



Learning from Phase 1 of the Place Based Social Action programme

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1. Introduction

1.1 The aims of the Place Based Social Action programme

The Place Based Social Action (PBSA) programme was launched in 2017 by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and The National Lottery Community Fund. It represents £4.5m of investment over seven years, aiming to support local partnerships to use social action to address issues and priorities that matter to people in their community.

The PBSA programme used the following definition of **social action**:

“People coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It involves people giving their time and other resources for the common good. This can be in a range of forms, from volunteering and community owned services to simple neighbourly acts.”¹

The **overall aims** of the PBSA Programme are to:

- Support **local communities, public sector organisations, service providers, civil society organisations and businesses** to work together to address local priorities
- Increase the **capability and ability of local people and organisations to take action** on the issues that matter to them
- Encourage **new ways of working**, so that the people who live and work in an area have more **meaningful influence and ownership** over local services²

This report presents the **early experiences and reflections of places, the funders and support providers** involved in Phase 1 of the PBSA programme. It has been authored by the learning partner for the programme (Renaissi) and draws on insights captured throughout the year via phone calls, surveys and ongoing engagement; an analysis of submitted plans; and feedback from both successful and unsuccessful places at the end of Phase 1. The intention is to provide an overview of the first year for those who were directly involved, and for others working on similar approaches who might be interested in early learning that has arisen from the programme. The report covers:

- How the PBSA programme operates
- An introduction to the places involved
- What happened in Phase 1
- Approaches to learning and understanding PBSA
- Reflections on programme design
- Next steps and how learning from Phase 1 is being applied to Phase 2

¹ [‘Place Based Social Action: A Learning Review’](#) was published in July 2018 as part of the Programme, and contains a more detailed explanation of some of the challenges around defining place based social action

² From the PBSA programme initial [guidance](#)

1.2 Key features of the PBSA programme

DCMS and The National Lottery Community Fund invited Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from local partnerships by the end of November 2017 asking for their vision for their place and its future, achievements so far, plans for engaging with the local community, and how they might bring in additional resources at each stage of the programme.

Local partnerships could include a **broad range of actors** – including local community members, representatives of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and statutory organisations. The lead organisation needed to be a registered charity, community benefit society, community interest company or social enterprise. A precondition of funding was that there could only be one application from a local authority area.

Following the EOI stage, **20 partnerships were selected** to go forward to the next stage. The three main stages of the PBSA programme are summarised in Table 1 below:

| Phase and timings | Programme activities |
|---|---|
| <p>Phase 1: Development</p> <p>Jan 2018-Dec 2018</p> | <p>Up to £5,000 available for 20 partnerships to create a shared vision and plan setting out how high impact social action can help respond to local priorities.</p> <p>Local partnerships had to submit a plan by 31st October 2018 of 10-15 pages long outlining different aspects such as community involvement, the development of the plan to date, the difference partnerships hoped to make, an activity and engagement plan, learning and sharing plans, and future sustainability.</p> <p>Match/in-kind funding of at least 33% was required for partnerships to be eligible for Phases 2 and 3.</p> <p>In November and December 2018 representatives from DCMS and The National Lottery Community Fund visited the 19 places that submitted a plan, inviting partnerships to present their ideas in whichever way best suited them.</p> <p>An assessment panel took place in January 2019, and the 10 successful places were announced in February 2019.</p> |
| <p>Phase 2: Delivery</p> <p>Jan 2019-Dec 2021</p> | <p>Grants of up to £240,000 are available for 10 partnerships to implement their social action plans.</p> <p>This can be spent on a wide range of activities that support the overall PBSA programme aims including staff salaries, training, volunteer expenses, management costs, premises costs, monitoring and evaluation and overheads.</p> |

Phase 3: Scale and Sustain

Jan 2022-Dec 2025

Grants of up to £240,000 are available for up to five partnerships to **develop and expand their social action activity** to sustain local outcomes beyond the duration of the PBSA programme³

Table 1: Stages of the PBSA programme

1.3 PBSA programme support

The PBSA programme was designed with **two key elements of support** for partnerships: a support contractor (Locality, New Economics Foundation and Co-operatives UK); and a learning partner (Renaissi). Although elements of these roles overlapped, the focus and activities for each was as follows:

Support contractor: delivery – supporting places to:

- Increase understanding around social action
- Build relationships across and within partnerships
- Support local partnerships to build a shared vision and plan for social action in their area

In Phase 1, this was delivered through:

- **A Social Action Journey modular training course** for each place involving different elements such as a diagnostic questionnaire, partnership workshops, webinars, and reviewing plans
- **Relationship Management support** – a dedicated point of contact for each place to guide and support partnerships through each stage of the programme, acting as a critical friend throughout the process
- **A Peer to Peer Network** – hosted on Locality’s My Community Forum

Learning partner: learning and evaluation – aiming to:

- Generate and share key learning at programme and place level
- Capture the difference the programme is making in places – at individual, community and wider system level
- Build evaluation capacity in places

In Phase 1, this was delivered through:

- **A learning review** bringing together existing evidence of practice in the field of place based working and social action to help guide and support the work of places
- Providing **1-2-1 support and feedback** on the development of plans, focussing on learning and evaluation sections
- **Contributing content to the Social Action Journey training** through webinars and Theory of Change workshops
- **Facilitating learning sessions** on Phase 1 with DCMS, The National Lottery Community Fund and support contractors, as well as with places (as part of the Phase 2 kick-off event)

³ At the time of writing, this element of the PBSA Programme was subject to review following feedback from Phase 1

1.4 A learning programme

A key aim of the PBSA Programme is to **build the evidence and demand** for social action so that local public services and other funders support social action at a local level in the future. During Phase 1, a set of **overarching outcomes** at **place** and **programme** level were developed (see figure 1 below). These will be refined further throughout Phase 2 and 3 in collaboration with the programme partners and places.



Figure 1: Place level and programme level outcomes from the PBSA programme

Underpinning these outcomes is a desire for the PBSA programme to provide **a space to test out a set of hypotheses around place based social action**, and make a valuable contribution to the evidence base. Over the course of the programme the learning partner will be drawing out learning about the conditions that are helpful for allowing social action to flourish, whilst remaining mindful that local conditions are influenced by much bigger systems and contexts that place based social action alone will not be able to change.

In Phase 1, the learning partner has focused on **how the programme is working in each area**. This has been guided by lines of enquiry which have informed the structure the report as follows: lessons for delivery, evaluation and learning approaches, as well as overall programme design.

2. The places

This section introduces the **twenty places** selected to take part in Phase 1 and provides an insight into the 'starting points' of the places at the beginning of the programme when they submitted their EOIs. It highlights the geographic spread of areas, provides an overview of the range of organisations and stakeholders that have come together to form partnerships, and discusses the range of ways in which 'place' has been defined by them. Consideration is also given to the rationale and drivers underpinning their approaches and an overview of their planned activities.

2.1 Introduction to the places

Twenty places across England were chosen to take part in Phase 1 of the programme (see figure 1 below). A full list of the twenty places is included in Appendix 1 alongside a short summary of their intended approach.



Figure 2: Map showing the locations of the 20 Phase 1 places

The **scale of operation** varied considerably between the twenty places involved in Phase 1. The funders intentionally avoided identifying the scale or size of 'places' in which social action was to take place. It was left for applicants themselves to define what place meant to them and the communities they were working with.

- Approximately a third of places proposed to direct their activities at what they defined as **neighbourhood or estate level**, these varied in population size from 1096 to 19,000 people

according to the expressions of interest and 2011 census data. These neighbourhoods typically scored below average on a number of indices of multiple deprivation (IMD).

- Another third planned to deliver coordinated activities across the **ward level** (scale varied from one ward to as many as six, with variations in between) and across multiple Lower Super Output Areas. Populations of a single ward varied from 9,175 to 13,250, one area extended their activities to 4 wards which would cover in excess of 41,000 people.
- The final third proposed to adopt a **whole town, city or borough approach** promoting social action across that place, or viewing place based social action as a means to tackling a single issue that was a challenge for the wider town rather than isolated parts (examples of this included loneliness, dementia, and domestic abuse). Populations here varied enormously from 3,800-92,000 in those that described themselves as towns; 174,000 - 184,000 in those taking a 'whole borough' approach; and 205,100 in the one area adopting a 'whole city' approach.

As the above highlights, there were some instances where the population of areas that defined their 'place' as a whole town were smaller than some inner city estates. The implications of this from a delivery and evaluation perspective are considered later in the report.

In some cases, the decision to focus on particular areas was straightforward and aligned with local commitments to increase investment and support into target area. In other cases there was careful consideration about the size and scope of the boundaries they used to define a 'place.' In one area a city council put the choice of area to public vote.

2.2 Local partnerships

The **make-up of partnerships** across Phase 1 were as diverse as the communities they sought to serve and the issues they hoped to address, bringing together a wide range of statutory, charitable and voluntary services, public and private partners, community representatives and local stakeholders.

Each partner was required to name a **lead partner** responsible for coordinating the work. These organisations were typically established local civic and voluntary infrastructure organisations or charitable or social enterprises with a track record of delivering successful community action. Other lead partners included a local Citizens Advice Bureau, a regeneration partnership established to oversee a programme of physical and social regeneration and community organisations formed and incorporated by local people. Where areas were pursuing social action as an approach to a single issue, such as dementia, the lead partner was selected for their specialism in that field.

A key component of the PBSA programme is to encourage **better collaboration and coproduction** between communities, local service providers and local government. Each EOI required sign-off from the Chief Executive of the local authority, ensuring that there was local political support for the activities from the outset. Representatives of local authorities had a role on the majority of partnerships and were credited with providing partnerships with valuable expertise and networks, raising the profile of planned activities and the opportunities the PBSA programme presented, and in some cases contributing staff time and funding to develop the plan and associated engagement activities.

