

A word cloud for Linlathen, featuring the name 'Linlathen' in large green letters. Other prominent words include 'employment', 'cost of living', 'advice', 'money', 'support groups', 'income maximisation', 'employability', 'training', 'job opportunities', 'skills', 'peer networks', 'financial resilience', 'access to services', 'play trails', 'green spaces', 'wellbeing workshops', 'physical activity', 'healthy lifestyles', 'support', 'multi-agency', 'drop-in', 'social connectedness', 'volunteering', 'community', 'social activities', 'home energy', 'mental wellbeing', 'housing', 'health support', 'information', 'benefits', and 'park improvement'.

Sheila McMahon, Community Health Inequalities Manager, Dundee City Council/ HSCP

Alan Gunn, Community Learning and Development Manager, Housing and Communities,
Neighbourhood Services

	CONTENT	PAGE
	Executive summary	
1.	Introduction and background	6
2.	The evaluation framework	8
3.	The six intermediate outcomes and evidence of impact	13
3.1	More financially resilient with reduced cost of living and income maximisation	13
3.2	More employable, more aware of job opportunities and better able to take these up	16
3.3	More socially connected and increased hope for the future	19
3.4	Able to access better quality homes and green spaces	21
3.5	Aware of and able to access support and services in the community	24
3.6	Able to live healthy lifestyles and improved mental wellbeing	26
4.	The intervention approach and role of the LFI team	28
4.1	Research study	28
4.2	Stakeholder survey	30
5.	Summary and conclusions	35
6.	Key success factors	39
7.	Limitations	41
8.	Acknowledgments and contributors	42

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Whilst much of Dundee is impacted by high levels of poverty, two neighbourhoods - Linlathen and Stobswell West – were perceived by strategic leaders to be affected more significantly when measured by a range of indicators including SIMD. Agreement was reached in June 2021 that specific attention be directed at these localities to develop long-term approaches with the community and partners to reduce the scale of inequality. LFI localities comprise a small number of data zones with more concentrated targeting than usual for place-based approaches in Dundee. This report draws on a wide range of data to evaluate the impact of the implementation process in Linlathen with most numeric evidence relating to the 2023-4 financial year period.

AIMS AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The LFIs had specific aims that focused on the drivers of child poverty:

- Increase income from employment and benefits
- Reduce cost of living
- Improve mental wellbeing

These aims align with Dundee's City Plan and national child poverty reduction strategies, including the Scottish Government's Child Poverty/Employability Pathfinder, which was implemented in Linlathen at the same time.

RESOURCES AND GOVERNANCE

The lead officer for the implementation of the LFI was the local Communities Officer (CO) with support from Community Empowerment Workers (CEWs) and a designated officer from the Community Planning Team. The work was governed by the LFI Board chaired by the Community Planning Manager with representation from all key delivery and strategic partners and support from the Council's Research and Information Team. No additional financial resources were allocated initially although partners were supported to identify and apply for external funding.

LFI ACTIONS

The following actions were led by the LFI team with support from partners:

- Extensive and consistent engagement with the community
- Raising awareness of locally identified issues with partners and the wider community
- Facilitating opportunities for partners and the community to work together in new ways
- Involving members of the community in implementation and decisions about the LFI
- Supporting innovative working and tests of change
- Building capacity and embedding new ways of working
- Ensuring appropriate strategic links and reporting mechanisms
- Accessing additional resources through external funding and in-kind resources
- Gathering evidence and evaluating impact

METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

The evaluation framework used a logic model, theory of change and results chain to assess progress across six intermediate outcomes summarised below:

1. Financial wellbeing
2. Employability
3. Social connectedness
4. Access to quality housing and green spaces
5. Awareness and access to services
6. Healthy lifestyles and mental wellbeing

KEY FINDINGS

A partnership evidence bank hosted data to demonstrate impact where developments were initiated or strengthened by the LFI. Short-term benefits for participants were identified from information generated at logic model events with data submitted on an ongoing basis by delivery agents. This showed the following commonalities across all outcome areas:

- Improved access to information
- Improved access to support
- Reduced barriers
- Increased participation and involvement

Other benefits were identified by stakeholders relevant to the specific intermediate outcome area and some headline impacts are provided below:

1. Financial wellbeing

- £254,478 in additional income and £93,892 in benefits gains accessed
- 1,920 food bags distributed, saving residents £59,520
- 95 children accessed affordable childcare, supporting 72 families

2. Employability

- 103 individuals supported into employment including 27 from Linlathen
- 31 residents engaged in accredited courses offered locally by D&A College
- 60 volunteers contributed 6,432 hours, equating to £81,043 in social value
- 456 visits to the Linlathen Works Drop-in at the Brooksbank Centre related to employability

3. Social Connectedness

- Over 1,000 attendances at Rowantree PS drop-ins through more targeted youth work offer
- 94 hours of family activities over 47 sessions in one year, with free meals provided
- The formation of new groups and peer networks reduced isolation

4. Housing and Green Spaces

- 3 play trails and 1 park improvement developed with £262,000 funding
- 367 residents involved in green space co-design
- 1,206 visits for home energy support with 80+ residents receiving housing advice at Brooksbank Centre Drop-in

5. Access to Services

- 3,461 individual concerns addressed at Brooksbank Drop-in
- 2,000+ leaflets with information about local support and services distributed annually
- Strong multi-agency collaboration through the LFI Steering Group, Drop-in, and new partnership interventions

6. Health and Wellbeing

- 249% increase in physical activity participation with 149% increase in female participation
- Mental health, physical activity and smoking cessation support integrated into community activities
- New health and wellbeing interventions supported families and children with additional needs

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION INSIGHTS

The Linlathen Fairness Initiative implemented a wide range of interventions that positively impacted income, employability, wellbeing and a range of other factors affected by poverty. The bespoke nature of the programme improved residents' lived experiences and quality of life, demonstrating the value of focusing efforts within a manageable geographic area.

Planning and evaluation were guided by six intermediate outcomes rooted in evidence on poverty drivers and effects. Activities strengthened protective factors like financial resilience and social connection, whilst reducing risks that limit life chances. The LFI Steering Group and sub-groups, led by the Communities Officer and supported by Community Empowerment Workers and Community Planning staff, fostered collaboration and respectful relationships among stakeholders. This inclusive and distributive leadership model encouraged shared ownership and sustained engagement throughout the initiative.

The logic model and results chain provided a framework for tracking progress. Early and mid-stage impacts included increased engagement, awareness, and commitment from services and the community to tackle child poverty. Engagement was continuous and multifaceted, involving residents and stakeholders in projects, consultations, and creative initiatives, which helped build trust and enabled co-production of local responses. Awareness grew through direct involvement in engagement processes, leading to deeper understanding of poverty's impact and fostering innovative, compassionate service delivery.

Capacity was built through practical support, networking, and strategic coordination by the LFI team. Stakeholders felt more informed and motivated, while residents gained skills and confidence through volunteering and participation. Changes in service delivery and community behaviours were evident, with partners adopting more inclusive and responsive practices. Although long-term outcomes like reduced child poverty will take time to realise, the initiative laid strong foundations for sustainable change. The evaluation highlights that the values-driven, flexible, and collaborative approach of the LFI is as crucial as the activities themselves.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

The following factors were consistently identified across the evidence base as contributing to the success of the Linlathen Fairness initiative. These are not provided in order of importance nor are they independent of one another:

- a) Focus on low income and small geography
- b) Diverse partnership and programme
- c) Easier access to support with co-location and no wrong door approach
- d) Community involvement and engagement
- e) Robust leadership, support team and reporting at all levels
- f) Shared implementation and evaluation framework

LIMITATIONS

The pre-existing local context meant that the LFI did not start completely from scratch and there were overlaps with several external initiatives. The evaluation aimed to focus on LFI-driven changes; however, real-world conditions and overlapping efforts make it challenging to separate influences.

