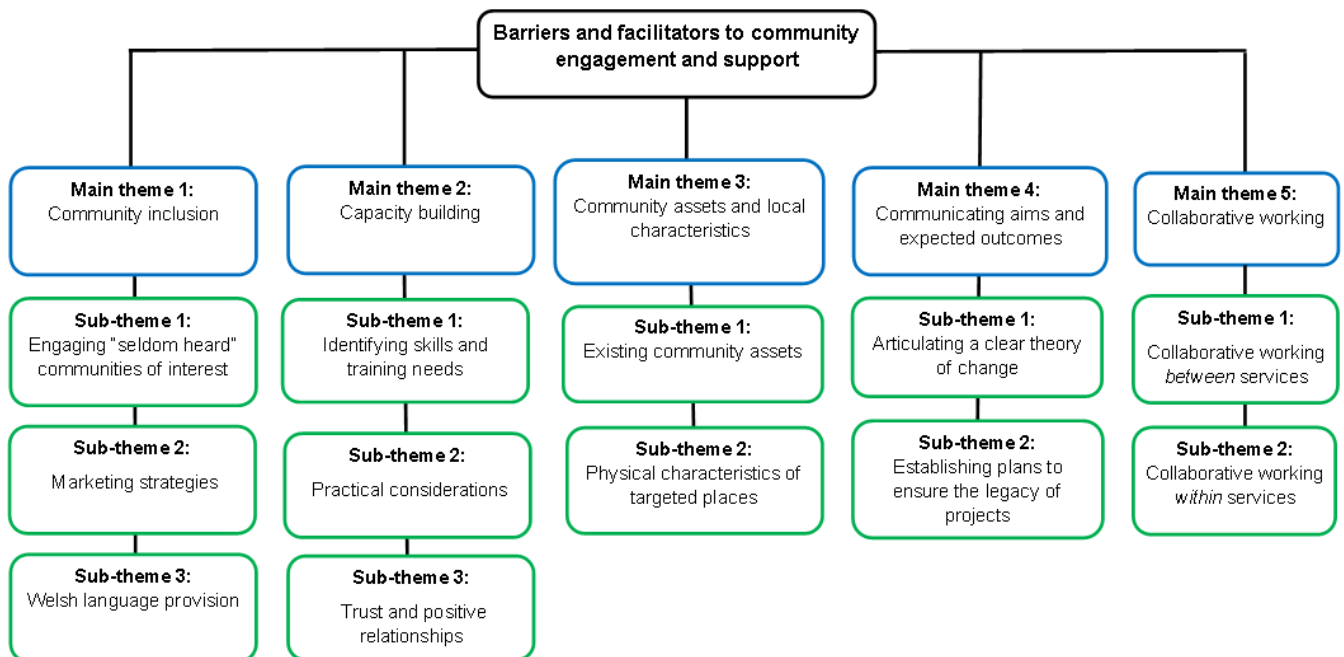
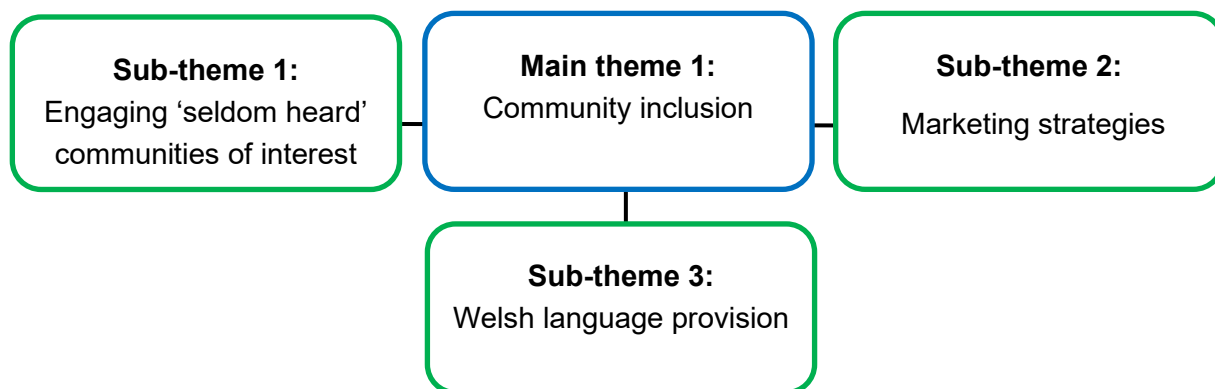


Figure 1. Thematic map of themes of barriers and facilitators to community engagement and support across PBAs.

8. Main theme 1: Community inclusion



8.1 Main theme 1, 'Community inclusion' relates to the measures taken to facilitate inclusive representation when engaging with communities.

8.2 PBAs are typically targeted at marginalised communities of place and communities of interest. To ensure that decisions made are in the best interest of the whole community, it is important to consider the needs of different groups within communities, particularly groups who might face additional barriers to participation.

Sub-theme 1: Engaging 'seldom heard' communities of interest

8.3 This subtheme is concerned with barriers and facilitators pertaining to engaging with "seldom heard" communities of interest, which can be defined as underrepresented groups who face additional barriers to public participation, including Black and Minority Ethnic individuals, people who experience language barriers, people with disabilities, carers, LGBTQ+ people, and people who are homeless.