Table 2 below summarises the range of local services and stakeholders that formed part of the Phase 1 partnerships in places:

| Partner | Description |
|--|---|
| Local statutory and social services | These included the local police; children and young people services; primary and secondary schools; higher education institutions; parks and recreational services; and local transport providers. |
| Neighbourhood and community groups | These included: neighbourhood forums; parish council representation; input from tenant and resident associations; and the involvement of wider collectives of local residents coming together to improve their local community |
| Health partners | A number of partnerships had developed close links with local surgeries and healthcare centres and several had representations from or close links with local clinical commissioning groups. |
| Charitable and voluntary services | Many were involved for their close links to parts of the community and their long standing association with particular areas or groups living within a locality. Some brought expertise in particular issues the partnership planned to explore (such as tackling hate crime, or supporting carers) or because they demonstrated a long tradition of community organising and mobilising. |
| Housing associations | Several partnerships involved representatives from the housing sector who were able to demonstrate a direct relationship with many of the people living within particular places and for their community investment and engagement activities and expertise. |
| University and learning partners | Universities were involved in a number of partnerships, representing an important community anchor with access to both valuable expertise and to a student population. In several partnerships, the university or local academics were identified as a learning partner, with a future role to support partnerships to understand best practice in place-based working and to support them in measuring the difference they hope to make in their area (see Section 4 for further explanation of different approaches to learning and evaluation being proposed by places). |
| Local arts and cultural organisations | Some partnerships also included local cultural and heritage organisations with the intention of using community assets and arts-based activities as a means to engage and excite communities around social action. |

Table 2: Overview of most common partnership members

2.3 Rationale and drivers for social action

The learning review of place based working published during Phase 1 of the programme stressed the importance of developing **locally tailored solutions** that were responsive to local need and context.⁴ As part of the expression of interest places were asked to reflect on what the **challenges** were in the areas they were working and **how they sought to address this through social action**. The mix of issues and drivers in each area were unique to that place but there were some common challenges that places shared. These included:

High indicators of poverty and deprivation – it was clear that many of the partnerships were operating in some of the most deprived parts of the country. Places drew on local and national statistics to demonstrate the need for support and investment in their areas, and these figures pointed to high unemployment and high proportions of households where there were no working adults; well above average figures of young people living in poverty; high proportions of adults living in pension poverty; and higher proportions of out of work benefit claimants compared to the UK average. Indicators also pointed to lower household and weekly income compared to the UK average and in areas amongst the lowest performers in the government's Social Mobility Index. Across Phase 1 places reported on the impact welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit was having on intensifying these disparities.

Health and wellbeing – places reported high levels of mental-ill health, drug and alcohol dependencies and, individuals living with a long-term condition or a disability. Life expectancy was often lower than neighbouring towns or regions. Some places also cited high levels of crime, sexual violence and domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour as major concerns they wanted to try to tackle.

Social and physical isolation – this was one of the most often cited issues partnerships were hoping to address through PBSA. Places cited higher than average proportions of one pensioner households and concerns about the considerable distances people were living from social and civic facilities. This was intensified in rural areas where the high cost and limited availability of public transport could be another barrier. In many instances places reported a complex local make-up with geographical areas of affluence sitting alongside Lower Super Output areas, creating physical and historical social divides that left residents feeling stigmatised and cut off from the main town. Digital exclusion was another challenge cited by a number of areas.

Youth provision – several places had higher than UK average proportions of young people living within their areas and highlighted a lack of social and training opportunities. Some places made the connection between cuts to council run youth provision and the closure of children 's centres to increasing anti-social behaviour. One area reflected that a lack of employment and training opportunities was leaving young men in particular increasingly vulnerable to gangs and drug dealing.

Population change – population increases and the impact of major homebuilding and regeneration programmes were another driver mentioned by several partnerships. There were concerns about the strain that population increases might place on already stretched local services, whilst others noted that rising house prices and an influx of expensive cafes and bars in their places was intensifying gaps between more affluent and lower income areas, impacting on community cohesion and in several cases intensifying long standing local tensions. The implications of people living longer for local services and social isolation were also considerations for some places.

⁴ ['Place Based Social Action: A Learning Review'](#) (July 2018)

Negative perceptions and low levels of confidence in local politics – a final common strand was a sense of disillusionment and ‘apathy’ from residents about both the place they live and the influence they have in improving their communities. Applicants pointed to low voter turnout figures, the concerning results of resident satisfaction surveys, and a general sense that traditional approaches to local services and engagement are not working for parts of their communities. Partnerships felt that new approaches to neighbourhood working and creating opportunities for local involvement were needed and PBSA can provide these. However, ‘consultation and intervention fatigue’ were challenges places were aware of and will continue to be mindful of in Phase 2.

The challenges listed above will be familiar to many areas across the country and places were quick to point out that there is also **much to celebrate** about the communities in which they are working. Successful places identified **strong community connections** already in place and **strong traditions of supportive community spirit and neighbourhood activity** - assets they hoped to build upon through place based social action.

Sources of data

Places drew on a **wide range of sources** to evidence the need for new ways of working in their areas:

- **National data sets** – *Census; Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey; Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD); Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index; Social Mobility Index; English Longitudinal Study of Ageing.*
- **Local government and statutory providers** - *Joint Strategic Needs Assessments; Home ownership statistics; Average household income; Pension claimant rates; Referrals to health services and police; Local crime statistics; School league tables and educational attainment; Local demographic data; Quality of life and neighbourhood satisfaction surveys.*

Several partnerships also commissioned their **own research** to better understand the challenges and needs of local people.

2.4 Social action approaches

Existing activity

As part of the EOI process all applicants were required to provide an overview of any activity and social action undertaken by the partnership prior to application. A review of the EOIs of the 20 places selected for Phase 1 highlighted a **wide range of social action activities and collaboration already taking place** across the country.

Activities undertaken at the point the EOIs were submitted varied by partnership but typically involved regularly coming together, either as a **strategic partnership** or as a **community of interest** formed around a particular place or issue. A combination of working group meetings, community forums and facilitated workshops had been undertaken to bring together ideas for the submission.

In most cases the PBSA programme was viewed as an ideal opportunity to **scale up or build upon existing activity** and partnership working within places. In some instances, the programme was seen as the **next stage of progression** for partnerships that have been working together for 10-20 years, allowing them to take on new projects and target new areas. For some of the applicants, partnerships were relatively new, only existing for 2-5 years. In these cases, the funding and support available through PBSA was viewed as a **catalyst for bringing to life the ambitions of the partnership** – developing activity that to this point had been volunteer led or run on limited resources.

Many places saw the PBSA programme as an opportunity to increase the **profile and reach of existing activities** and ambitions for the area, to develop new approaches to working and delivery, and to access staff and community spaces that would help them achieve their aims. There was already evidence of partnerships **broadening their connections** to local services and providers and employing new methods of engagement and consultation to ensure that the wider community was able to feed into and influence the planning stages. Successful EOIs demonstrated a commitment to finding new ways to increase the involvement and ownership of local people – a key objective of this programme.

Planned activity

The EOIs highlighted a range of **planned activities**. These included: new community spaces that would act as hubs for community action and bringing people together; training and development offers that would enable local people to become local champions and agents of social change within their locality; and the recruitment of dedicated community organisers and connectors whose role it would be to mobilise local people and ensure the networks and resources area in place to support ideas and activity as they emerge.

Several places rightly pointed out that it was difficult at the EOI stage to set out exactly what place based social action would be undertaken as this would be driven by the needs and aspirations of local people. However, many were able to set out a compelling vision for how they planned to engage locally and work with local people and partners to bring ideas to fruition.

The design of the PBSA programme was in part influenced by research and a series of resources produced by DCMS and the New Economics Foundation (NEF) under the banner of Enabling Social Action which were developed for commissioners and other public sector leaders to help them embed social action in commissioning.⁵ This included a **typology of social action** which categorises some of the approaches individuals or communities might undertake that would fall under the banner of social action.⁶ The guidance for the PBSA programme included the typology and encouraged places to reflect on the range of approaches they hoped to deploy or encourage in their own areas over the duration of the programme.

Table 3 below attempts to capture the range of activities proposed by places in their EOIs and final plans and align them to these typologies of social action. Whilst the table does not do full justice to the ideas and activities emerging from places it provides an overview into the wide range of activities being undertaken through this programme.

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enabling-social-action-guidance> for more information and to access the tools and resources.

⁶ Available here: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/place-based-social-action/prog_pbsa_social_action_typology.pdf

Learning from Phase 1 of the Place Based Social Action programme

| Place | Advocacy & Social Movements | Befriending & helping | Community asset ownership | Community organising | Co-operatively owned services | Co-production | Formal volunteering | Peer support & learning | Time credits |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Andover (Test Valley) | ○ | | ○ | | | ○ | ○ | | |
| Banbury (Oxford) | ○ | ○ | | | | ○ | ○ | | |
| Bootle (Sefton) | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Bristol | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Calderdale (Halifax) | ○ | | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Colchester | ○ | ○ | | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Coventry | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| East Marsh (Grimsby) | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Hackney (London) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Hammersmith (London) | ○ | ○ | | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hartlepool | ○ | | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Havant | ○ | ○ | | ○ | | | ○ | ○ | |
| Islington (London) | ○ | ○ | | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Lincoln City | ○ | | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Poole | ○ | ○ | | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Portsmouth | ○ | ○ | | | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Townstal (South Hams) | ○ | | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Thurrock | ○ | | ○ | ○ | | | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Watchet (West Somerset) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Wirral | ○ | ○ | ○ | | | | ○ | | |

Table 3: Overview of planned activities mapped against typologies of social action.