No agreed baseline existed beyond indicators that are not suitable for short-term impact measurement and community profile data was too broad or long-term to reflect immediate changes. Intermediate outcomes were set early on with shorter-term indicators developed later and evidence retrofitted. There was no community-wide social survey to assess broader impact beyond those directly involved. Stakeholder surveys and focus groups may be subject to bias.

The evaluation was led by a Dundee City Council officer with public health expertise and was not therefore fully independent.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report summarises the purpose and aims of the Local Fairness Initiatives (LFIs) in Dundee; a multi-agency place-based approach to tackle persistent deprivation as measured by the Scottish Index of Deprivation (SIMD), with a focus on increased income and reduced cost of living. The report describes the rationale for the LFIs, the evaluation framework and methodology, and the implementation experience in Linlathen, one of the two LFI sites. It draws on a range of data to draw conclusions on the impact of the intervention as determined by evidence of movement towards the desired trajectory reflected in the results chain, and towards the end goal of reduced child poverty. Further, it explores and reports the role of the LFI team in supporting action and how the community development values, principles and approaches adopted by the intervention may have influenced participation, implementation and outcomes.

RATIONALE

Whilst much of Dundee is impacted by high levels of poverty when measured by SIMD, two neighbourhoods - Linlathen and Stobswell West – were perceived to be affected more significantly in the ways and extent to which poverty manifested itself in people’s lives and life chances. Agreement was reached by Dundee City Council’s Policy and Resources Committee in June 2021 that specific attention be directed at these neighbourhoods to develop long-term approaches with communities and partners that reduce the scale of inequality felt by those who live there.

Linlathen sits within the 5% most deprived areas in Scotland. There was a desire to engage with residents to properly understand the causes and consequences of profound and enduring poverty, and co-produce responses with those that lived there. Specifically, the area has very high, and rising, deprivation connected to income, employment, health and education. Linlathen is within the wider East End ward, recognised as one of the most deprived parts of the city.

Stobswell West does not have the same level of deprivation as in Linlathen but has a high concentration of private-rented tenemental properties and evidence of social inequalities, which when combined, make it a challenging area to live. A large part of the targeted area is experiencing escalating problems across SIMD domains, including crime. Stobswell West sits within the Maryfield ward that includes more affluent parts with a predominance of large privately owned houses.

LFI localities comprise two data zones each with more concentrated targeting than usual for place-based approaches in Dundee. The process of implementation began in both areas at the same time; however, progress was swifter and more sustained in Linlathen for several reasons, which allowed an in-depth evaluation to take place of the process in that locality. The information contained in this report refers to the experience in the Linlathen area only.

AIMS

The overarching aim of the Fairness Initiatives was to increase financial wellbeing by reducing income inequalities and improving other social outcomes associated with poverty. The intervention had specific focus on the drivers of child poverty:

- Increase income from employment
- Increase income from Benefits
- Reduce cost of living

Additional focus was subsequently agreed to improve mental wellbeing in both areas.

These aims are challenging to achieve with many contributions and plausible options on the best delivery route for local actions. Notwithstanding this complexity, place-based developments are understood as important steps towards achieving Dundee’s high-level strategic outcomes to reduce inequalities and child poverty as stated in the City Plan.

TIMESCALE

The initiatives were planned over three years initially, with in-built annual reviews, community engagement, and feedback:

2021/22	Data gathering and area profiling; establishing Strategic Project Board; recruiting key partners and stakeholders; initial community engagement; preparation of financial requirements and applications
2022/23	Establish local operational groups; facilitate logic model events; develop and initiate project activities and deliverables; deepen community engagement and involvement; apply for secure corporate and external funding
2023/24	Mature phase of implementation and delivery of project activities; monitoring and external evaluation; report to stakeholders; plan for operational mainstreaming and financial sustainability

RESOURCES

The LFI development and implementation process was led by the local Communities Officer (CO) with support from Community Empowerment Workers (CEWs). Staff are sited in the Council's Community Learning and Development section with responsibility for multi-agency local community planning in the wider electoral ward. The team supports involvement from a range of partners, including members of the community, as a route to social justice.

An officer from the Community Planning Team was assigned to the LFIs offering considerable support through provision of additional expertise, co-ordination, involvement in planning and evaluation processes, and links to the city-wide community planning infrastructure.

This report refers to the LFI team throughout, which describes the local Communities Officer, two Community Empowerment Workers, and the designated Community Planning Officer for the East End ward.

LFI team actions included:

- Extensive and consistent engagement with the community
- Raising awareness of locally identified issues with partners and the wider community
- Facilitating opportunities for partners and the community to work together in new ways
- Involving members of the community in implementation and decisions about the LFI
- Supporting innovative working and tests of change
- Building capacity and embedding new ways of working
- Ensuring appropriate strategic links and reporting mechanisms
- Accessing additional resources through external funding and in-kind resources
- Gathering evidence and evaluating impact

The work was governed by the LFI Board chaired by the city's Community Planning Manager. The Board had representation from all key delivery and strategic partners with support from the Council's Research and Information Team, which produced detailed population profiles for the target data zones.

No additional financial resources were allocated initially to the LFIs although the nature of the programme meant that partners were supported to identify and apply for external funding. Data in the community profiles and involvement in the intervention was referenced by stakeholders in bids, which helped strengthen their case for funding and resulted in additional activities that aligned with LFI aims.

Over the course of the LFI timeframe in Linlathen, the following grants were awarded to support local activity. This is not a comprehensive list and does not include the funding that came to the area through the Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder and the Early Adopter Out of School Care Project.

Dundee United Sports Club

The Scottish Football Association awarded £425,000 of Extra Time funding over three years to deliver a range of programmes in Linlathen including support for pupils at Rowantree Primary School, after school clubs and holiday provision.

Brooksbank Centre

The Investing in Communities Fund awarded £335,000 over three years for a programme of targeted financial support, community engagement and community development to be delivered by the centre.

Leisure and Culture Dundee

£17,600 was identified for a dedicated Active Schools resource to support young carers in Linlathen.

Dundee City Council

A combination of Council and Community Regeneration Funds provided £260,000 to develop local play trails and improve playparks in the area.

The Yard

Over £1 million investment was made in the development of a bespoke facility to support children and young people with additional support needs.

Dundee and Angus College

The College was awarded £10,000 from NHS Tayside Charitable Trust to run targeted programmes in Linlathen.

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CHILD POVERTY / EMPLOYABILITY PATHFINDER

Once the Local Fairness Initiatives had been approved and in the early months of implementation, the strategic decision was made to align the Linlathen area with delivery of a Scottish Government Pathfinder focused on employability. This work sits within the Child Poverty Team at a national level and aims to increase employment in families with no working adult. The Pathfinder brought additional but distinct oversight to work taking place in the locality with national and local resources to support activity. The Pathfinder and LFI worked closely together to ensure complementary programmes and developments, secure best use of resources, and avoid duplication of effort and activities.

2. THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

A formal monitoring and evaluation framework with target setting and systematic alignment of service or intervention indicators with intermediate or longer-term outcomes did not exist at the outset for the LFIs, which were understood to require an iterative model of delivery. The hypothesis and logic model framework to measure progress were produced retrospectively with the latter agreed at an early stage of implementation. There were no resources for external evaluation, therefore, this was led by a partnership officer with public health, research and evaluation expertise supported by the local Communities Officer and member of the Dundee Partnership team assigned to the LFI.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis was agreed by the LFI Board:

An enhanced place-based approach in the target data zones will strengthen how partners work together to address the causes and consequences of poverty, thus reducing the impact of financial inequalities and improving other social outcomes.