8.4 Ensuring that programmes were effectively engaging with seldom heard members of the community was highlighted as an important issue across CF, VTF, FS, LEADER, and C2.0 evaluations. Skyline's feasibility study also noted the importance of developing strategies to engage a *"very wide cross-section of*

the community” to ensure that activities are broadly accepted and supported by the community.⁹⁸

- 8.5 Programme evaluations reported challenges with engaging seldom heard communities of interest. In a survey with CF Cluster teams, only 21% believed they were effectively engaging seldom heard groups⁹⁹. Of the four target groups outlined by C2.0,¹⁰⁰ a key finding from evaluations was that the programme experienced difficulties engaging disabled and housebound people with digital inclusion initiatives. Finally, there was some indication amongst VTF stakeholders that community representation and diversity was lacking in working groups however this was addressed through targeted sessions.¹⁰¹
- 8.6 CF and C2.0 evaluations reported that monitoring and reporting processes introduced barriers to engaging with seldom heard groups^{102,103} stating that the drive to achieve targets may have deterred staff from reaching the more disengaged and vulnerable groups. For example, an evaluation of CF reported that delivery teams may have been incentivised to target easier to reach members of the community to obtain a green status on a Red, Amber, Green rating [RAG] dashboard.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ The Green Valleys CIC., 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

⁹⁹ Welsh Government., 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First: a Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹⁰⁰ Welsh Government., 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* <https://Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015>

¹⁰¹ Welsh Government., 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁰² Welsh Government., 2021. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First Process Evaluation - 2021](#)

¹⁰³ Welsh Government., 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

¹⁰⁴ Welsh Government., 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First: a Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

- 8.7 Evaluations discussed measures taken to engage socially excluded and disengaged members of the community (CF, FS, LEADER). LEADER guidance¹⁰⁵ highlighted that engaging with the local community must go beyond making them aware that there are opportunities to be involved community development activities.
- 8.8 An evaluation of CF¹⁰⁶ stated that measures taken to engage seldom heard groups should have been set out in Delivery Plans and Community Involvement Plans. The most successful clusters reported best practice techniques, which included keeping a strong presence in the community, more targeted approaches such as door knocking and community events and utilising local partner organisations and schools. In line with this, a survey of forty-five Cluster Managers and LDB representatives reported outreach, taster sessions, social media, and community events and the most effective methods of engaging seldom heard communities of interest.¹⁰⁷ C2.0's evaluation reported that measures were taken to reach the most difficult target group including projects with Care and Repair and Age Cymru¹⁰⁸.
- 8.9 Evaluations reported methods of facilitating inclusive representation, for example a VTF stakeholder suggested the use of a citizen's jury¹⁰⁹. This process involves randomly selecting a representative group from the target area, developing a question or an issue for the group to discuss, providing information, and convening an expert group for the jury to question about the given topic.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ European Network for Rural Development, 2016. LEADER Local Development Strategies (LDS) Guidance on design and implementation [LEADER Local Development Strategies \(LDS\) Guidance on design and implementation - 2016](#)

¹⁰⁶ Welsh Government, 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First: a Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹⁰⁷ Welsh Government, 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First: a Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹⁰⁸ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

¹⁰⁹ Welsh Government, 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹¹⁰ Involve resources, online www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods/citizens-jury

8.10 Language needs beyond English and Welsh were identified as barriers to engagement in CF¹¹¹ and FS.¹¹² An evaluation of CF recognised that additional language provision is an important consideration for clusters comprising high proportions of Polish, Portuguese, or Asian communities.¹¹³ CF and FS evaluations reported measures taken to facilitate engagement with groups facing language barriers. For example, a FS case study described how a family of Iraqi refugees with limited English language skills were supported through signposting to ESOL courses and other essential services.¹¹⁴

Sub-theme 2: Marketing strategies

8.11 This sub-theme relates to marketing strategies to raise public awareness of the programme.

8.12 In LEADER's mid-term evaluation,¹¹⁵ interviewees noted concerns about the lack of awareness of the LAG and the programme in general. This was also raised in interviews with FS stakeholders,¹¹⁶ who reported barriers to engagement relating to a lack of community awareness of the support offered by the programme or the perception that the services offered were not relevant. Additionally, another FS evaluation report reported challenges due to the belief that there was stigma attached to engaging with the programme.¹¹⁷ Similarly, evaluation of C2.0¹¹⁸ noted that the main barrier to internet use was a lack of awareness of its benefits.

¹¹¹ Welsh Government, 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First: a Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹¹² Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

¹¹³ Welsh Government, 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First: a Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹¹⁴ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

¹¹⁵ Wavehill: social and economic research (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey: Arloesi Môn [Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey - 2019](#)

¹¹⁶ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

¹¹⁷ Welsh Government, 2013. National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area case study synthesis report [National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area case study synthesis report - 2013](#)

¹¹⁸ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

- 8.13 To facilitate engagement, evaluations of FS and CF recommended that programmes use wide marketing strategies, with the national evaluation of FS advising against targeting groups with specific demographic characteristics.¹¹⁹ Evaluations noted that the activities and successes of programmes should be widely publicised in each target area (e.g., LEADER, CF, VTF).
- 8.14 There were examples of effective social media campaigns launched by programmes which had been successful in raising awareness of programmes. For example, C2.0¹²⁰ and VTF stakeholders¹²¹ indicated that a good social media presence is an effective way of facilitating engagement.
- 8.15 Interviews with C2.0 stakeholders reported that the programme had been successful in raising public awareness of C2.0, but the initial spatial targeting of the programme had presented some barriers to promotion – noting that an all-Wales programme and a national media campaign would be more successful in increasing community engagement.¹²²
- 8.16 Considerations around the language used to promote programmes was also highlighted as an important consideration. For example, some VTF stakeholders thought the term “Taskforce” was patronising¹²³ and a C2.0 evaluation highlighted the importance of using accessible language, with some interviewees noting that it was not clear what was meant by some of the terms used to advertise the programme.¹²⁴

Sub-theme 3: Welsh language provision

¹¹⁹ Welsh Government, 2013. National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area case study synthesis report [National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area case study synthesis report - 2013](#)