3. Phase 1 delivery

The primary focus of Phase 1 of the programme was to **develop a plan for social action** that outlines the approaches places would take over the next three years should they be successful in obtaining Phase 2 funding. This section provides an overview of the **activities partnerships undertook in Phase 1** to develop their plans and captures their **experience of this approach to working** at this early stage of the programme.

3.1 Community and partner engagement and involvement

Places were required to show how they had involved a wide range of community stakeholders in developing their plan and in identifying the issues they hope to address. Table 4 (below) summarises the approaches adopted by places to engage and involve local people and partners in the development of their plans.

| Approach | Description |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Meetings and community forums | All partnerships made use of existing forums and meetings (e.g. neighbourhood forums, local strategic partnerships, town hall meetings) to present and discuss ideas and share insights. |
| Events and festivals | Almost every partnership reported having a presence at community events and festivals, providing opportunities to share ideas and obtain feedback in a friendly, informal setting. Several partnerships organised their own events to connect with the wider community. These included taster sessions, social events, coffee mornings and walking tours. 'Ideas Factories' and 'Fun Palaces' were examples of innovative approaches being led and delivered by partnerships. |
| Surveys and questionnaires | Surveys and questionnaires were another common approach used by the majority of partnerships to capture feedback from local people. These typically focused on neighbourhood perceptions and quality of life indicators or sought to capture feedback on a particular service or single issue. A combination of print and online surveys were used, with a preference for shorter surveys to encourage wider take up. A few partnerships trained citizen researchers to undertake engagement and consultation - ensuring residents were driving the research and analysis, not only taking part. Several more plan to adopt such practices in Phase 2. |
| Online | Around half of the partnerships reported a substantial online presence using partner websites, community forums and social media (Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp) to promote activities, canvas views and encourage interaction. Comments sections, polls, and hashtags were used to encourage feedback and sharing of ideas. Several partnerships reflected that this had generated more interest and conversation than in print communications. |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Print and local media</p> | <p>Local press and radio stations were cited as a valuable tool by a few places, particularly those that were operating on a wider geographic scale, helping them to reach a wider audience. The opportunity to secure funding from DCMS and The National Lottery Community Fund was used to generate local media attention.</p> <p>Several places cited negative media coverage of their place as something they are hoping to reverse over the course of the programme. Flyers delivered door to door and left at community venues were used by most partnerships to promote activities and highlight ways in which local people could get involved.</p> |
| <p>Listening campaigns and community organising</p> | <p>Community organising approaches featured heavily in the activities of almost all of the places. Partnerships utilised community engagement staff to go from door-to-door, conducting listening campaigns and encouraging local people to share their hopes and frustrations for their local area. Phase 2 funding will allow places to build on the early work of organisers. This was commonly cited as the most effective way of learning about local issues and encouraging participants to become more involved in shaping and delivering PBSA activities.</p> |
| <p>Local groups and networks</p> | <p>Around half of the partnerships had deployed 'community connectors' (a range of titles were used to describe this role) in Phase 1, they actively worked across places to identify and join up local provision and ensure broad cross-sections of the community were aware of the opportunities PBSA presents and the ways in which they can participate. Connections were formed with local schools, faith groups, social groups and with local businesses. Several partnerships are exploring how they could draw on ongoing business support through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitments. 'Pop-up' stalls in local libraries, health centres and community centres were another approach used to connect with people in the spaces they regularly use.</p> |
| <p>Arts based and creative processes</p> | <p>The plans submitted at the end of Phase 1 highlighted a wide array of other approaches that had been employed to draw attention to the opportunities PBSA presents and to make engagement fun and interesting. Pledge walls, a touring community bus, videos, crowdfunders, pop-up stalls and activities for young people were all deployed to encourage new forms of interaction. Community Soups which brought people together to discuss ideas for improving their community over a shared meal was another innovative approach deployed in some areas. These approaches were talked about positively, adding fun and vibrancy and stimulating new conversations - highlighting their value alongside more traditional approaches to consultation and establishing baseline data.</p> |

Table 4: Overview of engagement techniques

Places were unanimous in recognising the **value of these connections** and the emphasis placed on community involvement by the funders. Places highlighted **new relationships** with previously “hard to reach” groups, **positive feedback from residents** whose outlook on their communities had changed as a result of participation, and **new commitments to working collaboratively** from local delivery partners that had proved difficult to engage in the past. In end of Phase 1 surveys and interviews several participants highlighted the considerable time and resource that had gone into preparing, facilitating and reviewing these approaches which was considered by some to be a sizeable risk with no guarantee of continuation funding. However, on a positive note all respondents, including those that had not progressed to Phase 2 cited new connections and conversations with community members and representatives as a result of the programme, and the important role the programme had played in catalysing this activity.

Case study: Community Soups (Poole)

Poole were exploring the use of Community Soups to bring people together of all ages to share lived experiences, raise awareness of the problems of social isolation in the area, and create the space to discuss and support place based social action. A 'soup' invites attendees to pay a small fee for a communal meal, and over the course of the meal attendees hear pitches for local social projects and are given the opportunity to ask questions and share ideas. Participants are then invited to vote for the idea they like the most (often through stacking bowls!) and proceeds from the event are distributed between those pitching in accordance with the votes.

3.2 Producing a plan for social action

Nineteen of the twenty places selected to take part in Phase 1 submitted Phase 2 plans setting out what they would hope to achieve with the match funding and how they would approach delivery. Limited capacity to lead the programme in the second phase and challenges of securing the required match funding were the reasons cited by the area that decided not to submit a plan.

Lead partners were typically responsible for coordinating and compiling the Phase 2 plan but on the most part reflected that it had been a **collaborative process** – with those on the partnership and with the wider community. Each partnership adopted their own plan development processes but they typically involved the following stages:

- **Community mapping exercises** – coming together as a partnership to identify community assets and opportunities. These would be unique to each place but typically involved identifying community groups and institutions, spaces where places may come together (churches, schools, community centres, shops, etc), local services and provision, local businesses, community facilities and areas where there are already strong community organisations and local leadership. It also served as an opportunity for partners to reflect on where they have strong connections to partners and networks and where there is some work to do. In several cases places have produced physical representations of these networks and will be revisiting them overtime as a tool to review progress. Relationship managers helped to facilitate these early meetings as part of the support offer to places.
- **Data collection and analysis** – as outlined on pages 15-17 (above), partnerships drew on a wide range of sources to identify local strengths and issues. Partnerships would meet frequently to discuss what these sources of data were telling them about their place and the implications of this for their plans.
- **Community consultation** – In the spirit of the programme places sought opportunities to share emerging ideas with local people and to invite feedback and challenge. The previous section

outlined some of the approaches deployed. Some places were able to share a draft version of the final plan for community consultation (via websites and community meetings), and this provided important validation. Several partnerships reflected that programme time constraints meant they were not able to share a full version of their plan before submission but they had intentions to do so as part of any early engagement in Phase 2.

- **Ongoing reflection and iteration** – most partnerships had monthly meetings to review project progress and to invite feedback on plans and proposals. These provided useful milestones to reflect on the progress being made and adapt plans accordingly where necessary. As a result plans and supporting documents went through several iterations before submission.

As well as the support from Locality, NEF, Co-ops UK and Renaisi partnerships also had access to £5000 of development funding they could draw upon to support their activities in this planning stage. This was most commonly spent on the following:

- **Meetings and engagement** - hiring meeting space, catering, resources, etc.
- **Staff time** – places used funding to ‘buy in’ extra staff time to support the facilitation of events and engagement activities. Places also used it to pay consultants to help in developing and producing the final plan.
- **Design and photography** – others brought in specialist support to improve the design of finished outputs and to capture photographs of activity undertaken in phase one.
- **Printing and marketing costs** – the funding also went towards the printing and circulation of flyers, posters and newsletters promoting the programme and the opportunities for local people.

Given the funding on offer in Phases 2 and 3 of the programme and the ambitions partnerships have for their places a sum of £5k seems relatively small. Some places did feedback that the amount available was not reflective of the level of staff and volunteer time that went into Phase 1. However, it was never the intention that the £5k would cover this. The general consensus was that even this small sum made a difference, enabling places to provide food, host meetings in easily accessible locations and tap into specialist support partners. They were able to have new conversations, find out more about each other and work collaboratively to help bring their plans for their places to fruition.

“It meant that we could offer a hook to get people in. Once they were there we could get them excited about our plans.”

3.3 Partnership reflections on the experience of Phase 1

Through ongoing reflection and end of Phase 1 surveys partnerships were asked to reflect on their experiences of co-designing a plan for PBSA. The following section summarises **what places have learnt** from Phase 1, some of the **positive impacts this way of working has had on those involved**, whilst also acknowledging some of the **challenges** inherent with this way of working.

What have partnerships learnt about place-based working and this approach?

A common reflection has been that lead partners have been enthused by the **appetite they have seen from local people** about the potential of PBSA and the new ways of working it encourages. Places have reported a growing interest in volunteering and running and joining local campaigns, increasing numbers of local people coming forwards to run activities and pledging to do more for and with their neighbours. They are seeing that people have a **clear attachment or affinity to their places**, both at neighbourhood and town or city level, and care deeply about the issues impacting their communities.

Places have also highlighted how their engagement throughout Phase 1 has shone a light on the **huge array of skills and experience** already residing within their communities. This is leading to a growing recognition from places that a core focus of their activities should be on **facilitating connections** between local people and organisations; building confidence and capacity so that they feel comfortable leading social action; and helping to build foundations that can sustain this activity long after the funding has been spent.