This report provides examples of where interventions align with identified outcomes illustrated by numerical data where this exists, and case studies and other forms of qualitative evidence to help tell the performance story. The evaluation recognises the challenges of fully evidencing impact of complex place-based interventions, particularly where the range of meaningful measures required are not built in at the outset and no additional resources are provided to do this independently.

DEFINITIONS

The overarching aim of the Fairness Initiatives was to increase financial wellbeing, which refers to the state of having control over your financial situation and freedom to make choices that allow you to enjoy life. It encompasses several key aspects:

1. **Control over day-to-day finances**
2. **Capacity to absorb financial shocks**
3. **Meeting financial goals**
4. **Financial freedom**

Improving financial wellbeing involves the provision of support to ensure that individuals and families have adequate resources to meet their daily needs, can function well and meaningfully in society, enjoy a financial cushion to deal with unexpected expenses, develop good money habits, and can set realistic achievable goals, ultimately enhancing overall quality of life.

Improving mental wellbeing was a priority for both localities. Put simply this encompasses how we feel, think and behave. It is a dynamic state influenced by factors such as our financial and social circumstances, where we live, whether we feel useful and valued, and the relationships we have with others. Mental wellbeing is different to mental ill health and is important for everyone. People in disadvantaged areas who experience poverty and other adverse life circumstances are at higher risk of poor mental health, which can influence other outcomes such as employability and income.

METHODOLOGY

It was agreed at the outset that the LFIs would use a modified version of the approach created by the Scottish Government Equally Well Test Site in Dundee, which was externally evaluated as successful in terms of both process and outcomes. The model was adapted to apply to financial wellbeing and key features include:

- o **Community engagement:** *working differently with the community*
- o **Understanding financial wellbeing and inequalities:** *impact and influences*
- o **Partnership working:** *knowing who does what; sharing resources and responsibility*
- o **Supporting service change:** *doing things differently; meeting unmet needs*
- o **Strategic influence:** *linked to community planning, citywide and locally*
- o **Sustainability:** *rolling out the learning; embedding change*

To achieve its aims, the LFI acted as a catalyst for change, providing strong leadership and support for a wide range of service providers and community members to become involved in the design, development and implementation of direct and indirect supporting activities. The LFI team were responsible for:

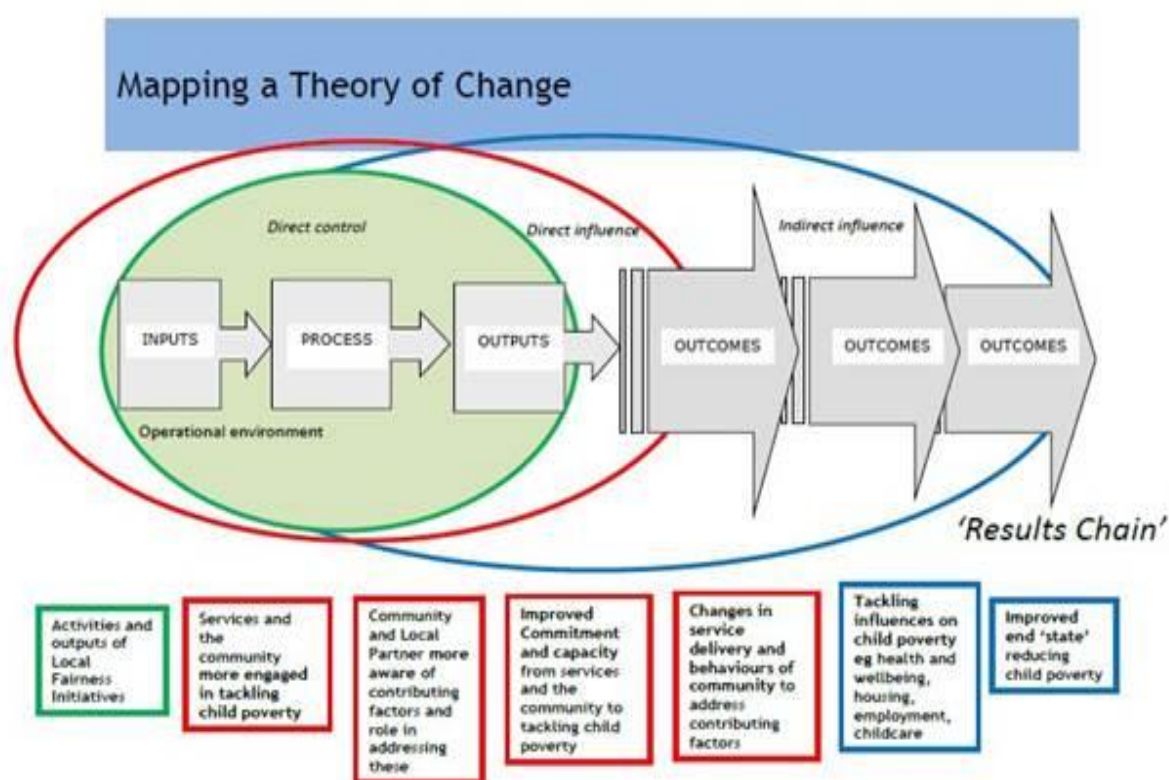
- o Community engagement to identify influences on and assets for financial wellbeing
- o Events and training sessions to increase financial wellbeing solutions and improve understanding of the causes of income inequality
- o Targeted action to directly address low incomes and costs of living where possible
- o Logic modelling and tests of change to enable stakeholders to recognise and develop their role in improving financial wellbeing on their own and in partnership with others
- o Embedding financial wellbeing into the Local Community Plan and including measures for wellbeing within the City Plan framework

LOGIC MODELLING

Logic modelling has been a key feature of the LFIs, forming a blueprint for planning, implementation, and evaluation by outlining the sequence of events that lead to the desired outcome. A typical logic model includes the following components:

1. **Inputs:** resources, contributions, and investments in the programme
2. **Activities:** actions, processes and interventions to bring about intended changes or results
3. **Outputs:** direct products of programme activities
4. **Outcomes:** specific changes in stakeholder and participant behaviour, knowledge, and skills
5. **Impact:** the broader, long-term effects of the programme

The results chain identifies the expected pathways of change, with progress mapped at each stage complemented with a narrative of the “performance story”. This enables clarity on the expected contribution of the LFIs to strategic priorities, helps delivery partners understand the significance of their activities to the collective vision, and facilitates collaborative performance overall.



DEMONSTRATING IMPACT

Change and evidence of impact is generally collected at three levels. Definitions of and timescales for the long, medium and short term may differ for local programmes and strategic plans:

1. **Longer-term changes** in the high-level outcomes in Dundee's City Plan are monitored through agreed long-term indicators and the Pentana performance monitoring system. It should be noted that the actions delivered by the LFIs cannot be attributed directly to any changes in outcome indicators at this level.
2. **Medium-term changes** related to the LFI programme must be specific to the individual and collective contributions of stakeholders since there are many other influences on these outcomes, most of which are outwith the direct control of local interventions. It is important to agree the intermediate outcome indicators most pertinent to the LFIs to help evidence the

desired changes reflected in the results chain. It may be necessary to identify ways to gather this data should it not be collected already.

3. **Short-term changes** that are directly attributable to the LFIs and related to the immediate results of engagement with the community, practitioners and other stakeholders should be prioritised in terms of data collection and evidence. These are the changes within the direct control of the LFIs and demonstrate the start of the trajectory to achieving longer term goals.