¹²⁰ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

¹²¹ Welsh Government, 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹²² Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

¹²³ Welsh Government, 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

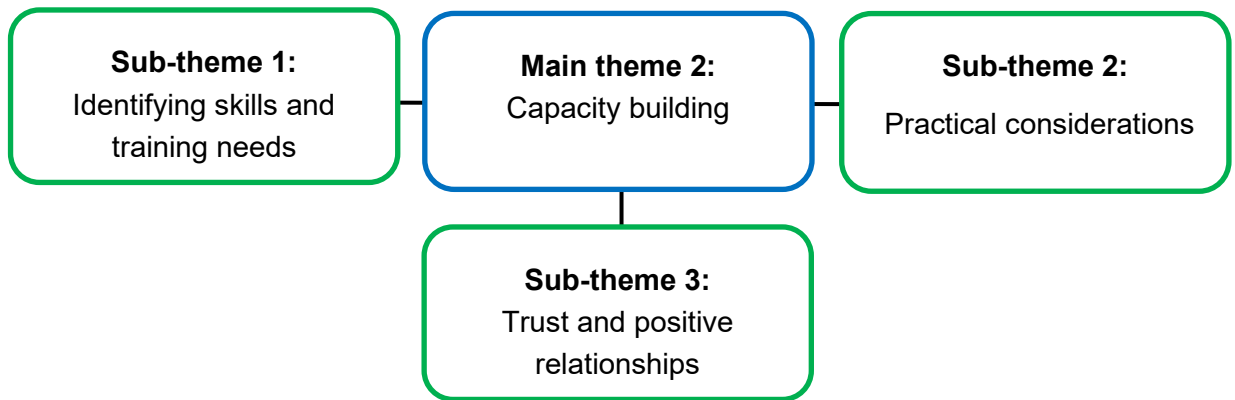
¹²⁴ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

- 8.17 This sub-theme is about measures taken to ensure that Welsh language provision is embedded in the programme.
- 8.18 Programme evaluations also highlighted the availability of Welsh language services was as an important facilitator of community engagement (CF, VTF, FS, C2.0). For example, VTF's engagement activities recruited individuals using purposive sampling to facilitate representation across socio-demographic groups - which included Welsh medium focus groups.¹²⁵
- 8.19 Evaluation of FS noted that most parents interviewed did not require services in the medium of Welsh; however, this was an important factor for some families who explained that they felt more comfortable using Welsh-language services. Overall, families had mixed views in terms of the perceived accessibility of Welsh-medium services – this was noted as a consistent barrier for some across the three waves of qualitative research with FS families.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Arad Research, 2017. Talk Valleys: Engagement Programme. Commissioned from Arad Research by the Welsh Government [Talk Valleys: Engagement Programme - 2017](#)

¹²⁶ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

9. Main theme 2: Capacity building



9.1 Main theme 2 “Capacity building” relates to community capacity building or actions taken to empower community members to develop the confidence and competencies needed to capitalise on the support available and/or influence decision making in their local area through community engagement.

Sub-theme 1: Identifying skills and training needs

9.2 This sub-theme describes the importance of taking measures to ensure that community members are provided with support and training to equip them with the specific competencies needed to engage with the programme.

9.3 A Joseph Rowntree report¹²⁷ assessing CF highlighted the importance of taking measures to ensure that participating community members are provided with support and training to equip them with the specific competencies needed to engage in community partnership working. The role of community development teams was considered instrumental in this.

9.4 For FS, it was noted that engagement was hindered by low literacy levels of FS parents.¹²⁸ Interviews with FS families also revealed that parenting experience (whether they were first time parents), prior experience of entitlements, and confidence (e.g., not wanting to attend sessions on their own) presented barriers to engagement.¹²⁹ There was evidence that the opportunity to improve job prospects by developing skills and gaining certificates incentivised families to

¹²⁷ Adamson & Bromiley (2008) Community empowerment in practice: Lessons from Communities First [Community Empowerment in Practice: Lessons from Communities First - 2008](#)

¹²⁸ Welsh Government, 2013. National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area case study synthesis report [Evaluation of Flying Start: Area Case Study Synthesis Report - 2013](#)

¹²⁹ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

engage with FS services.¹³⁰ FS's evaluation also noted that employing specialist staff to engage in pre-course preparatory work was a useful method of facilitating engagement.¹³¹

Sub-theme 2: Practical considerations

- 9.5 This subtheme relates to practical barriers that are important to consider when planning community engagement activities.
- 9.6 For example, interviews with FS families highlighted that scheduling of sessions presented barriers to engagement, for example, working hours meant that some parents were unable to take up childcare entitlements offered by the programme.¹³² Similarly, Skyline's feasibility study noted difficulties engaging working age members of the community.¹³³
- 9.7 To remove potential barriers to participation, LEADER guidance recommends careful consideration of timing and locations of sessions, providing food and refreshments, and offering childcare where possible.¹³⁴

Sub-theme 3: Trust and positive relationships

- 9.8 This sub-theme is about building trust and positive relationships between programme staff and community members. This also includes consideration the balance of power within partnerships to ensure that the community voice is heard.