Despite this enthusiasm there is a recognition that things will not happen or change overnight. Whilst people have been passionate about their area and the problems they feel are blighting it, as one lead partner explained *“changing the conversation from ‘what would you change about your area?’ to ‘what can you contribute to your neighbourhood?’ has been challenging.”*

Many of the areas PBSA is operating in have received government and National Lottery funding in the past and there can be a local perception that local people have had little influence or visibility over how that money has been spent. Similarly, there is also some wariness that these approaches are a response to local spending cuts, asking people to take on what previously would have been delivered as part of core public services. Working on PBSA will have to be done carefully and efforts made to distinguish this from *“the next programme in town”* (as one place termed it).

Interestingly several partnerships reflected that local people feel held back by a *“perceived need for permission to do this stuff”* – pointing to the importance of building a culture of social action and agency over the years to come, as well as putting in place local enablers. Relatedly (and encouragingly) several places reported a **growing interest and appetite for place-based co-design and co-delivery** from senior council officials. Several partnerships talked of the important role council officers had played in developing a plan for Phase 2 but reflected that it may still take some time for council departments and officers less closely aligned to the programme to embrace this way of working. Insights from the DCMS funded Enabling Social Action programme running concurrently to PBSA could prove helpful here and the learning partner will work with the ESA delivery partners to ensure opportunities for shared learning between the two programmes are maximised.⁷

What have been the positive impacts arising from Phase 1?

Through end of programme surveys, interviews and workshops we asked project leads to reflect on their experiences of being involved in phase one of the programme. All reflected that the programme had been beneficial for the following reasons, regardless of whether they had obtained Phase 2 funding or not:

- The funding on offer and the support and platform the programme offers encouraged existing partnerships to **consolidate their activities and conversations** to develop a **clear plan of action**. Others used the possibility of funding and support as the incentive to come together and develop a plan - *“The programme gave us the impetus to come together.”*
- **New connections** were formed as a result of the programme - in almost every case places reported establishing connections with groups and individuals with whom they had not worked before, despite their shared objectives. The links the programme created to senior local authority staff were seen as particularly valuable.
- Others reflected that the programme had encouraged them to **be creative in their approaches to community and partner engagement** and to *“raise their gaze”* as one partner responded. The emphasis on co-designing a plan for social action encouraged partnerships to try new ways to engage with local people and to ensure they were being accountable to the community in their planning and activities.

⁷ See <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/esa> for more information on the Enabling Social Action programme.

- The emphasis on adopting an **asset based approach** to working was appreciated by many - one partner reflected that it was positive to be leading on a project that encouraged them to focus on “*what is strong not what is wrong*” in their area.
- A large majority of places reflected that regardless of whether they were chosen to progress to Phase 2 of the programme or not – the fact that they now had a **fully costed plan and established partnership in place** meant that they were better placed to undertake PBSA approaches going forwards and that there was significant local interest to continue in some capacity.

What challenges were encountered by partnerships in Phase 1?

Place-based working is not without its challenges and there has been a recognition from the outset that partnerships are operating in a **difficult social, political and economic climate**. Common challenges cited across Phase 1 included:

Finite time and resources – A significant proportion of lead partners talked of the challenges of developing a plan for social action within the desired time frame with limited staff time and resources. Section 5 considers feedback on the programme design in more detail but a general reflection is that a lot was asked of places within Phase 1 of the programme without guarantee of Phase 2 funding. This meant partners had to make difficult decisions about how much staff time and funding they committed to developing their plans and that lead partners, who inevitably assumed responsibility for producing and submitting the plan, had to carefully manage the expectations of local people and partners.

Impact of local spending cuts – Several lead partners talked of the impact local spending cuts were having on themselves and their partners. Partners were having to balance the requirements of Phase 1 with rising demand for their own services and reductions in funding. Challenges in achieving match funding and limited local capacity to lead place based social action led to one partnership choosing not to submit a plan for Phase 2. Similarly, local people are also feeling the impact of almost a decade of austerity, and this was seen by many places as a significant barrier to participation for some of the most vulnerable local people and cause for scepticism from some parts of the community.

Staff turnover – A number of partnerships experienced turnover of key personnel during Phase 1. There were some instances where funding cuts meant staff time originally allocated to PBSA was reduced or removed complete due to redundancy or restructures. This in turn impacted on the planning process and momentum and networks that had been built. Similar challenges were occurring across the wider partnerships. One place cited the turnover of youth workers and teachers in their area as a big barrier to engagement, and reflected that “*we need real consistency in order to have an impact.*”

Realities of place-based working – there was a general acknowledgement that place based working is ‘messy’ – as one partnership said “*taking an asset based approach means that what happens often isn’t predictable, under our control, or at times evidence based!*” Partnerships are countering this by adopting a flexible approach and through a stated commitment to regularly reviewing and adapting their approaches over the next phase of the programme. There were also instances where bureaucracy and engrained working practices were at odds with the collaborative approaches place-based working demands – partnerships cited challenges to data sharing (particularly in the wake of the introduction of GDPR) and reporting expectations as problems many were still grappling with as they move in to Phase 2.

Community engagement – Section 3.1 outlined the wide range of community engagement methods employed by places in Phase 1. However, there were certain groups respondents found more difficult to engage. These included private landlords, local businesses (particularly those that were owned and managed by chains), and working households. Language barriers also posed a problem in some areas and

partnerships were exploring approaches to address this. Limited time, money, and energy and a “fear of sticking your head above the parapet” were all cited as common barriers to involvement for local people.

An awareness of these challenges is important and partnerships were already considering how they might address these in their action plans for Phase 2. The following were considered helpful in **overcoming these challenges**:

- **Council commitment** and involvement
- **Financial investment** - staff time, training and support for volunteers, community spaces and resources
- **Community ownership and involvement** in the process. Employing an asset based approach
- Adopting an iterative approach, reviewing activities regularly and involving local people in this process.
- **Recognition events** and showing appreciation that “small changes can be big steps”
- **Aligning activities to local strategies and wider activities** - for example, provisions for social prescribing, and where one area identified significant areas of crossover with a citywide Children and Young People’s transformation plan – inviting conversations about how the two steering groups might be mutually beneficial if activities can be joined up.

Case study: Free Ice Cream ‘Conductive Wool’ (Watchet)

As part of their ongoing engagement plans with the community, the partnership in Watchet plan to work with Free Ice Cream (collaborative gaming developers) to develop innovative new 'playable' means to engage residents in what social action is all about and how it can bring about positive change. They will adapt their platform that was developed for the UN for social action initiative and outcomes to enable people to map and 'play' at what social action can do in their place.

4. Approaches to evaluation and learning about PBSA

This section provides an overview of the approaches being taken to evaluation and learning across the PBSA programme, and how partnerships are planning to understand change and the difference they are making in their areas. This draws on insights from places through Renaisi's conversations in Phase 1, as well as the Phase 2 applications of the 10 successful places.

4.1 Evaluating place based programmes

The learning review published during Phase 1 explored some of the **challenges around evaluating place based social action** and the need to be realistic about the level of transformation a programme of this size can expect to achieve over the timescales.

Lessons from evaluating other place based initiatives has informed the approach being taken on the PBSA Programme. An early decision was taken to avoid having a common measurement framework and to be clear that the learning partner was not collecting data on behalf of places. A one size fits all approach to evaluating the PBSA programme is not appropriate for a variety of reasons. The places involved in the PBSA programme are diverse, addressing a wide range of issues in a variety of different ways. As a result, a lot of the learning will be context specific. In addition, there are likely to be changes during the programme in partnership priorities and personnel, as well as local and national objectives.

The evaluation and learning approach is based on **places conducting their own evaluations** (with guidance where required) with the learning partner focussing on **analysing, synthesising and sharing learning** across the programme.

The **following considerations** have guided the approach:

- **Places are complex**, and a degree of caution should be employed when attributing changes in a place to one particular programme or intervention.
- **Place based social action takes time** – it could be 7-10 years before any impact is noticeable, and this might be beyond the timescales of the programme.
- Any approach to evaluation needs to be **developmental** focussing on ongoing reflection and adaptation – understanding not only whether or not particular approaches worked, but also the reasons behind this – why, who for, and what some of the unintended consequences were.
- **Power imbalances and engagement challenges** apply as much to evaluation as they do to the delivery of social action itself – it is important to involve those participating at different levels throughout, rather than as a one-off at the end of a project
- It can be easy to capture tangible changes such as physical assets from projects, but it is harder to measure wider and more systemic changes, and softer outcomes.
- The **potential range of outcomes** from place based social action is wide – at individual, organisational and community level – and this breadth means it is not feasible to encourage places to track all of these.
- Some of the outcomes associated with place based action **do not lend themselves easily to measurement**. For example, there is little consensus on how to best measure the impact that participation in social action might have on people's sense of community empowerment and engagement in their local area

- More broadly, it is not always clear **what the likely impact might be** - for example, there is little known about what social action can 'do' to a place

4.2 Evaluation needs and challenges

During Phase 1, the learning partner explored **evaluation capacity needs** with the 20 places. This was based on the assumption that there would be varying levels of confidence and expertise in evaluation and that understanding these starting points better help to inform the support and guidance provided to places. Partnerships were aware of the complexity of understanding the difference their approaches were making but demonstrated a strong commitment to finding ways to capture what happens as part of their PBSA work, as well as the difference it makes to individuals, organisations and communities.

For the Phase 2 application, partnerships were asked to articulate the difference they hoped to make, what they would like to learn from their activities, and how they would use this to help achieve change in their places. They were not expected to have a fully developed evaluation framework or plan - although some partnerships did share their draft theories of change at this stage.

As outlined earlier, some partnerships had previous experience of commissioning external evaluations or working with learning partners. In general, partnerships that were using the time and space provided in Phase 1 to develop new ideas were less likely to engage with questions about evaluation and learning until the end of Phase 1 as the focus of their time and energies was understandably on clarifying aims, activities, and narrowing down possible outcomes, before turning to the question of 'how will we know?'