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

A Narrative Inquiry community engagement process undertaken in the early stages of implementation identified what mattered most to residents, be these concerns about money, jobs or other factors. The process was led by Community Learning and Development staff with support and training from a research team at the University of Aberdeen. It incorporated a film-making project where local people were trained and supported to create short films about what it was like living in the area. This process confirmed that financial pressures and uncertainties were key concerns for Linlathen residents, as were a range of wider environmental and psychosocial factors. The priorities identified were:

- o Place and space, and greater community control
- o Housing and insulation
- o The cost-of-living crisis, in particular food and fuel poverty
- o Anti-social behaviour and the needs of young people

Matters associated with employment were mainly implicit due to residents grappling with more urgent issues of struggling with basic needs and tackling other barriers to moving forward. The Narrative Inquiry acknowledged three important dimensions that build community and individual resilience and wellbeing:

- o **Self:** the way people feel about their own lives
- o **Support:** the quality of social supports and networks in the community
- o **Structure and systems:** the strength of the infrastructure and environment to support people to achieve their aspirations and live a good life

These dimensions are consistent with the LFI community development approach, which acknowledges the importance of relationships at every level, social justice, and active citizenship. Findings shaped the development of an implementation plan including the actions below, which remained a focus for delivery thereafter:

1. Continue with the Cash First approach and insulation and housing improvements to help address the significant fuel poverty experienced by residents
2. Establish a Housing Action Sub-group of the Local Community Planning Partnership with representation from Dundee City Council and residents
3. Establish community green spaces or gardens using a partnership approach
4. Develop a new youth work offer to improve availability and accessibility of spaces and activities
5. Develop a plan to address food insecurity in a sustainable way and continue to provide the food larder for the foreseeable future
6. Reduce social isolation and improve mental health and wellbeing by provision of low cost or free learning activities in a range of community spaces
7. Tackle employability in a way that acknowledges barriers to employment and by providing flexible and affordable childcare for families seeking employment
8. Provide local opportunities to learn and develop skills as a route to addressing the multiple barriers to employment that residents face

The evidence section later in this report demonstrates how these actions were achieved and the impact they had, aligned with the six intermediate outcomes identified for the LFI.

THE LOGIC MODEL EVENT AND MEASURING CHANGE

A multi-agency logic model event in year 1 shared findings from the Narrative Inquiry and identified contributions to the LFI agenda. Shaped around the theory of change, the event used a suite of intermediate outcomes produced by the LFI Board in recognition of priorities identified by the community and in line with the stages of the results chain showing reduced child poverty as a long-term goal.

The event successfully engaged stakeholders with approximately 40 stakeholders attending. It supported participants to identify how short-term benefits from their activities linked to intermediate outcomes, thus contributing to the child poverty agenda. The interactive nature of the session and the templates populated at the event helped stakeholders to recognise the totality of work for each outcome and where there might be scope to do things differently, both individually and together. Outputs enabled the LFI team to identify collective short-term outcomes and indicators against which progress could be measured.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

These focused on measures that could be aligned with the contribution of multiple stakeholders and which recognised wider environmental and psychosocial factors as important influences on people's sense of agency, control, and hopes for the future. Improvements in these wider determinants can lead to positive changes that could potentially impact life chances, circumstances, and financial wellbeing. The outcomes were:

People are:

- More employable, more aware of job opportunities and better able to take these up
- More socially connected and increased hope for the future
- Able to access better quality homes and green spaces
- Aware of and able to access support and services in their community
- Able to live healthy lifestyles and improved mental health & wellbeing

Latterly, another for financial wellbeing was added to reflect the overarching aim of the LFIs:

- More financially resilient through income maximisation and reduced financial pressures

Although this may be influenced by achievement in other outcome areas it was the principal goal, with activity and evidence that would benefit from being reported separately:

Impact on intermediate outcomes was predicted to occur at the middle of the results chain with some evidence at the longer term stage of level 5.

1. Engagement
2. Awareness
3. Improved commitment and capacity
4. Changes in service delivery and behaviours of community
5. Tackling influences on child poverty

HOW EVIDENCE WAS COLLECTED

Delivery agents (projects and services that contributed to the LFI programme in Linlathen) used their own methodology to collect data. For some, this linked to an existing database or system and for others it was to report to external funders or governing bodies. Often, it required breaking information down into smaller localities than usual to demonstrate impact from channelling resources more specifically into Linlathen. Delivery agents forwarded information to the LFI team to be housed in an evidence bank, which contained a multitude of data collected and presented in different ways.

OUTCOMES AND THEMES

Short-term benefits for service users and intervention participants, subsequently translated into indicators, were identified from information generated at logic model events and submitted on an ongoing basis by delivery agents. There were common short-term benefits across all outcomes:

- Improved access to information
- Improved access to support
- Reduced barriers
- Increased participation and involvement

Other benefits were identified by stakeholders relevant to the specific intermediate outcome area.

3. THE SIX INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES AND EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

The section below takes each intermediate outcome in turn and aligns available data with shorter term outcomes and indicators that can be evidenced. It reports on the impact on financial wellbeing first as the key focus for the LFI.

Numeric data has been listed to demonstrate the extent of reach and participation. Qualitative data is provided in the form of intervention descriptors, quotations and case studies. The baseline for measurement is either that none of the interventions described would have happened without the focus on Linlathen and the support of the LFI team, or there have been significant synergies with the LFI that strengthened the impact of planned interventions, such as the Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder.

Some data reports on gains for residents in the adjoining community of Mid Craigie or more widely, which reflects the “No Wrong Door” approach adopted by the LFI, the Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder and other partners. This inclusive model ensured that individuals from neighbouring areas were not turned away when seeking support, particularly at shared access points like the Brooksbank Centre. This approach maximised reach and impact while maintaining a strong focus on Linlathen.

Most of the data in this report covers the 2023–2024 financial year though some figures may include activity from late 2022 or early 2025 where services continued without interruption or where cumulative totals were used.

1. More financially resilient, with reduced cost of living and income maximisation

Living in poverty due to life on welfare benefits or low paid insecure employment is itself undesirable whilst also intrinsically associated with a range of other negative outcomes. Evidence of the impact of poverty on mental and physical health and wellbeing, educational attainment, substance use, crime, and experience in early years is well documented and unequivocal. The pathways between poverty, health, and behaviours can be complex and interact with wider environmental and psychosocial factors, that is, the interrelation between social factors and individual thoughts, feelings and behaviours. For example, poor quality, inadequately heated housing can affect health, which may influence an individual’s capacity to earn a living. Childhood trauma can affect mental health and increase risk of offending and substance use in later life, which can put a person at higher risk of poverty.

Contributions to achieving the overarching aim to increase income and reduce the cost-of-living described here focus predominantly on the work of financial inclusion/ money advice services in the area and local provision that saved families and individuals money. Financial support for residents was provided by Brooksbank Centre, Dundee Energy Efficiency and Advice Project (DEEAP), and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) through tailored money advice, budgeting support, and access to benefits and grants. These services were co-located in the Brooksbank Drop-in, which was

established as a joint venture between the LFI, the Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder, and the Brooksbank Centre, which received Scottish Government Investing in Communities Funding to strengthen and support this approach. A wider range of partners were involved to provide advice and information about other aspects of people's lives, such as health and housing supported by the Health Inclusion Nursing Team and the Council's Housing Section respectively. Social Security Scotland and the DWP also had a presence facilitated through their involvement with the Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder. The Drop-in was open all day on Tuesdays for any resident of Dundee in line with the "No Wrong Door" approach, and on a Thursday afternoon specifically for residents of Mid Craigie and Linlathen.

The CLD service and a range of other partners helped mitigate the cost of living for residents by the offer of subsidised food at local larders, free family meals and activities, sports and leisure initiatives, and free childcare to support parents into work through the Early Adopter Out of School Care project.