¹³⁰ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

¹³¹ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

¹³² Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 <https://Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018>

¹³³ The Green Valleys CIC, 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

¹³⁴ European Network for Rural Development, 2016. LEADER Local Development Strategies (LDS) Guidance on design and implementation [LEADER Local Development Strategies \(LDS\) Guidance on design and implementation - 2016](#)

- 9.9 For example, evaluation of FS¹³⁵ highlighted the importance of trust between Health Visitors and families. A small number of FS families reported that a negative relationship with FS staff was a barrier to engagement, for example feeling judged or not listened to. However, most interviewees reported that they developed a good relationship with their Health Visitor which meant they felt comfortable contacting them if they needed support.
- 9.10 Evaluations raised concerns about the formal community input into decision making processes. For example, VTF stakeholders highlighted that engagement activities were only introduced after the Taskforce had been formed which meant there was limited community input into the way that the programme was delivered.¹³⁶ Similar concerns were raised by LEADER stakeholders who suggested that Menter Môn project officers sometimes had a greater influence on programme actions than community members.¹³⁷
- 9.11 To address power imbalances in partnerships and ensure that a representative community voice is heard, LEADER guidance recommended careful consideration of existing community relationships. This involves selecting trusted members of the community as chairs and avoiding individuals that they describe as “blockers”, in other words, people whose involvement could potentially deter or exclude others from engaging.¹³⁸ Additionally, Skyline’s feasibility study highlighted the importance of Stakeholder group “advising but not leading” the community development process¹³⁹.

¹³⁵ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 - 2018](#)

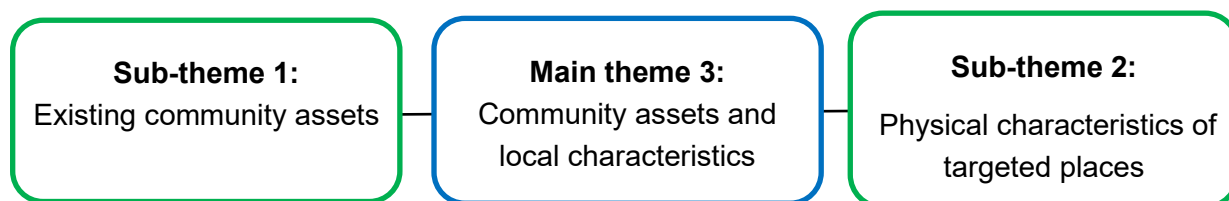
¹³⁶ Welsh Government, 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹³⁷ Wavehill: social and economic research (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey: Arloesi Môn [Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey - 2019](#)

¹³⁸ European Network for Rural Development, 2016. LEADER Local Development Strategies (LDS) Guidance on design and implementation [LEADER Local Development Strategies \(LDS\) Guidance on design and implementation - 2016](#)

¹³⁹ The Green Valleys CIC, 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

10. Main theme 3: Community assets and local characteristics



This theme relates to the use of community assets as a foundation for community engagement and development. Community assets here includes physical structures or places, but also, importantly, community leaders, groups, services, and businesses.

Sub-theme 1: Existing community assets

- 10.1 This sub-theme covers the ways in which existing community assets were identified and utilised to provide a foundation for engagement and community development.
- 10.2 Recognising that targeted areas will differ in terms of existing community activity and social capital was acknowledged as an important consideration for community engagement in CF, with some areas needing more “*preparatory capacity building*.” (p.39)¹⁴⁰
- 10.3 C2.0 stakeholders highlighted that a key facilitator of engagement was the use of accessible community venues, noting that drop-in sessions in libraries had been particularly effective. Delivering training through community groups was also regarded as a successful approach.¹⁴¹
- 10.4 To encourage community participation, the mid-term evaluation of the Arloesi Môn LEADER programme¹⁴² recommended that LAG members adopt an ambassador role, which should include promoting the programme through community events and networks. It was observed, however, that using already established Menter Môn networks could potentially present barriers in terms of

¹⁴⁰ Adamson & Bromiley (2008) Community empowerment in practice: Lessons from Communities First [Community Empowerment in Practice: Lessons from Communities First - 2008](#)

¹⁴¹ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

¹⁴² Wavehill: social and economic research (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey: Arloesi Môn [Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey - 2019](#)

achieving “genuine, new community engagement” - this is an important consideration to note.

- 10.5 To maximise the potential of existing community assets, VTF focussed on engaging residents, existing businesses, and third sector organisations to optimise existing investment by identifying successful projects and scaling up and extending this work across the Valleys.^{143,144}
- 10.6 Skyline’s feasibility study¹⁴⁵ is about community control of assets, namely community land ownership. The report provides evidence that projects with this focus can improve community engagement, citing evidence from Scotland demonstrating higher public participation in communities with land ownership.
- 10.7 In terms of practical methods for identifying and building on existing community assets, LEADER guidance recommends “stakeholder analysis”. This process involves:

“Mapping and analysing the people, organisations and institutions which have or can have a significant impact on the area’s development. It identifies the core capabilities and contributions of actual or potential partners and may be undertaken by sector, public, private, and civic, area, theme, or activity type. The analysis can be structured around people or organisations’ official remit, interests, capacity or resources, or possible projects or interests they wish to promote. This mapping also helps demonstrate the relevance of the partnership to the area and provide evidence of community involvement in the LDS document. There are various tools available to assist with this (matrices, relationship diagrams, organisational capacity diagrams, mind maps, etc.)”
(p.7-8)¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Welsh Government, (2021) The Valleys Taskforce, 2016 – 2021: a final report [The Valleys Taskforce - 2016 to 2021- Report](#)

¹⁴⁴ Welsh Government, (2021) Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁴⁵ The Green Valleys CIC, 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

¹⁴⁶ European Network for Rural Development, 2016. LEADER Local Development Strategies (LDS) Guidance on design and implementation [LEADER Local Development Strategies \(LDS\) Guidance on Design and Implementation - 2016 2016](#)