Partnerships identified a **consistent set of areas relating to evaluation and learning** that they wished to develop or find out more about. These broadly corresponded to some of the inherent challenges around evaluating social action:

- Developing a shared evaluation approach and methods within places and across partnerships consisting of multiple organisations of different sizes
- Using local datasets to map local needs and understand changes over time
- Capturing outcomes from those taking part in social action in a proportionate way – in particular, for softer outcomes
- Developing measurement tools that take into account varying depths of engagement from participants, and can be seen as part of project delivery rather than an 'add-on'
- Understanding the changes people might feel in terms of their ability to influence change in their local areas
- Understanding the relationship between individual outcomes and area wide change
- Involving members of the community meaningfully in defining outcomes and ongoing evaluation activities
- Capturing the experiences and stories of local people in a participatory and creative way
- Encouraging the partnership to reflect on their own development and learning through the PBSA programme
- Sharing learning within the partnership, with other organisations in the local area and beyond

Case study: Social action library (Hackney)

Hackney plan to set up a 'Social Action Library' in Phase 2. Residents and community groups will be invited to hold talks and discussions, as well as post their learning and ideas around project development, resident engagement and any aspect of social action that is of interest. The partnership hope that once this develops and materials are added by residents around areas that the community care about, it will attract the interest of others in the borough and elsewhere including other places on the PBSA programme, and other relevant networks.

4.3 Outcomes from place based social action

As outlined earlier in this report, at the start of Phase 1 partnerships had identified the challenges they hoped to address through place based social action. Alongside their overall vision for their place, partnerships were encouraged to think about the **difference they hoped to make at individual, community, organisation and system level**. This was articulated in the Phase 2 applications in varying degrees of detail, and Figure 3 below summarises some of the most consistent outcomes identified by the ten places in Phase 2 – although this is not exhaustive. Places have also been keen to emphasise that outcomes in their plans have been co-produced with residents, and these need to be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain meaningful and relevant to those most directly involved.

| Outcomes for individuals | Outcomes for communities |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence and self-esteem • Increased sense of purpose • Improved wellbeing • Improved resilience and capacity to tackle personal difficulties • Raised aspirations and a sense of purpose • Improved employment skills – connected to new opportunities and forms of learning • Reduced isolation and better able to support each other • More empowered local residents - understanding their individual potential to influence change and increased knowledge of how to do this • More able to develop their interests and curiosity  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective confidence and agency • An increased sense of collective strength and mission • Increased community pride • A shared understanding and commitment to tackling problems • Increased ability to self-organise and address local issues • Increased feelings of voice and being listened to • Improved knowledge of local services and how to influence their development • Increased use of public spaces • Bridging divides between different groups in the community • Increased power to influence  |
| Organisational and system outcomes | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities and services that are responsive to local needs • Greater involvement of residents in co-producing services • Local organisations and partnerships recognise the power of communities to improve lives • Improved understanding amongst communities, public sector organisations, voluntary organisations and decision makers of asset based approaches | |

- More new partnerships formed between residents, community groups, voluntary organisations, statutory organisations and businesses
- Greater confidence in working across sectors on shared local issues
- Increased capacity across partnerships to share resources, practices and improve trust



Figure 3: Proposed outcomes from place based social action

4.4 Proposed methods and tools

In their Phase 2 applications, places outlined a variety of **different methods and potential tools** that they would like to use in order to understand their contribution to changes in their places, and capture learning in real time to continue to inform the development of their ideas and activities. Three partnerships have plans to partner with local universities, and two partnerships are considering commissioning external agencies.

Baselining and use of local data: As outlined earlier, several partnerships had developed their own resident surveys as part of Phase 1 and plan to re-run these in subsequent years to look at any changes in self-reported connections, agency, feelings of influence etc. This approach appeared to be most practical for partnerships working in a smaller geographical area, and where there was existing resource to administer and analyse a survey. One partnership is working with the local authority to access existing resident survey data at ward level, and another is considering how to use local authority wide datasets on an ongoing basis throughout the programme to understand wider area changes.

Monitoring activities: Many partnerships were conscious of the need to capture what takes place as part of their place based social action work, and the levels of engagement from residents and volunteers. Where possible, partnerships are planning to keep logs for the numbers of activities, events and projects held, as well as record attendance numbers, volunteer hours and some basic demographic information. However, there are likely to be ongoing challenges with this especially given many community-led actions might emerge organically alongside more planned activities, and engagement patterns will inevitably vary from one-offs to more sustained over time.

Involving residents in evaluation and learning: Building on the approaches started in Phase 1, all the plans highlighted the importance of ongoing feedback from residents to ensure that their views are captured regularly and directly inform future decisions. Around half of the partnerships explicitly plan to train residents and participants in evaluation and data gathering – using community researcher approaches and participatory appraisal methodology.

Case study: Action Labs and Community Researchers (Hartlepool)

Hartlepool have worked closely with community researchers in the past who engage in conversation, listening and dialogue with residents. Community researchers were trained in Participatory Learning and Action techniques which involves visible and flexible tools and interviewing in an unbiased and non-judgmental way. Action Lab events involve taking the learning from the community researchers and spending time with people who live and work in the town to generate practical solutions. This uses an 'Agile Problem Solving' approach - trying things out to see if they work and learning when things don't work. The partnership plan to organise a community research process in the latter part of 2019 and hold a third Action Lab in 2020 to draw more people into active participation.

Capturing changes for people: Some partnerships plan to use resident surveys (as above), and others that are working with a more defined group of people over time have plans for some pre/post survey measures using validated tools (such as the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale), or tracking individual journeys of a few participants to produce case studies. However, in recognition that they would not always be working with a consistent group of residents, most partnerships plan to prioritise the use of creative and participatory techniques to understand the difference participation might make for individuals and communities. Ideas proposed include storytelling, podcasts, videos, suggestion boxes, focus groups and workshops in community settings, online scrapbooks, vox pops on the spot and quick fire responses at events.

“Any measurement should not get in the way or distort the very informal, organic and community-focussed nature... If we start to ask Individuals who get involved to fill out surveys - however 'fun' or short - this will immediately create a tension with the style of our approach.”

Other approaches: Three partnerships have set out plans around social value - using the HACT social impact valuation tool, the Social Audit Network Framework, and developing a social impact measurement tool with KPIs developed with the community.⁸ Many of the partnerships also mentioned their plans to monitor social media platforms, hashtags, and the local press.

Case study: Creative tools (Coventry)

Coventry are clear that they want to adopt a real time approach to learning in Phase 2 drawing on their experiences of using different creative techniques. This includes facilitated system change exercises like Constellations - an exercise where a group of people express themselves wordlessly arranging themselves in proximity to a central focus or idea that reflects their feelings about it. Coventry also plan to use kumu - a system and network mapping tool which helps to understand networks and levers. This will help the to capture the growth of networks around place based social action.

Capturing partnership reflections: Most Phase 2 plans outline how partnerships intend to capture their own learning and reflections throughout the programme. The majority highlighted creating spaces for regular reflection sessions in partnership meetings focussing on issues such as their roles, contributions, progress, what has been learnt, and how to apply it. Some were also interested in partner reflections on the extent to which they were confidently working with the community and adhering to co-production principles. Methodologies mentioned included feedback loops, action learning sets and action-reflection cycles, as well as individual staff journals and sharing content across partners on online message boards or communication channels.

As partnerships develop their thinking about evaluation and learning, one of the roles of the learning partner will be to **share ideas, good practice and successful evaluation approaches** more widely. This reflects the fact that there is value in aligning and sharing with others working on similar programmes and place-based initiatives.

4.5 Learning aspirations from places

The Phase 2 applications demonstrated the **strong commitment to learning** about place based social action and the value of a new way of working that will improve places and the lives of local residents. This

⁸ More information on HACT is available [here](#) and on the SAN Framework [here](#)

included learning at a local level (within partnerships and across the area), as well as more widely with the PBSA programme as a whole.

“We would like to learn from other areas involved in place based social action to avoid mistakes and capitalise on successes.”

There was a high level of awareness of the need to test, fail and adapt – reflecting the emergent nature of many of the proposed social action activities themselves. The **main learning areas** to help improve delivery and that are common across the places include:

- Understanding whether **particular models or approaches** being adopted lead to social action happening, being sustained, and having an impact on those involved – interrogating which parts of the models work for different people, whether social action is particularly suited to specific issues/initiatives, and at what intensity
- How to **foster social action in an inclusive, non-directive** way, learning from past approaches where things were ‘done to’ rather than ‘done with and by’ the community
- Understanding the **barriers and enablers in the local environment and context** – that might help and hinder social action
- Understanding how to **engage, connect and communicate with different groups** in the community – being challenged as to whether existing methods identified (e.g. community organising and door knocking) are the best ones
- Whether **social action can influence cultural change** – in partner organisations and the wider area.

“We would like to see social action initiatives being understood as integral to and underpinning the system.”

The Phase 2 application plans also set out how partnerships **plan to share learning**. This included regularly feeding back to residents, further embedding the co-design and consultation principles that shaped their plans, and potentially fostering wider involvement and interest from others. A couple of partnerships highlighted the need for any sharing with residents to be accessible, inclusive and led by the community, using informal methods such as films, maps, music and food to help maximise the value for those involved.

“Any knowledge gained will also continue to be shared with local people, as it is important for residents to have the same level of understanding in order for them to be able to drive change in their community.”

The plans also set out ideas for sharing with **other local networks** – using existing forums and assemblies to share learning and recommendations.