Direct indicators of financial wellbeing relate to uptake of welfare benefits such as Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment, Carer's Allowance and Adult Disability Payment. They include home energy grants, numbers of food bags and meals distributed, and individuals accessing free childcare.

Income maximisation through increased employment is reflected briefly below with further details reported under intermediate outcome 2.

Short term outcomes:

- Increased financial stability
- Reduction in financial pressures
- Reduced cost of living

Indicators:

- 1.1 Increased availability of money advice and cost-of-living support
- 1.2. Number of households supported
- 1.3. Benefits gains
- 1.4. Home energy savings
- 1.5. Reduced cost of living through food support
- 1.6. Employment and education linked to financial resilience
- 1.7. Reduced cost of living through Early Adopter - Out of School Care

1.1. Increased availability of money advice and cost-of-living support

The Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder and LFI acted as levers to bring in additional stakeholders to the Brooksbank Centre to provide a Drop-in service offering targeted support on money/ benefits issues and costs of running a home. This included Home Energy Scotland, DEEAP and CAB.

Support to reduce the cost-of-living was provided through the Open Doors itinerary and free activities/ food programme developed specifically for residents of Linlathen.

1.2. Number of households supported

272 families in the Linlathen area were supported through a combination of targeted intervention and those self-identifying and reaching out for support.

1.3. Benefits gains

- Linlathen: £254,477.97 in additional income including £93,891.50 in benefits gains
- Mid Craigie: £98,198.60 in additional income, including £49,524.83 in benefits gains

1.4. Support for energy savings

- 21 residents received water-saving advice and water-saving pack
- Referrals were made to energy-saving programmes such as:

- Warmer Homes Scotland Programme
- Home Energy Scotland Grant

1.5. Reduced cost of living through food support

- 1920 food bags distributed via the Hub Larder. Each bag cost £4 and had an average value of £35 equating to an approximate total saving of £59,520
- Free family meals provided at Rowantree evening sessions and youth drop-ins through CLD provision
- 1812 free lunches and 1442 free evening meals provided at Brooksbank centre

“Getting shopping for £4 means I can use the money saved to put on my electric.”

1.6. Employment and education linked to financial resilience

- 76 individuals supported into employment
 - 31 individuals accepted college places
- (See Outcome 2 for further detail on employability)

“The better-off-in-work calculation showed me that I would be financially better off working.”

1.7. Reduced cost of living through Early Adopter - Out of School Care

- Affordable childcare for 95 children helped 72 families cut costs and access work or training

Case study: money advice at the Brooksbank Drop-in

Background

Client D was aware of the drop-in service because she received the Linlathen newsletter through her letter box. She was brought into the centre by a family member as her benefits had been stopped and they knew she would receive assistance. Client D lives alone with her 2 children and her younger child has a disability. Client D is a full time Carer for two people.

How was the client helped?

Client D received a letter in April to complete a Universal Credit migration by the end of July. Because she received three months’ notice of these changes, she put the notice aside and forgot about it. Her Income Support and Child Tax Credits continued to be paid until October but when Client D went to the bank after that she found that all her money had been stopped.

Due to the client having no funds Brooksbank’s money adviser helped her apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund for a crisis grant. Client D was struggling with the cost of gas and electricity, so the adviser helped her get a fuel bank top up from Dundee City Council. Whilst in the appointment the client advised she was struggling to afford winter clothing for her children and other items they needed for the home. The adviser helped the client apply to Cozy Bairs and Aberlour Urgent Assistance fund and informed her of the Winter Warm Home discount, helping her to make an application. The adviser also helped Client D make a claim for Universal Credit.

Support from the money adviser at Brooksbank helped the client and her children have more financial stability as they were all affected by the household income reducing. It also helped the client’s wellbeing as she struggled with her mental health and was unable to sort out benefits herself.

Any benefits or challenges?

Having a money/benefit adviser present at the Linlathen Brooksbank drop-in means people in crisis can be seen and helped straight away rather than waiting on an appointment. This has a positive effect on individuals and on the availability of money advice appointments locally.

2. More employable, more aware of job opportunities and better able to take these up

A considerable proportion of households in poverty contain someone in employment; however, fair and decent work is recognised as an important and sustainable route out of poverty. Ability to move into employment is affected by factors such as mental and physical health, availability of childcare, skills and qualifications, self-confidence, and belief that a different future is possible and achievable.

This outcome encompasses support given to people of all ages at different stages of the employment pipeline, including pre-employability. It acknowledges that helping people to recognise their own skills and potential through direct and indirect employability activity can tackle some of the barriers that exist.

Dundee City Council Employability Team, which led the Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder provided a significant component of the employability support locally through targeted outreach with families with no working adult and via the Linlathen Works Drop-in at the Brooksbank Centre. More broadly, employability support was linked to improving access to other forms of support through co-location and signposting to services that can help. It involved building relationships with out-of-work people in the area, helping to improve their life circumstances and reach a position where they might see employment as possible and beneficial for them and their families.

New relationships were built between the LFI team and Dundee and Angus College, which led to its involvement and a local offer of courses usually offered at the college campus. The establishment of D&A College Community Project resulted in two accredited courses delivered initially in Linlathen then moving to campus.

Residents were acknowledged as assets for the delivery of local programmes and new volunteering roles were developed to maximise their contribution to community wellbeing and resilience. This included volunteer support for the evening youth work programmes at Rowantree Primary School where young people were trained to assist with food preparation and other activities. Adult volunteers were involved in Brooksbank Centre and CLD projects such as building and garden maintenance, community café, the local food larder and freecycle service, and family activities and events. The evidence below demonstrates the value of volunteering not only as a means of community contribution but also as a stepping stone toward education, employment, and personal development.

Data reported below is for activities linked to the LFI that most closely aligned with the employability outcome.

Short term outcomes:

- Improved access to job, skills and training information
- Increased access to employment support, career guidance and work experience / work placement
- Increased participation in employability, job training and skill development programmes

Indicators:

- 2.1 Number of participants in training, college or skill development programmes
- 2.2 Number of residents accessing employment support services
- 2.3 Feedback from participants on increased confidence and readiness for employment
- 2.4 Number of people volunteering
- 2.5 Number of people entering employment

2.1 Number of participants in training, college, or skill development programmes

- 31 individuals took up places at D&A College, including 10 from Linlathen and 4 from Mid Craigie.

- 31 people engaged in two accredited courses offered in Linlathen as part of the D&A College Community Project with 19 attending regularly.
- 6 individuals from Linlathen attended an Access Course information session at Abertay University; subsequently, 1 person completed the course and is now undertaking an undergraduate degree course.
- 16 young people took part in 25 sessions facilitated by the college and CLD youth work with a total of 218 attendances overall.

2.2 Number of residents accessing employment support services

- 456 visits to the “Linlathen Works” drop-in at the Brooksbank Centre related to employability, upskilling or addressing barriers to employment
- 327 better-off-in-work calculations were provided

“The support I received at Linlathen Works was invaluable. They helped me with my CV and interview skills, which gave me the confidence to apply for jobs.”

2.3 Feedback from participants on increased confidence and readiness for employment

Positive feedback was received from young people participating in the Skills for Life & Work programme such as increased confidence and a sense of achievement. Adults receiving employability support also fed back on how support had moved them closer to employment.

“Going to college is something I’ve thought about for the last 7 years but never had the confidence to do it... now I really believe it is something I can do.”