Sub-theme 2: Physical infrastructure

- 10.8 This theme relates to aspects of the physical environment that can present challenges in terms of engagement and delivery.
- 10.9 Evaluations (e.g., CF and VTF) stated that programmes implemented in low-density, rural communities with poor transport links should take measures to reduce potential barriers to participation when designing community engagement activities.^{147,148,149}
- 10.10 CF evaluation reported a number of other challenges relating to spatial targeting and physical characteristics of targeted areas. The evaluation noted case studies of rural clusters comprising of several isolated villages. This had a negative impact in terms of funding because services had to be duplicated to make them accessible to community members and the programme had to cover transport costs for CF staff. Finally, programme activities were delayed while organisational processes were established due to the absence of services or organisations operating across the whole cluster.¹⁵⁰

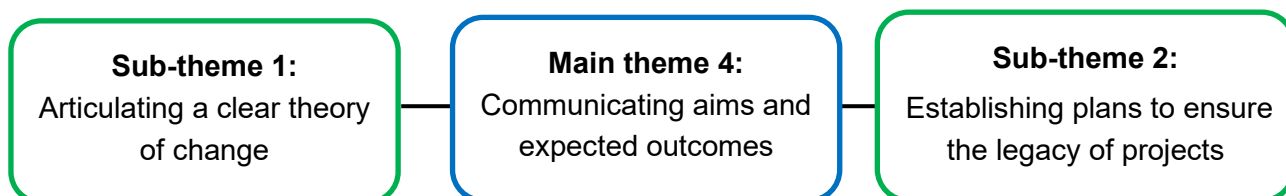
¹⁴⁷ Welsh Government, 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁴⁸ Welsh Government, 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation <https://Communities First - Process Evaluation 2015>

¹⁴⁹ Adamson & Bromiley (2008) Community empowerment in practice: Lessons from Communities First [Community Empowerment in Practice: Lessons from Communities First - 2008](#)

¹⁵⁰ Welsh Government, (2015) Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First - Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

11. Main theme 4: Communicating aims and expected outcomes



11.1 This theme pertains to the importance of community partnerships (as well as other key stakeholders *e.g.*, funders and policy makers) agreeing on the aims and expectations of the programme and clearly communicating what can realistically be achieved within the constraints of the given time frame, funding, and resources. This involves effective collaboration with the community to identify what the problem is, how it can be addressed, and identify tangible outcomes that can be measured to evaluate the effectiveness of the PBA.

Sub-theme 1: Articulating a clear theory of change

11.2 Sub-theme 1 is about articulating a clear theory of change to determine “what works” in terms of PBAs to community engagement and support. Communicating tangible results to community members is also an important way of maintaining engagement and avoiding disillusionment with programmes.

11.3 When working with residents to address community issues, there is a challenge in striking a balance between top-down and bottom-up (community-led) approaches to community engagement and support. An evaluation of CF notes that top-down approaches tend to have more of a narrow focus and are developed with specific outcomes and impacts in mind¹⁵¹. However, this approach is criticised due to its lack of input the community has in the shaping of activities.

11.4 Conversely, in programmes that adopt a bottom-up approach, the community is instrumental in driving the intervention, but activities tend to have a broader focus – presenting inherent challenges in terms of the monitoring and evaluation of the

¹⁵¹ Welsh Government, 2015. Process evaluation of Communities First Appendix 1: Theory of Change [Communities First - Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

programme¹⁵². A common view of stakeholders was that that the programme activities were too wide-ranging or ambitious and could have benefited from refinement (e.g., CF, VTF, C2.0, LEADER). Other challenges related to bottom-up approaches are that the project might focus on issues that are not in the best interest of the whole community. Additionally, with bottom-up approaches, priorities may not align with larger geographical or national priorities e.g., Welsh Government objectives.

- 11.5 A lack of precision in terms of aims and performance indicators was highlighted as a challenge across all the community-led programme evaluations (CF, VTF, C2.0, LEADER).
- 11.6 For example, VTF stakeholders reported that it was difficult to assess the efficacy of the programme because performance indicators had not been put in place to assess the effects of the programme over time.¹⁵³
- 11.7 The mid-term evaluation of the Arloesi Môn LEADER programme¹⁵⁴ highlighted the need for greater focus of actions in terms of facilitating the efficient allocation of funding. It was recommended that a review of projects be conducted, including clearly outlining how projects align with the specific objectives within each of the five themes.
- 11.8 Another common challenge was that programmes often evolved over time (CF, VTF, C2.0). This presented challenges in engagement and delivery. For example, evaluation of C2.0 reported that staff experienced difficulties meeting targets as they were required to adapt to shifting focus of the programme's priorities.¹⁵⁵ Changing aims also exacerbates the problem of differing expectations if communities are not kept informed or do not agree with the new aims or priorities of the programme. There is also the risk that programmes are then asked to respond to priorities that they were not initially designed to respond

¹⁵² Welsh Government, 2015. Process evaluation of Communities First Appendix 1: Theory of Change [Communities First - Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹⁵³ Welsh Government, 2021. The Valleys Taskforce, 2016 – 2021: a final report [The Valleys Taskforce - 2016 to 2021- Report](#)

¹⁵⁴ Wavehill: social and economic research (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey: Arloesi Môn [Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey - 2019](#)

¹⁵⁵ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

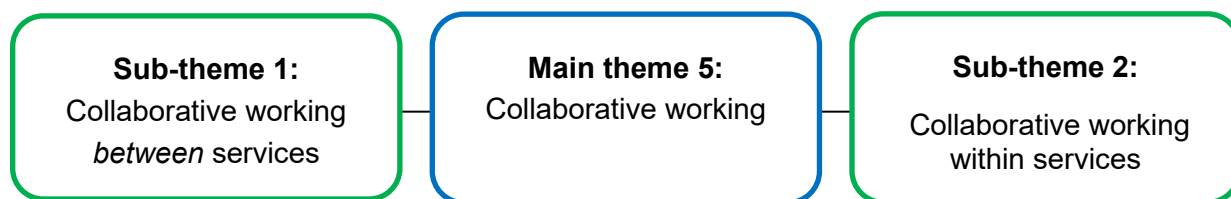
to. This can lead to ineffective performance against the new priorities and a lack of focus on the original programme goals.