“Sharing our learning will also enable us to shout about the positive impact of the programme on the look and feel of the area and challenge negative stereotypes. People will be able to see their own values and aspirations for the area within the programme and the way in which it is developed and delivered.”

As section 7 outlines in more detail, places also have a strong appetite to **share with each other**, and access national conferences, networks and events. Several already have international exchanges in places and were keen to continue to develop these using their experiences of place based social action as a hook.

5. Reflections on Phase 1 programme support, design and decision making

The learning partner and support contractors encouraged those involved to reflect on the **design** of Phase 1 of the PBSA Programme. This section covers the feedback received on the support provided, the design and decision making process, as well as recommendations that could help inform similar programmes in the future.

5.1 Feedback on support provided

During Phase 1 there was a **good level of engagement** with the support available. Figure 4 below summarises the main elements that those involved in providing and receiving support felt had worked well and less well.

| Positives | Negatives |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support at the beginning was particularly effective – e.g. kick-off events in places bringing partnerships together • 1-2-1 flexible support for partnerships as they developed their plans • The opportunity to have plans reviewed and receive detailed feedback from different perspectives (delivery and learning) was the most valued element • Co-ordination of support between the different providers – where this happened, places valued the joined up nature of the offer • The chance to explore different evaluation methods proportionate to the work being planned  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount on offer felt overwhelming at the start for some places in terms of unpicking what was necessary, useful or most relevant • Places were not always clear about the respective roles of those involved in providing support • Some places lacked time to engage with the support and found it to be an additional burden • It was hard to get the pitch of more generic support right especially given some partnerships were more experienced • Partnerships' plans developed at different speeds which meant the timing of some of the support on offer did not always align with when it was needed most • The webinars were the least valued element of support – with too many in too short a space of time, and a lack of clarity over who would benefit from them  |

Figure 4: The positive and negative feedback on programme support

One of the **main strengths** highlighted in Phase 1 was the relationship manager role provided by the support contractor. Feedback from places indicated that they valued having a critical friend who helped them to carve out time and space to reflect. They appreciated relationship managers' ability to keep the momentum going, whilst not directing or leading partnerships.

“The support offered by our relationship manager was a valuable resource. They were able to offer reassurance and facilitated the partnership to create a shared vision.” (Places survey)

However, some partnerships did not engage regularly with their relationship manager, and struggled with the volume on offer, and its appropriateness to their context.

“There was quite a lot on offer, and we struggled to make use of everything and attend all webinars – quite a few of these were not so useful to our partnership either because of existing knowledge/experience or inappropriate to our particular PBSA project.” (Places survey)

Relationship managers’ own reflections on their work indicated that:

- Most felt their role made a positive difference in helping places create a shared vision and plan for social action
- They felt reviewing the plans and running a Theory of Change workshops were the most useful elements of their support to places – particularly in cases where the latter helped partnerships clarify their thoughts and develop a coherent narrative
- It could be challenging at times being a ‘middle man’ between places and the funders especially if places wanted more insight on priorities informing the Phase 2 decision making process

Places had less direct contact with the learning partner throughout Phase 1 and more support was targeted at the end of the year, helping to develop and review learning and evaluation approaches in the plans. This worked well for some places, who felt they had to be clear in what they were aiming to do and deliver before they could devote time and energy to thinking about evaluation. Several places highlighted how they had appreciated the chance for an additional objective view on their plans, and the opportunity to explore using different participatory methods to capture learning.

“It was good detailed feedback when needed. We found it very constructive, in depth and it flagged up new things.” (Places survey)

However, some places also felt they could have benefitted from more proactive help earlier in the process.

“It was less value for us, but I think this was timing and relevance at this stage of the project – not the quality of what was on offer.” (Places survey)

Renaiss’ own reflections on the learning partner support includes:

- The timing of the support at a later stage in Phase 1 meant it could be hard to align with other support available, and made it more challenging to build up a rapport with places over time.
- The decision not to share an overall learning framework with places was the right one in terms of the light-touch nature of the Programme in Phase 1, but did mean that, for some places, the requirements felt vague or that a distinct evaluation ‘offer’ was lacking.
- The plan to have a Learning Champion in each place to liaise with over evaluation and learning did not take off given the time and resources constraints that many places faced. However, this would have been useful in terms of streamlining communication and making sure the most appropriate person could engage with questions about evaluation and learning

At the end of Phase 1, both places and The National Lottery Community Funders reflected that they had not had the chance to build relationships over the course of the year, apart from through the visits at the end. This was largely attributed to the fact that support was being provided by others and places inevitably asked questions directly to their Relationship Manager, rather than The National Lottery Community Fund.

Overall, the **main criticisms** of the support provided centred on two key aspects:

- **Opportunities for face-to-face learning and sharing were not encouraged and developed in Phase 1.** Whilst some of this was linked to the competition element of the Programme design and time constraints, there were also planned events in the autumn which did not take place, and the engagement with the online forum was limited.

“It was difficult to openly share our learning at times with other PBSA projects as we knew that we’d be competing for ongoing funding for our projects later on.” (Places survey)

- **The support on offer could feel prescribed.** This risked creating an unequal dynamic between the support contractors and learning partner, and places (for example, if places felt they had to engage to satisfy certain funding criteria).

“Time is a very scarce resource and we felt that people being paid for theirs were asking a lot of people who were not. That inequality – perceived or real – was a problem in a world where we might not get the grant.” (Places survey)

5.2 Feedback on decision making

As outlined earlier, the key **elements of the decision making process** in Phase 1 of the PBSA Programme were: submitted plans, visits from DCMS and The National Lottery Community Fund, and an assessment meeting.

The guidance for Phase 2 emphasised that a **strong plan** would contain a vision for delivering high quality social action with an emphasis on being people-led, strengths based and connected. Criteria when assessing plans included:

- Evidence that local communities have been involved in the plan, and will continue to help shape its delivery
- Detail on how people can become empowered to address a clearly defined need that matters to them
- New approaches to working collaboratively with others in the local area
- A strong commitment to learning, embedded within the place and shared widely
- Evidence of being able to secure additional resource for the partnership

The **visits** were introduced following feedback from the 20 places at the induction events (held in March 2018). The guidance for this was deliberately open, encouraging places to ‘use the approach which you feel would best encapsulate the change you want to see and brings your passion for the social action to life’ (Phase 2 guidance).

Places took this on board and the visits featured a **variety of different elements** including walking tours, videos, meetings involving local residents who had supported the development of the plans, and presentations.

The **assessment panel** involved reviewing the submitted plans, information gathered through the visits, considering how well the ideas fitted with PBSA funding priorities, as well as ensuring a diverse range of projects featured in Phase 2. At the end of Phase 1 workshop, the funders were asked to reflect on this process and what they looked out for in plans and visits to help guide their decisions. Figure 5 summarises this:

| Successful Phase 2 places | Places that did not get through to Phase 2 |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A succinct articulation of the approaches being undertaken and the place the partnership represents • A broad mix of partners with an inclusive approach that empowered or enabled the community to lead social action • Community members present at visits and the depth of their involvement being clear • Obvious excitement and commitment to place based social action that felt genuine • Active local authority involvement in the design of the plan and partnership going forward – supporting and enabling, rather than directing • Determination (and a plan) to develop and sustain power in communities  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships appeared to be unequal • Lack of engagement from the community, or reliance on the usual suspects • Lack of passion or enthusiasm • Difficulty in communicating the journey they took during Phase 1 • Lack of ambition • Insufficient focus on sustainability  |

Figure 5: Characteristics of successful and unsuccessful plans in Phase 1

5.3 Feedback on programme design

Consistent feedback was provided throughout Phase 1 on three key elements of the programme design that were more challenging for partnerships:

- **Time** – instead of being a full year, Phase 1 was nearer to 8 months in practice by the time the induction process had happened
- **Delays** in issuing the guidance meaning that partnerships lacked clarity on funders’ expectations from the outset
- **Competition** – the fact that only 10 places would progress to Phase 2 was felt to be against the ethos of the programme and limited how much places were willing to engage with each other.

Despite these concerns, many places reflected that they **appreciated the different approach** that was being taken on the PBSA Programme and found it ‘exciting and refreshing’. There was recognition that there were opportunities to work without stringent guidelines, and with a degree of flexibility. At its best, this reflected the fact that the nature of PBSA is emergent and community-led where defined outcomes are hard to articulate, or relate to the more traditional questions asked by funders.

However, there was recognition that the **funder/place relationship would always be imbalanced**, and it was apparent that some partnerships struggled to trust the openness in the process, and felt that it was not always clear how decisions were made. There were some contradictions – for example, providing light touch guidance on the application whilst still requiring certain sections to be completed with a page limit. Some felt that this undermined the openness that was being promoted, whereas others appreciated the structure especially as nearer the submission deadline they were feeling anxious about what to include.

The **visits were a highlight for many of the places** that are now part of Phase 2, as they helped to show the funders their vision in a way that is not possible in a written application. It was often a moment where everyone was in the same place, marking a culmination of their work over the year and a chance to feel proud about what had been achieved. Positive feedback was also given that funders immersed themselves in the areas for the day, and connected well with the community members they met.

However, some places felt that there needed to be a clearer understanding of what funders expected to get from the visits. Different team members from DCMS and The National Lottery Community Fund were spread across the visits, and there was some feedback that the approaches could vary – for example, with one place reporting that they felt scrutinised and that the power imbalance between them and the representatives was too apparent.

5.4 Recommendations for future programme design

The PBSA programme has been designed around three key stages, and a strong commitment to being open and non-prescriptive in terms of how partnerships and places interpret different requirements. However, at the end of Phase 1, it is apparent that there is **learning from the way the PBSA programme was designed that can be applied to future phases, and similar place based initiatives in the future**. The regular reflection points built in to the design mean that The National Lottery Community Funders have always been open to adaptation. A key learning point going forwards is to involve places and partnerships more in iterating the design and support aspects of the programme.