2.4 Number of people volunteering

- 10 young volunteers were recruited and trained to support the evening youth work programme at Rowantree Primary School and subsequently received accreditation
- 40 volunteers participated in Brooksbank community projects and events. 21 returned regularly and 10 became involved in other community initiatives
- 19 new volunteers joined Community Empowerment Team projects contributing 148.5 hours over a six-month period
- In total, 60 residents were involved in volunteering across LFI-supported projects in 2024 contributing 6432 hours of their time. Based on the Real Living Wage this equates to a social return on investment of £81,043
- Volunteering also served as a pathway to positive destinations:
 - 1 volunteer gained employment with a local sports club
 - 1 volunteer accessed university
 - 2 volunteers progressed to college
 - Others took on new roles in community-led projects, building transferable skills in planning, communication, and leadership

“Everyone wants to feel valued, and you do, you feel valued at what you do. Actually, you might come here for two hours a month or something, but there’s value to it... a little difference to someone somewhere.”

2.5 Number of people entering employment

- 103 individuals were supported into employment city-wide through the “Linlathen Works” drop-in; 27 were from Linlathen and 10 from Mid Craigie.

“Thanks to the employability team, I was able to find a job that suits my skills and fits around my childcare responsibilities.”

Case Study: Dundee and Angus College

What was the intervention?

College staff and the lead LFI officer established a relationship and planned local delivery of two D&A programmes involving innovative methods to identify potential participants. The key aim was to decentralise and customise college courses and promote uptake from Linlathen residents.

Touchpoints was a tailor-made programme developed by college staff who engaged with local people at Brooksbank and The Hub over several weeks to build relationships and co-produce the programme. During delivery of the programme transport and childcare were available, supported through funding for barrier-free learning. There were curriculum sessions on social care, social science, construction, beauty/hair, and hospitality. External partners delivered First Aid, Heart Start, sessions on Radicalisation and Racism, and accredited Moving and Handling training.

Community Kitchen was an established course usually offered at the college campus. The course was delivered in Linlathen with referrals generated through word of mouth, local key workers, Rowantree PS, Brooksbank Centre, door-knocking, leaflet drops, and social media advertising. The Community Kitchen involved two days of activity each week; one of cooking with hospitality staff, and another upskilling including farm visits, Moving and Handling training, wellbeing activity, and a visit from the NHS nutrition team. Participant achievement was recognised at an Awards & Celebration event.

Both courses were supported by an award of £30k from NHS Tayside Charitable Trust to run three programmes across Tayside. The Linlathen programme cost approximately £10k including Chef Lecturer, cooking produce, food/refreshments, childcare, RHET fees (Royal Horticultural-Educational Trust) for farm visits, accreditation fees, and the summer programme for family learning at Touchpoints. It is important to note that college staff time, kitchen use, utilities, minibuses and drivers were not covered by this funding and D&A college supported the project in-kind for maximum success.

What were the successes?

There was full participation and attendance throughout both programmes and staff were able to introduce D&A College to those who had previously thought this was not an option for them, either through poor schooling experience or lack of self-belief. This was a whole family approach, introducing parents and children to the college, which can be a catalyst for change when intergenerational worklessness is prevalent. Provision of high-quality learning experiences and certification led to college staff supporting people with job and college applications, including references and personal statements.

What were the challenges?

These included logistics of transport and childcare, timekeeping for people not used to routine, and managing the general anxiety and mental health of participants. Funding allowed the college to have two dedicated workers on site, as well as the Chef Lecturer, as the group required a high staff ratio to ensure a good quality experience and positive retention.

How was this approach different?

The funding allowed the college to work in a bespoke way, targeting one area of the city to offer highly supported learning opportunities exclusively to them; an approach that is rare and funding reliant. Being out in the community and co-located with community partners was a new way of working, building strength through collaboration, and ensuring success through provision of scaffolding for the programme.

Having a local presence by attending a wide range of events/drop ins and groups helped the college to establish strong relationships in the area and introduce its flexible learning opportunities to

people who may never have otherwise engaged.

3. More socially connected and increased hope for the future

Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly acknowledged as harmful for mental and physical health. Evidence in the literature and via local data collection sources such as the Engage Dundee surveys show that one of the ongoing consequences of the pandemic, and more recently the cost-of-living crisis, is that many people feel psychologically and/or practically excluded from society with associated negative impacts on wellbeing and levels of participation.

The LFI Steering Group brought together services and groups with an interest in increasing activity in the area, including opportunities for social connection. Over the course of the LFI, members of the steering group and other identified local people participated in the Value-based Leadership Training facilitated by Columba 1400 as part of the What Matters To You initiative, which expedited partnership working and helped produce a plan for the locality including provision of social opportunities. The delivery team co-ordinated an extensive programme offering a wide variety of free activities to encourage local people of all ages to come together, make social connections, and develop networks of support.

Many of these activities also positively affected other outcome areas. This included helping reduce the cost of living through incorporating a “feeding the family” component, influencing employability by linking participants to services, promoting skills development through volunteering opportunities, and improving the mental wellbeing of adults, children and young people through increased social capital. Some activities, such as community cafes, also incorporated a health and recovery element linked to decentralised Alcohol and Drug Partnership funding.

All social activities were offered in a friendly, non-stigmatising and dignified manner and many included the presence of partner organisations to increase access to services.

Short term outcomes:

- Increased social opportunities, support groups and networks
- Greater involvement in community events and social activities
- Increased access to mental health resources and support
- Improved mental wellbeing

Indicators:

- 3.1 Number of residents attending social events and activities
- 3.2 New support groups or networks established
- 3.3 Participant feedback on social connections and perceived community support

3.1 Number of residents attending social events and activities

- 10 volunteers were supported to run a weekly family activity project at Rowantree Primary School, promoting social inclusion and the development of peer networks. In 2024, 47 sessions were provided, equating to 94 hours of activities that included a free family meal. 38 families accessed this provision over the year.
- 7 volunteers were provided with CLD capacity building support over 21 group development sessions to enable them to co-ordinate and deliver local community events during the school holidays. In 2024, the volunteers delivered 4 events with an average attendance of 210 Linlathen residents at each
- 1073 attendances were recorded at the Tuesday P7 Drop-In and Wednesday S1 Drop-In at Rowantree Primary School.
- Attendance at community events and sessions included:
 - 128 unique participants at PS Drop-In
 - 151 unique participants at S1 Drop-In

- 75 unique participants at Football Drop-In
- Summer outings provided young people with social opportunities outside their usual circles and helped strengthen community ties:
 - Cinema & Ice Skating: 46 participants
 - M&D's Theme Park: 59 participants
 - Blair Drummond Safari Park: 53 participants
 - Wild Shore: 38 participants

"It is great to spend time with my kids but also get to speak to other parents at the same time."

"There was such a feeling of community."

3.2 New support groups or networks established

Columba 1400 Leadership Programme initiated support networks that resulted in the formation of community toolbox and a men's mental health support group, and new partnerships for mental health and wellbeing.

- New support networks formed through events hosted by the Brooksbank Centre
- Additional groups were established, including a Parent Support Network at Rowantree Primary School

"This makes such a difference being able to go to things like this in our own area."

The Brooksbank Centre enhanced its programme to offer community events and additional groups with a social element including wellbeing workshops and the Craft Group, which was developed with support from the Carer's Centre.

- 20 regular attendees had improved social connections and crafting skills, more confidence and better mental health and wellbeing
- Group members developed an advocacy role and extended their involvement to the wider community (see case study below)

3.3 Participant feedback on social connections and perceived community support

Feedback from young volunteers at Rowantree Primary School showed they were more socially connected and confident through their involvement in supporting evening programmes and family sessions.

"I feel more confident now talking to people I didn't know before."

Young people involved in the Skills for Life & Work programme reported increased social connections, stronger peer relationships, and a greater sense of community belonging. Participants described feeling more confident engaging with others and valued the opportunity to contribute to something meaningful.