Sub-theme 2: Establishing plans to ensure the legacy of projects

- 11.9 Evaluations of programmes (e.g., LEADER, CF, and Skyline), noted the importance of programmes setting out a plan for the legacy of projects, specifying how they will continue to operate once the funding and resources allocated by the programme ends.
- 11.10 To maintain engagement and support, Skyline's feasibility study¹⁵⁶ recommended that their proposed future programme should set out a ten-year plan and ensure that the community are in agreement. A community poll or similar evidence of wide-ranging support were suggested as ways of assessing this.

¹⁵⁶ The Green Valleys CIC, 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

12. Main theme 5: Collaborative working



12.1 Main theme 5, 'Collaborative working' refers to practices of joint working *within* and *between* services to facilitate community engagement and support, ensure effective delivery, and avoid duplication of services.

Sub-theme 1: Collaborative working *between* services

12.2 This sub-theme relates to ways in which programmes worked with external stakeholders. This includes communication and alignment of activities with other organisations, and practices of networking and information sharing.

12.3 Evaluations discussed barriers and facilitators relating to communication with external stakeholders as well as the alignment and co-ordination of activities alongside other services. Multi-stakeholder working can be strongly facilitated or hindered by the interpersonal relationships of staff in different organisations, and even staff within different departments in the same organisation. Parochialism and silo working can be significant barriers to effective joint working.

12.4 It was widely noted that the VTF had engaged well with stakeholders across sectors and local authorities, with evidence of new connections between organisations being established because of the VTF. There was, however, less evidence that this engagement was sustained in the long-term. Evaluations did report that the health and education sectors were more difficult to engage with the programme, however, it was highlighted that COVID-19 likely presented significant challenges in terms of engagement with health boards.^{157,158}

12.5 There were reports from stakeholders that the combination of VTF's and the COVID-19 response had helped to strengthen collaborative working between LAs

¹⁵⁷ Welsh Government, 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁵⁸ Welsh Government, 2021. The Valleys Taskforce, 2016 – 2021: a final report [The Valleys Taskforce - 2016 to 2021- Report](#)

and the WG. One LA noted that collaborative working with Business Wales had strengthened as a result.¹⁵⁹

- 12.6 C2.0 stakeholders¹⁶⁰ also reported that the programme had been successful in building relationships and working effectively with intermediary organisations, including LAs, County Voluntary Councils [CVCs], and CF clusters to facilitate engagement with community groups and social enterprises. In terms of the success of wider engagement with third sector organisations, evidence was more mixed – with some stakeholders reporting that C2.0 had not aligned well with other digital inclusion initiatives. Alignment with other approaches was also highlighted as a challenge by VTF stakeholders,¹⁶¹ noting that opportunities for collaborative working with Cardiff City Deal had been missed.
- 12.7 Similarly, CF's alignment alongside other tackling poverty programmes (e.g., Families First [FF], FS, and Communities for Work) was highlighted as a challenge,¹⁶² with stakeholders reporting that the links between programmes were not clear until after the restructuring of the programme in 2012. Evaluation of CF also raised concerns that the programme was duplicating services that fall within the remit of other statutory bodies.¹⁶³ A CF project focussed on mental health was provided as an example – the Bevan Foundation questioned why this work was not being delivered by the health board in collaboration with the third sector organisation instead of CF.^{164,165}

¹⁵⁹ Welsh Government, (2021) Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁶⁰ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

¹⁶¹ Welsh Government, 2021. Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁶² National Assembly for Wales, 2017. Communities First Lessons Learnt [Senedd Business - Communities First Lessons Learnt - 2017](#)

¹⁶³ National Assembly for Wales, 2017. Communities First Lessons Learnt [Senedd Business - Communities First Lessons Learnt - 2017](#)

¹⁶⁴ National Assembly for Wales, 2017. Communities First Lessons Learnt [Senedd Business - Communities First Lessons Learnt - 2017](#)

¹⁶⁵ National Assembly for Wales, 2017. The Record of Proceedings. ELGC Committee, June 2017 [Senedd Business Record of Proceedings. ELGC Committee, June 2017](#)

- 12.8 CF stakeholders also reported that alignment of tackling poverty programmes was hindered by differences in funding cycles and performance frameworks.^{166,167}
- 12.9 An evaluation of VTF found that collaborative working had been facilitated by the way in which funding was distributed. Stakeholders reported that VTF funds were available across all LAs as opposed to a more targeted allocation of funds to fewer areas.¹⁶⁸
- 12.10 To facilitate alignment between CF and other programmes and services, a European Social Funded [ESF] Communities First and Family Integration Project was established¹⁶⁹. This included regional tackling poverty events to facilitate joint working which were attended by representatives of CF, FF, and FS in addition to staff from the third sector, health services, and local government. It was also reported that the introduction of a Common Outcomes Framework across CF, FF, and FS brought about greater coherence in terms of the common Tackling Poverty objectives across the programmes.¹⁷⁰
- 12.11 VTF stakeholders also reported a range of ways that collaborative working between organisations was facilitated. Including consultation events organised by the transport sub-group which brought together residents, politicians, and key stakeholder organisations and “placemaking planning” which included collaborative working between the WG and representatives from transport, regeneration, housing and LAs.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ National Assembly for Wales, 2017. Communities First Lessons Learnt [Senedd Business - Communities First Lessons Learnt - 2017](#)

¹⁶⁷ Written evidence, CF16 City of Cardiff Council, paragraph 14 [Senedd Business Written evidence, CF16 City of Cardiff Council](#)