Section 7 explains how some of this learning has already informed the programme design and support for Phase 2.

Programme design recommendations

- Clearly communicate the **aims and objectives** of the programme, and ensure that this reflects the ethos – for example, being bold, experimenting and learning in an iterative way.
- Ensure that all **information and guidance about the programme is available to grantees at the very start**. This allows partnerships to prepare most effectively for the forthcoming year, with clarity on key milestones and timing. However, this also needs to be balanced with some flexibility so that the programme can be flexible and responsive to suggestions. For example, the idea of holding visits arose during the induction events, and The National Lottery Community Fund and DCMS were able to incorporate this change.
- **Programme guidance needs to be aligned with the overall ethos** – whilst reflecting that applicants need information about the criteria that funders base their decisions on, and their expectations
- Continue to **prioritise learning** about processes, rather than placing monitoring expectations on partnerships that do not fit the nature of the activities being delivered.
- Include a **strong emphasis from the outset on planning for sustainability**, encouraging places to think about how they might transfer successful projects and activities to the community. Support to connect with other sources of funding.
- **Allow more time and money for Phase 1** – at least a full 12 months and consider a larger amount than £5k that could be spent more flexibly by places
- Remove the **match funding** element

Programme support recommendations

- Ensure that roles, relationships and the different elements of support on offer from providers are **clarified at the outset** to minimise confusion amongst places
- Support providers and the learning partner should ensure each place has **one point of contact** in their organisations to reduce the volume of communication from different people, and increase the likelihood of this being targeted at the most appropriate person to engage in each place
- **Design delivery and evaluation support to be flexible** – making it clear that places can pick and choose
- Ensure that the support available **aligns with delivery patterns** in each place, and is flexible enough to be evenly spread out at times that best meets their needs and requirements
- Build in **opportunities for face-to-face learning**

6. Overall reflections from Phase 1

Phase 1 of the programme has provided a **wealth of insight** into the factors that enable the development of compelling plans for PBSA. This section brings together some **final reflections** on the factors, enablers and conditions that helped places get from an initial idea to a plan for Phase 2 of the programme.

6.1 Partnership reflections

The end of Phase 1 survey asked partnerships to reflect on their overall experiences of being involved in the programme and all of the respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that participation in the first stage of the programme had had a positive impact on their partnership so far, and they appreciated the planning time that had been built in. Partnerships valued that the programme had:

- Given partnerships the focus and incentive to pursue some of their local priorities
- Created time and space to work together that might not have otherwise been afforded. As one partnership responded it *"gave [them] reflection time and re-energised the partnership. [We] rethought, reformed, reconnected and strengthened the partnership vision."*
- Encouraged coproduction and collaboration, encouraging partnerships to *"become more strategic and joined up"*
- Helped them to expand their partnership and local networks and engage with new partners, such as local businesses.
- Encouraged creativity and the opportunity to develop a programme independent of prescriptive guidance and reporting requirements.
- Provided opportunities to work more closely with the local authority.
- Encouraged loose associations of organisations to become a formalised partnership with regular meetings and shared objectives.

As noted in section 5 there were elements of the programme design that partnerships found challenging and this feedback will prove helpful in reviewing phases 2 and 3 of the programme as well as future programme development.

Two quotes summarising partnerships' experiences that are broadly reflective of the wider feedback:

"The partnership has found participating in the PBSA programme exciting and motivating. The programme has enhanced relationships between all partners and has facilitated an improved understanding of each partner's ways of working." (Places survey)

"Having the development time has been a luxury, however it has been difficult to manage expectations as we had no guarantee of future funding for the project." (Places survey)

6.2 What we have learnt about PBSA so far

This section recaps on the key learning to emerge from the programme in Phase 1.

What are the main enablers and conditions that help PBSA to thrive?

Phase 1 of the programme has highlighted the potential of PBSA as an approach to tackling a wide range of local issues and an approach that can reenergise communities and make the most of local skills and knowledge. Across the first phase of the programme, the following factors have been important in setting the groundwork for the delivery phase of the programme:

- **Community involvement at all stages of planning and delivery** – As raised by other reports and highlighted in the Learning Review for Place Based Social Action, PBSA is only going to work if there is sufficient buy-in from local residents, businesses, community and social groups.⁹ This report has highlighted a wide range of methods partnerships have deployed to ensure community involvement in shaping and delivering these plans. The challenge going forwards will be to **build and sustain this initial interest through ongoing support and capacity building** and to continue to review and adapt delivery in line with the needs and ideas of local people – ensuring the community play a leading role in this process.
- **Local authority commitment** – the requirement that every EOI received local authority sign-off ensured that there was a degree of support from local councils from the outset of the programme – this is important as PBSA can only be effective if those with power locally are willing to change their working practices and be open to new ways of collaborating with local communities and partners¹⁰ – this is often easily promised but not so easily done. Already there are examples emerging from across the programme of senior council officials embracing new ways of working– supporting partnerships but not leading them, using the power and influence of local government to create connections, unlock assets and find new channels of communication and power sharing. It will be vital to the programme that **this involvement is maintained across local election cycles and amidst an uncertain political and economic environment.**
- **The role of community organisers and connectors** – the final plans were testament to the hard work of the staff and volunteer organisers who spent countless hours organising and facilitating events, going from door to door, and building local connections. They will play a key role in progressing the plans of partnerships in Phase 2. Organisers were valued for their ability to “work between the gaps” across places, their appreciation of the intricacies and sensitivities of working at the local level, and for their enthusiasm and understanding of the potential of PBSA.

What are the main challenges partnerships encountered?

Places reported a **number of challenges** they had encountered during Phase 1. These included:

- Limited time and resources with which to research and produce a plan
- Impacts of local spending cuts and welfare reform
- Staff availability and turnover

⁹ Section 2 of the Place Based Social Action: A Learning Review' (July 2018) available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/place-based-social-action-learning-review-july-2018> reflects on challenges and lessons to emerge from over 20 years of place based working and research.

¹⁰ Pages 11-14 of Place Based Social Action: A Learning Review' (July 2018) discusses the important role 'power' can play in enabling or inhibiting place based social action, drawing on 'The Power Cube model' – a tool that can be used to consider and discuss opportunities for power sharing.

- High population turnover and the impact of major regeneration schemes changing the dynamics of the local community
- Distrust of local services and politics
- Local apathy and consultation/programme fatigue
- Ensuring a broad range of community stakeholders are engaged

Phase 1 has highlighted that PBSA does not happen in a vacuum and the progress of places involved in the programme over the next 3-6 years will be helped and no doubt hindered by local and national context. The development of a peer network, allowing places to exchange ideas and best practice will enable partnerships to support each other to flourish.

What processes and support are needed to enable places to effectively develop their plans and move into delivery?

Regular partnership meetings were seen as important for maintaining momentum despite the busy workloads of partners, and several places organised regular community forums to discuss ideas and ensure plans were aligned to the needs and interests of local people. Development funding allowed partnerships to hold meetings in accessible and welcoming venues and allowed for catering – providing an extra hook to bring people around the table. This funding also allowed for staff and expert time to bring their plans to life.

In the most part places valued the **additional support** provided by relationship managers, the delivery providers, and the evaluation partner. Of particular value was the one-to-one support to partnerships – with Relationship Managers and the evaluators providing direct support and feedback to places on matters of importance to their place. Partnerships have expressed a preference for more direct and tailored support in Phase 2 of the programme.

7. Looking forwards to Phase 2

With Phase 1 complete, 10 places have been chosen to **progress through to Phase 2** of the programme (see Appendix 1). This final section provides a brief introduction to the approaches partnerships will be adopting and outlines partnerships' aspirations for peer-learning and collaboration going forwards. It concludes with an overview of how the feedback captured throughout this report has helped to shape the support offer to places in Phase 2.

7.1 Delivering place based social action

In their Phase 2 plans partnerships highlighted a range of ways they will support local people and partners to maximise the possibilities PBSA presents. As outlined earlier in this report, it is hard to capture the diversity of approaches and the difference that partnerships aim to make, but looking across the ten plans, the most commonly occurring themes for Phase 2 include:

- **Building connections** – through supportive relationships, strengthening networks, and providing opportunities for people to come together.
- **Resident-led activities, community leadership and action** that can harness the skills, ideas, resources and energy in communities – unearthing further passions and talents.
- **Fostering a sense of belonging, shared language and identity** in communities.
- Shifting the **way organisations across different sectors work together** and with local residents – connecting people with power
- **Tackling inequalities** and improving the life prospects of local residents.
- **Creating lasting change in communities** – and in some cases improving physical spaces such as public spaces and town centres.

7.2 Support offer for Phase 2

In March 2019, the ten successful partnerships were brought together to commence Phase 2 of the programme. As part of a commitment to co-designing the support offer for Phase 2 with places, those present were asked to reflect on their aspirations over the next 3-6 years of the programme, and co-design the Phase 2 support offer.

At the workshop, the support contractor and learning partner facilitated a World Café exercise, inviting attendees to discuss their **learning aspirations and support needs** under four headings:

- Learning and sharing across the programme
- Working with the funders
- Making the most of the Relationship Manager
- Learning and Evaluation support (Renaissi)

Through these sessions (and in other sources of feedback) partnerships emphasised the following about their support needs:

- **Flexible and responsive to their needs** – avoiding a 'one size fits all' approach, tailoring support to the needs of each partnership at times when it is most valuable to them.