"Being part of the group helped me feel like I belong somewhere."

Case Study – Craft Group

What was the intervention?

This involved the delivery of interactive crafting sessions at the Brooksbank Centre, funded through the Investing in Communities Fund and Participatory Budgeting programme for carers. The sessions were held twice weekly and targeted local people and unpaid carers, including those with chronic health conditions. The sessions included free refreshments and lunches with optional low-cost meals. A Craft Support Worker funded via the Carers Centre facilitated the sessions, provided informal support, and signposted attendees to additional services such as debt and benefits advice, local grants, and energy support.

What were the successes?

There was good attendance with around 20 regular attendees per session both male and female, and 60% being carers. The group continues to grow, largely through word of mouth and social media. Evaluations showed that participants find the environment relaxing and enjoyable and feel involved in shaping the group's activities. Participants developed crafting skills, and confidence and willingness to learn have also increased. Members have also taken on voluntary roles, reported reduced social anxiety, and increased their social engagement outside the group.

Craft Group members voted to dedicate sessions to designing and creating Halloween decorations for a 'Spooky Supper' in Brooksbank's café, a free family Halloween event, demonstrating pride and purpose in contributing to wider community goals.

The group had a high prevalence of smokers, and 11 participants were referred to NHS Tayside's Quit Your Way programme, which offers a financial incentive to stop smoking. Some members reported that the group helped them to manage cravings and one carer member was invited to talk about their journey at ASH Scotland's 50th Anniversary event. Group members also engaged with Social Security Scotland and hosted visits from NHS Tayside Public Health Officers and the Deputy First Minister, raising awareness of carers' needs.

What were the challenges?

Some members lacked confidence initially, rushed through projects, or expressed self-doubt. There was concern the group might only attract a narrow demographic though this was ultimately disproven. Ongoing funding is needed to retain the Craft Support Worker, whose role is critical to the group's success and continuity. The worker, who has caring responsibilities, welcomes new members, motivates those who feel less confident, deals with all practical aspects of the group and has a role in monitoring and evaluation.

How was this approach different?

The group combined creative activity with informal peer support and direct links to services like financial advice and smoking cessation, thus offering an integrated model of support. There was empowerment through participation, and attendees were actively involved in shaping the group's direction and projects, fostering ownership and empowerment. The group evolved organically into a platform for advocacy, enabling participants to engage with policymakers and service providers. There was evidence of impact beyond crafting, and the group addressed social isolation, mental health, financial wellbeing, and health behaviours in a cohesive, community-rooted way.

4. Able to access better quality homes and green spaces

Good quality, affordable and sustainable housing where residents feel safe, warm and settled is an important foundation in people's lives. Equally, outdoor spaces that provide an opportunity for play, exercise, active travel and contact with nature are well evidenced as important for physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Lack of insulation in the wood-clad houses in Linlathen meant that residents could not afford to heat their homes adequately or found that heat generated was quickly lost through walls, doors and windows. Additionally, lack of investment and maintenance for green spaces in the area was highlighted by people of all ages in the narrative inquiry process.

Much of the activity for this intermediate outcome focused on two key areas:

- 1) the partnership with Dundee City Council Housing Section
- 2) the local environmental improvement programme to improve green spaces.

Housing officers were heavily involved in the implementation of the LFI, working differently than usual by being involved in the narrative inquiry process, and engaging and working alongside members of the community in more co-productive ways. Housing staff were regular attendees at the Brooksbank

Drop-in giving advice to council house tenants and those with other social landlords on anti-social behaviour, repairs, housing applications, rent arrears and rubbish uplift. The proximity of housing staff ensured that local people were provided with the support they needed, which was particularly important once the local housing office closed. It also enabled effective communication with residents on the insulation programme, which experienced delays.

In response to community concerns about lack of play facilities and the poor condition of green spaces, three active play-trail sites were successfully developed to improve access to nature, promote physical activity, enhance the local environment, and provide more recreational opportunities for local people.

Community clean-up events were held at five locations across Linlathen, which were well attended and supported by skip placements. Volunteers played an active role in maintaining outdoor spaces, supporting litter-picking hubs, and contributing to the upkeep of gardens and green areas linked to community projects.

Short term outcomes:

- Partnership approach to implementation of housing improvement initiatives
- Increased access to housing support
- Development of community gardens and green spaces
- Enhanced community involvement in development of outdoor spaces

Indicators:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 4.1 | Number of housing units scheduled for housing improvements |
| 4.2 | Uptake of housing support services among residents |
| 4.3 | Number of community spaces developed or enhanced |
| 4.4 | Number of residents involved in developing green spaces |

4.1 Number of housing units scheduled for housing improvements

External wall insulation projects led by Dundee City Council Housing Section are scheduled in Linlathen to improve energy efficiency and reduce heating costs for residents. Specific data on the number of homes improved will be included in future reports.

4.2 Uptake of housing support services among residents

Many Linlathen families engaged with the Home Energy Scotland Programme and other housing support services to access insulation improvements and financial support, helping to make homes more energy-efficient and affordable.

- Approximately 80 residents per year were given advice by housing officers attending the Brooksbank Drop-in.
- Over a two-year period there were 1,206 visits for energy support.

“I think it’s a good thing someone representing the Council at Brookie. I think they need to inform the public more about the service the Council offers and maybe rethink opening that big building again, although Brooksbank is better than nothing and you all do your best to help.”

4.3 Number of community spaces developed or enhanced (green space, clean-ups etc)

Three active play trail sites were developed in Linlathen; Mossgiel Place, Alloway Place and Rowantree Crescent, supported by £65,000 funding from Dundee City Council Environment section. Improvements were also made to the nearby Pitairlie Park with a £137,000 funding allocation. The East End Community Regeneration Forum supported the project by contributing an additional £60,000 for inclusive play equipment.

Community litter-picking hubs were established to encourage residents to engage in their local environment and improve the overall quality of shared green spaces.

Five locations hosted community clean-up events; Pitkerro Drive, Mossgiel Place, Lomond Place, Blacklock Crescent, and Rowantree Crescent, supported by skip placements.

4.4 Number of residents involved in developing green spaces

- 117 local people took part in a co-design exercise for the active play trails, through outreach, engagement sessions or a survey.
- 250 residents were involved in the development of Pitairlie Park in Mid Craigie.

Case study: provision of drop-in local housing support

What happened?

The Housing Section of Dundee City Council was a key LFI partner from the outset due mainly to the need to address issues residents experienced with wood-clad houses in the area. The service manager was an active member of the LFI Board, with a local Housing Support Officer representing the service at the Stakeholder Steering Group and sub-groups. Housing staff were involved in the community engagement process and logic model event that took place at the early stages of implementation.

The Tenancy Officer was a regular attendee at the Brooksbank Drop-in providing advice primarily to Dundee City Council tenants and also to those that were homeless or at risk of homelessness, and to people renting from other social landlords. Tasks included support with anti-social behaviour, chasing up repairs, completion of housing application forms, advice on housing points, checking on rent arrears, arranging rubbish uplifts, and providing information on waiting lists for house moves. This enabled residents to access advice, information and support locally given that the local Area Housing Office had closed to the public.

What were the benefits and challenges of working in this way?

There were numerous benefits identified from housing support being available at the drop-in. Housing Officers were able to work with other partners and help people in the local community in a much more direct way, for example, by extending reach through linking with key workers who went door to door in the community. This resulted in increased engagement and provision of housing support for families who would not normally ask for help in addition to building capacity in the Linlathen community.