¹⁶⁸ Welsh Government, (2021) Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁶⁹ Welsh Government, (2015) Communities First Process Evaluation [Communities First - Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹⁷⁰ Welsh Government, (2015) Communities First Process Evaluation [Communities First - Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹⁷¹ Welsh Government, (2021) Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

- 12.12 Programme evaluations discussed practices of networking and information sharing to learn from other projects and to effectively refer clients to the appropriate services.
- 12.13 The national evaluation of FS¹⁷² highlighted that having access to data on families is a requirement for achieving the aim of more integrated services. It was reported that the programme had made good progress in data-sharing with other programmes such as FF and CF with just under half reporting that they had systems in place to share data with external agencies. Additionally, Information Sharing Protocols were established in FS areas to facilitate this process.
- 12.14 VTF stakeholders suggested that more could have been done to share “lessons learned” by the different VTF funded projects to help in terms of the identification and potential expansion of successful projects.¹⁷³
- 12.15 Evaluations of the Arloesi Môn LEADER programme,¹⁷⁴ CF¹⁷⁵ and C2.0¹⁷⁶ also noted the importance of information sharing so that programmes can learn about similar projects, identify common issues encountered and share solutions. For example, LEADER’s evaluation also recommended that cooperative projects are developed with Local Action Groups [LAGs] both in Wales and the EU. Interviewees highlighted that the LAGs had provided networking opportunities and reported networking with the Gwynedd programme. LEADER also has the ‘Wales Rural Network’ [WRN] which was developed to share details of projects in Wales, however despite this, LAG members reported limited awareness of other projects across Wales.
- 12.16 The feasibility study of Skyline noted that one of the most successful components of the project was taking community members to Scotland to enable teams to

¹⁷² Welsh Government, (2013) National evaluation of flying start area case study synthesis report [National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area Case Study Synthesis Report - 2013](#)

¹⁷³ Welsh Government, (2021) Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews [Valleys Taskforce: Stakeholders Interviews 2021](#)

¹⁷⁴ European Network for Rural Development, 2016. LEADER Local Development Strategies (LDS) Guidance on design and implementation [LEADER Local Development Strategies \(LDS\) Guidance on design and implementation - 2016](#)

¹⁷⁵ Welsh Government, 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation [Communities First - Process Evaluation - 2015](#)

¹⁷⁶ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - 2015](#)

learn from a successful landscape stewardship project and what community ownership and management of assets looks like in practice¹⁷⁷.

Sub-theme 2: Collaborative working within services

- 12.17 This sub-theme discusses ways in which staff worked together within programmes and the determinants of effective collaborative working. This includes capacity building in programme staff, the structures and processes of community partnerships, and internal information sharing.
- 12.18 Evaluation of FS reported that information sharing between health and social care practitioners within the programme had improved significantly since 2009, noting that by 2012, more than half of the FS areas had systems in place for sharing information within the programme. In terms of FS's aim of achieving a well-integrated service, national evaluation reported that some areas had been more successful than others in this regard. Areas that had established more integrated services reported advantages in terms of quicker referrals, increased access, and visibility of services, and enhanced training.¹⁷⁸ Stakeholder interviews echoed this, with service users reporting effective collaborative working within the programme - referral between FS services was efficient, and stakeholders were aware of the links between the different FS entitlements.¹⁷⁹
- 12.19 Evaluation of VTF¹⁸⁰ stressed the importance of the Taskforce comprising a balance of political members and representatives with expertise across a range of sectors - noting that members must have a clear understanding of their role and the support they can offer. Generally, stakeholders were positive about the way in which the programme operated noting the strong presence and leadership of the taskforce, and transparency regarding its activities. However, some interviewees reported the programme could have benefited from more simplified

¹⁷⁷ The Green Valleys CIC, 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

¹⁷⁸ Welsh Government, 2013. National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area case study synthesis report [National Evaluation of Flying Start: Area Case Study Synthesis Report - 2013](#)

¹⁷⁹ Welsh Government, 2018. Qualitative research with Flying Start families: Wave 3 [Qualitative Research - Flying Start Families - Wave 3 - 2018](#)

¹⁸⁰ Welsh Government, 2021. The Valleys Taskforce, 2016 – 2021: a final report [The Valleys Taskforce - 2016 to 2021- Report](#)

governance arrangements and others questioned the appropriateness of Taskforce members contributing to decisions about funding.

- 12.20 C2.0 stakeholders¹⁸¹ reported effective collaborative working between the Welsh European Funding Office [WEFO], the Digital Inclusion Unit [DIU] and C2.0. It was also noted that the introduction of integrated local area teams following the restructuring of the programme in 2012 facilitated engagement with supported organisations.
- 12.21 Evaluations discussed practices of capacity building in programme staff. CF stakeholders¹⁸² reported difficulties recruiting staff with the required skillset for Cluster Manager roles and noted that the required skills changed after the restructuring of the programme, calling for individuals with expertise in project, people, and financial management. Ongoing training was made available to cluster teams which included a Community Involvement Plan guidance document and support delivered by the by Wales Council for Voluntary Action [WCVA] and the Welsh government such as drop-in surgeries, peer to peer learning and exchange, and topic specific training.
- 12.22 C2.0 incorporated a “train the trainer” component which involved supporting organisations to train volunteers to deliver digital inclusion courses. Stakeholders considered the inclusion of volunteers to be a significant strength of the programme, reporting benefits in terms of capacity building in volunteers including job seeking individuals and older people, but also noting that this had significant benefits in terms of extending the reach of the programme and building rapport with service users.¹⁸³
- 12.23 Mid-term evaluation of the Arloesi Môn LEADER programme¹⁸⁴ recommended introducing a training programme for LAG members which covers issues related to the LDS and LEADER’s approach. It was also noted that there should be more

¹⁸¹ Welsh Government, 2015. The Evaluation of Communities 2.0 Final Evaluation Report - Revised* [Evaluation of Communities 2.0 - 2015](#)

¹⁸² Welsh Government., 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation <https://Communities First - Process Evaluation 2015>

¹⁸³ Welsh Government., 2015. Communities First: a process evaluation <https://Communities First - Process Evaluation 2015>

¹⁸⁴ Wavehill: social and economic research (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey: Arloesi Môn [Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme on Anglesey - 2019](#)

representation in meetings from individuals with specific expertise in the proposed areas of intervention.