- **Critical friendship** – places had valued the feedback they received during the final months of the planning stage and were keen that support providers continue to offer support and constructive challenge over Phase 2.
- **Collaboration** – linked to the above, partnerships are keen to learn and share with each other and to learn more about what is happening nationally.
- **Making it simple and straightforward** – partnerships wanted clarity on the roles of the support providers, what support and networks they can provide, and how much support time they have to draw upon.

At the time of writing (May 2019) a revised support offer, based on the principles above, has been shared with places for further feedback. The **revised offer** will provide partnerships with a combination of direct support from a Relationship Manager (providing strategic support and challenge to help partnerships realise their plans and navigate local challenges) and a dedicated Evaluation Adviser (providing a named contact who will advise on approaches to capturing, understanding and sharing insights and act as a link to Renaisi's wider evaluation expertise).

The end of Phase 1 review also highlighted the importance for DCMS and The National Lottery Community Fund to understand **who is taking part** across the PBSA (participation levels and key demographic information), the **volume of activities** and **engagement levels**. Guidance is currently being developed by the funders on this monitoring, and Renaisi will support places with advice on how to collect this information as part of their ongoing support to places.

7.3 Learning and collaboration

In Phase 2, the four support providers will work closely with partnerships and the funders to maximise opportunities for **learning, brokering connections and sharing insights** with each other, and beyond the PBSA Programme.

Through their plans and the discussions at the Phase 2 kick off workshop it is clear that partnerships plan to adopt **new approaches to collaboration** and working locally that are fundamentally different from traditional service provision models. This provides a significant opportunity for **sharing learning** – within the programme and beyond. Partnerships were struck by how much **they had in common** with each other, not only in the range of approaches they hoped to deploy but also in some of the challenges and barriers they had encountered in Phase 1 – creating a genuine desire for peer learning opportunities and support through place to place visits, regular events bringing all places together, and an online platform to connect digitally. Participants also expressed a hope that these could become supportive environments to reflect on shared challenges and learn from and acknowledge failure as well as successes. This points to a role for the support contractor and learning partner in helping to map synergies across the programme and promoting **a culture of learning and sharing** that recognises and celebrates failure as well as success.

Partnerships were keen to draw on **learning from wider place based programmes** and the aforementioned Enabling Social Action programme. Between the funders and delivery and evaluation partners there are a wide range of links to complimentary programmes and activities – an important role for all involved will be to build links between these programmes so that the full benefits of place-based working can be realised.

7.4 Programme level learning in Phase 2

Section 4 of this report outlines the **learning aspirations** of PBSA partnerships and the range of outcomes they will be looking to capture, and Renaisi will be supporting them with this. In addition, the role of the

learning partner will also be to continue to operate at a **programme level** to collect insights emerging from across the programme and regularly share these to maximise programme wide learning.

This programme level learning will involve working closely with places, support providers and the funders to understand the extent to which the programme has achieved the **broader place and programme outcomes** outlined in the introduction to this report (page 7) over the next three years. This will build on the themes explored in this report, including:

- Ongoing community involvement and accountability
- Feedback on the value and experience of participating in a social action project from those involved
- The ways partnerships are working together - and the extent to which this is changing cultures and/or levelling power
- Reflective practice amongst organisations/residents – and differences made to delivery as a result
- Testing approaches – capturing unanticipated outcomes and ‘failure’
- The role of local context
- Approaches to sustainability and legacy

Insights will be gathered from a range of sources, including: peer learning events; annual programme surveys; quarterly reporting to the funders; support provider feedback; and the learning outputs created and shared by places. This will help to understand the extent to which the programme is achieving its aims and inform ongoing programme reflection and adaptation.

7.5 Next steps for partnerships

At the end of the workshop participants were asked to **reflect on the next steps** they would be taking to mobilise Phase 2 delivery. Responses included:

- Arranging kick off events to reconvene partners and support providers
- Recruitment of staff to support the delivery of their plans
- Developing a partnership agreement in line with programme guidance
- Discussing monitoring and evaluation expectations with partners and opportunities for aligning sources and approaches to collecting evidence
- Revisiting plans with communities and reopening dialogue with local stakeholders
- Deciding how to make the most of the Relationship Manager and Evaluation Adviser support
- Building on the connections made with other PBSA participants.

As Phase 2 begins, the revised support offer, coupled with partnerships’ desire to learn from each other and share what is working well, and less well, set the foundations to realise the full potential in the next phase of the PBSA programme.

Appendix 1 – Phase 1 places

| Partnership | Overview |
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| Phase 2 places | |
| Community360 (Colchester, East) | The partnership is comprised of voluntary, statutory, housing, education and health partners who will support residents with dementia through a referral and support pathway to create a “dementia friendly borough”. |
| Grapevine Coventry and Warwickshire (Coventry, West Midlands) | This project will focus on children and young people by creating a series of ongoing activities to help them and their families become more integrated into the local community. |
| Halifax Opportunities Trust (Calderdale, Yorkshire and Humber) | This project seeks to bridge divides between West Central and North Halifax by bringing the two communities together through social action and connecting organisations in the two areas. |
| Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership (Bristol, South West) | This project will focus on bringing diverse communities together through a friendship scheme for new residents, the improvement of green spaces alongside new build developments and enhancing local facilities. |
| Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Hartlepool, North East) | This project aims to use social action to create a range of solutions to local social and economic challenges and help people escape poverty. This project would enable the organisation to develop programmes to support, strengthen and better connect existing social action initiatives, as well as identify new initiatives and making it easier for people in Hartlepool to engage in social action. |
| Lincoln City FC Sport & Education Trust (Lincoln, East Midlands) | This project seeks to increase community cohesion through the delivery of activities such as a street art project, regular litter picks, the maintenance of green spaces and the Sincil riverbank, and the development of a timebank. |
| North East Lincolnshire VCSE Alliance (North East Lincolnshire) | This project will promote community action to address local issues such as drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and slum landlords. It will work with local people to support neighbourliness, to increase well-being, reduce health inequalities and create a central community hub. |
| Onion Collective CIC, Watchet (West Somerset) | The project will address five main issues: tackling transport difficulties faced by people at risk of social isolation; |

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| | increasing training and education opportunities; helping local people find a voice in local decision making; supporting young people and promoting existing opportunities and support to the community. |
| Safe Regeneration (Sefton) | The project will bring together local organisations to deliver volunteering and social action activities to help local people contribute to the regeneration of Bootle. Funding will also be used to tackle social isolation and enhance the role of public and private business in supporting community engagement. |
| Volunteer Centre Hackney (Hackney, London) | This project will establish a new community hub in Hoxton West providing a safe space for people to meet, talk and share their experiences. Residents will be encouraged to develop their skills with a view to eventually running activities for themselves. |
| Phase 1 places that are not part of Phase 2 | |
| Oxfordshire Community Foundation (Banbury, Oxfordshire) | Age Friendly Banbury is a collection of voluntary, statutory, community and businesses working to make Banbury a great place to grow older. Through PBSA they sought to build on existing social action, better join up local provision and opportunities, and raise the profile of best practice and identify opportunities for replication. |
| Citizens Advice Portsmouth (Portsmouth) | Portsmouth Together is a city-wide volunteering service. Through PBSA they sought to create a city-wide social action sustainable strategy, shaped and owned by local people alongside the council, setting out how social action can respond to the priorities facing our city. |
| Hammersmith United Charities (Hammersmith and Fulham, London) | This project sought to promote social action on the Old Oak Estate, supporting local people to build their confidence and resourcefulness, connect people together and strengthen relationships and neighbourliness within and across diverse communities. |
| Hanley Crouch Community Association (Islington, London) | Having recently opened a new multi-purpose community centre, the partnership in Islington used Phase 1 funding to promote community organising and coproduction activities, to enable and facilitate the coming together of professionals and residents to plan and deliver support together and ensure the centre becomes a truly resident led public space and community asset. |
| New Beginnings New Ferry (Wirral, Merseyside) | New Beginnings New Ferry sought to use social action to empower the local community following a gas explosion |

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| | <p>last year, which had a devastating impact on the town centre and the surrounding residential streets. They planned to explore how social action can support a new Neighbourhood Resource and Support Centre and youth facilities, including opportunities for young people to come together, socialise and learn new skills.</p> |
| <p>Poole Council for Voluntary Service (Poole)</p> | <p>Poole Council for Voluntary Service and its partners lead the development of a plan to encourage older people to be active in their local community, with the number of over 85-year-olds in the town set to increase by a third (33%) over the next ten years. Their plans aim to get people volunteering to befriend older people so they can access activities, become more independent and live more fulfilled lives.</p> |
| <p>Southern Domestic Abuse Service (Havant)</p> | <p>This project aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse via social action, so that victims can be reached earlier. Their plan involves introducing an 'Ask Me' scheme, that will train local volunteers to become 'Ask Me' ambassadors, equipped to respond to disclosures and signpost victims of abuse to help.</p> |
| <p>South Hams Community and Voluntary Service (Townstal, South Hams)</p> | <p>Phase 1 funding allowed the Townstal Community Partnership to further involve communities in their plans to improve the area of Townstal for the benefits of its residents through; supporting and enabling residents and community groups to proactively lead and support local social action; foster community spirit and civic pride; and encourage and support joint projects between local residents and public services.</p> |
| <p>Test Valley Community Services (Andover, Test Valley)</p> | <p>Andover Vision is a partnership of the town's residents, community groups, businesses and public bodies who have a 20 year vision for improving the town. Through PBSA the partnership were exploring opportunities and aspirations for a community hub - to be a centre of social action in the town, managed by and for the community.</p> |
| <p>Thurrock CVS (Thurrock, Essex)</p> | <p>The Stronger Together Thurrock partnership promotes local, community activities that strengthen the connections between people. Through PBSA and associated activities they seek to encourage local people to have a greater say in what happens in their neighbourhood and to take control over where they live and the decisions that affect them.</p> |