- 12.24 Skyline was successful in bringing together experts from across different disciplines to work together with communities, including artist facilitators, local project management, ecologists, legal advisors, and other technical specialists. It was also noted that care must be taken to ensure that experts “serve but not lead” the plans set out by community members.¹⁸⁵

13. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 13.1 This review provides an initial mapping of the literature on PBAs and how they have been implemented to address some of the key challenges facing Welsh communities. This included a review of PBAs, describing their features, in

¹⁸⁵ The Green Valleys CIC, 2019. Skyline: Report on the feasibility study into landscape-style community land stewardship in the South Wales Valleys [Report on the Feasibility Study into Landscape-style Community Land Stewardship in the South Wales Valleys - 2019](#)

addition summary of the theoretical rationale and key evidence underpinning this approach. A synthesis of the evaluations of six PBA case studies was also conducted to identify common barrier and facilitators to PBAs to community engagement and support.

- 13.2 The six case studies selected were: Communities First [CF], Valleys Taskforce [VTF], Flying Start [FS], LEADER (Arloesi Môn), Skyline, and Communities 2.0 [C2.0].
- 13.3 CF, VTF, and FS aimed to address the geographical variation in deprivation rates in Wales using spatial targeting to mitigate the impact of poverty in the most deprived communities of place and interest.
- 13.4 The LEADER project (Arloesi Môn) provided useful considerations for future PBAs to rural development programmes in Wales in the context of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.
- 13.5 Skyline's feasibility study outlined PBAs to promote sustainable development, including community land stewardship and renewable energy projects, which have the potential to improve the prosperity of former mining communities in the South Wales Valleys and provide practical strategies for addressing the climate crisis.
- 13.6 Finally, C2.0 implemented digital initiatives through community and voluntary organisations to target groups who are at a higher risk of digital exclusion.

Recommendations

- 13.7 Recommendations have been developed as informed by the five main themes of barriers and facilitators to community engagement and support that were derived through the synthesis of case study evaluations. This can serve as a framework for the development of community policy.

Theme 1: Community inclusion

- 13.8 Recommendation 1: Take measures to facilitate inclusive representation when engaging with communities.
- 13.9 Recommendation 2: Gather an in-depth understanding of the targeted communities of place and interest and address barriers to participation.
- 13.10 Recommendation 3: Employ effective marketing strategies to raise public awareness of any community focussed activity or programme.
- 13.11 Recommendation 4: Support community activities to offer Welsh medium services.
- 13.12 Facilitators to these recommendations include local area reports – which can provide an in-depth understanding of the socio-demographics of the targeted communities. Other examples include, outreach work, publicising activities, and using a citizen’s jury process.

Theme 2: Capacity building

- 13.13 Recommendation 5: Identify gaps in skills and take actions to empower community members to develop the confidence and competencies needed to capitalise on the support available and/or influence decision making in their local area.
- 13.14 Recommendation 6: Address practical barriers to engagement.
- 13.15 Recommendation 7: Build trust and positive relationships with community members and consider the balance of power within community partnerships.
- 13.16 Facilitators to these recommendations include the provision of capacity building opportunities for community members and carefully considering of the structures and processes involved in partnership working.

Theme 3: Community assets and local characteristics

- 13.17 Recommendation 8: Identify and utilise community assets to facilitate engagement and community development activities.
- 13.18 Recommendation 9: Consider how physical characteristics of the targeted area could present barriers to engagement.
- 13.19 Recommendation 10: Consider how community problems and solutions differ in urban and rural areas.

- 13.20 Facilitators to these recommendations include stakeholder analysis to identify and build on community assets.

Theme 4: Communicating aims and expected outcomes

- 13.21 Recommendation 11: Manage expectations in terms of what can be achieved within the constraints of the given time frame, funding, and resources. This involves effective collaboration with the community to identify what the problem is, how it can be addressed, and identify tangible outcomes that can be measured to evaluate its efficacy.
- 13.22 Recommendation 12: Set out a plan for the legacy of projects, specifying how they will continue to operate once support from the programme ends.
- 13.23 Facilitators to these recommendations include the development of a clear theory of change grounded in evidence, specifying aims, tangible outcomes, and impacts from the outset, and use of a community poll to assess community support.

Theme 5: Collaborative working

- 13.24 Recommendation 13: Adopt good practices of joint working *within* and *between* services to facilitate community engagement and support, ensure effective delivery, and avoid duplication of services.
- 13.25 Recommendation 14: Consider alignment and co-ordination of activities alongside other services.
- 13.26 Facilitators to these recommendations include capacity building for staff, having systems in place to share information internally and externally, networking and sharing “lessons learned”.

Limitations and future research

- 13.27 Findings should be considered in light of their limitations. There is subjectivity in terms of the selection of case studies and analysis of qualitative data. Further, all case studies PBAs have been implemented in Wales only.
- 13.28 In terms of future research, conducting a systematic review of PBAs might be valuable. This could include the synthesis of evaluations of other programmes in Wales, in addition to PBAs that have been implemented elsewhere in the UK, and internationally.