There were positive changes identified in the relationship between residents and the designated member of housing staff present at the drop-in, who felt they were perceived with less suspicion because local people associated them the good work carried out at Brooksbank. Tenants came to understand that staff were there to help and not blame them for disrepair or other issues with the appearance of their tenancy or garden.

The housing officer reflected that although they had been in their role for several years, it was during the relatively short period of their involvement in the LFI there had been a much greater sense of engagement, which they attributed to the drop-in. They received feedback from tenants that although they had sought support for a single issue, they were able to access support for a range of other concerns. There was a view that although the local housing office had closed, the presence of housing staff at Brooksbank had helped mitigate the effects and break down some of the barriers members of the public encounter when trying to access face to face support regarding council services.

It was recognised that there may be challenges in sustaining and rolling out this approach, particularly as the person-centred nature may mean that multiple concerns are raised during consultations. However, there was commitment from the housing service to continue with this approach as it was recognised as being a better delivery of the service for tenants.

5. Aware of and able to access support and services in the community

Ensuring appropriate and adequate access to services for people experiencing inequalities whilst simultaneously providing preventative and early action targeted at those who need less immediate help is increasingly challenging for service providers. However, support that is proportionate to need is known as a key pillar that helps to reduce the inequalities gap and make best use of available resources.

The community profiles for the Linlathen LFI data zones showed that many residents experienced challenges across multiple parts of their lives; for example, the area houses higher than average proportions of people who are unemployed/income deprived, pupils with lower than average attainment and attendance at school, higher than average admittance to hospital for drug and alcohol related issues, and low awareness of support available for childcare. Findings from the narrative inquiry and other engagement processes showed that managing financial and other daily struggles was the priority for individuals.

Help to navigate systems and access support from trusted local sources under one roof is consistently an underpinning theme in place-based interventions. Consequently, increasing the accessibility of services by co-location was a key development for the Linlathen LFI predominantly via the Brooksbank Drop-in, and ensuring that residents knew about this through local outreach and promotion. Signposting and soft handovers were key features, as was the approachability of staff.

Established and led by the LFI team, the Linlathen Steering Group was the driving force for many local developments. Its existence ensured effective sharing and dissemination of information across the membership of the group and more widely within the community, helping to promote the support available and encourage signposting/ soft handovers.

Outcomes:

- Increased availability of services locally
- Improved collaboration between service providers
- Enhanced dissemination of information about available services
- Increased awareness of residents of support available

Indicators:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 5.1 | No of services operating from Brooksbank Drop-in and beyond |
| 5.2 | Number of residents accessing support at drop-in |
| 5.3 | Number of hours available at drop-in |
| 5.4 | Engagement in partnership meetings focused on Linlathen |
| 5.5 | No of information leaflets disseminated |

5.1 Number of Services operating from Brooksbank Drop-in and beyond.

Multiple services were delivered through the Brooksbank Drop-in, including employability support, housing support, health checks/advice/information, money advice, CAB, Home Energy Scotland, DWP and Social Security Scotland.

“Brooksbank for me is great. I go to the drop-in when I need to, which is usually for filling in forms as with my mental health I don’t find things like that easy. The staff there are great too – always smiling away.”

5.2 Number of residents accessing support at drop-in

Between October 2022 and November 2024, the drop-in supported 3,461 individual concerns raised by residents. This included:

- 1,206 visits for energy support
- 947 for benefits and cost-of-living advice
- 456 for employability and upskilling

- 302 for housing issues

These figures refer to the number of concerns or issues addressed and not the number of unique individuals. Many residents accessed support for multiple issues over time.

“The service has always proved helpful for me. There is lots of support on offer. The one thing I struggle with is the open plan hall. I find it intimidating going in a lot of the time”

5.3 Number of hours available at drop-in

Brooksbank operated two drop-in sessions per week resulting in approximately 500 hours of availability per year.

5.4 Engagement in partnership meetings focused on Linlathen

The LFI Steering Group met quarterly for approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. On average, 25–30 individuals attend each meeting, representing a wide range of sectors:

- **Local authority** (CLD, Housing, Children and Families, Discover Work)
- **Health services** (e.g. NHS Tayside, CAMHS, Speech and Language)
- **Education** (local schools, Dundee and Angus College)
- **Third sector** (e.g. Brooksbank Centre, Aberlour, Dundee Carers Centre, The Yard, Dundee Rep)
- **National agencies** (Social Security Scotland, Home Energy Scotland)
- **Community and sports groups** (Dundee United Community Sports Club, Dundee Rugby, Friends of Linlathen)

5.5 Number of information leaflets disseminated

2000 leaflets with information about the Brooksbank Drop-in were printed and distributed per year.

Case Study: A journey from crisis to stability through Brooksbank support

Miss C had been signposted to Brooksbank by Hope Point, which she had visited due to suicidal thoughts. She was accompanied by her only friend and was visibly distressed. Staff at Brooksbank responded with compassion and care, inviting her into a private space to talk. Miss C explained that she was not local to Dundee, had been asked to leave the home she shared with her partner, was homeless, in poor physical health, and unsure how to access help.

The Brooksbank team immediately contacted Shelter who arranged temporary accommodation. Staff also supported Miss C to report a change in her Universal Credit claim, arranged a foodbank referral, and spent time listening and offering emotional support.

Miss C mentioned she enjoyed crafting and was invited to join the Brooksbank craft group. Over the following weeks, she attended regularly and volunteered at Brooksbank’s annual Fun Day. When she later moved to other temporary accommodation she remained engaged with Brooksbank, building confidence and community connections.

Eventually, Miss C was allocated a network flat and accepted into college. She expressed feeling more positive about her future and was grateful for the support she received. Brooksbank staff also provided her with household essentials including a small television, bedding, and kitchen items to help her settle in her new home.

“I was at my lowest when I came to Brooksbank. Now I’m in college, I have my own place, and I still come to the craft group. I’m so thankful for everything.”

Miss C continues to attend Brooksbank activities and volunteers when she can, demonstrating the long-term impact of accessible, compassionate, and community-rooted support.

6. Able to live healthy lifestyles and improved mental health & wellbeing

Health inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes for people from different socio-economic groups, where those on lower incomes tend to experience poorer health and earlier death than those who are more affluent. Health inequalities arise from a combination of the wider determinants of health, for example, poor-quality housing and environments, low educational attainment, insecure employment and unemployment, and access to transport and other services, and the interplay with psychosocial factors such as weak social networks, lack of support, low self-regard and confidence, and low levels of trust.

Poor physical and mental health was found to be a barrier to employment for identified workless households in Linlathen through the work of the Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder. In addition, the mental health of children and young people has become an increasing concern in the city and beyond. The poor mental health of both adults and young people featured heavily in the Engage Dundee surveys during the first Covid lockdown and at the onset of the cost-of-living crisis.

In recognition of the wider influences on health, much of the work reported under previous intermediate indicators will have also had an impact here; therefore, the information below focuses predominantly on health and wellbeing activities and lifestyle-related interventions. These were offered directly through the provision of sports, leisure, play and food activities, and indirectly through the positive effects of bringing people together socially in a wide range of activities, and increasing the agency of individuals and wider community to be part of decision-making processes. Mental wellbeing was also promoted by tackling the root causes of people's distress through increasing their income and reducing the cost of living.

Outcomes:

- Increased responses to the wider influences on health inequalities
- Enhanced availability of health and wellbeing support
- Greater participation in health and wellbeing activities

Indicators

- 6.1 New health and wellbeing partnerships and developments
- 6.2 Number of individuals provided with health information and advice
- 6.3 Participation in health and wellbeing activities

6.1 New health and wellbeing partnerships and developments

- A new Together To Thrive (TTT) partnership group was formed including practitioners from Dundee Carers Centre, The Speech and Language Company, and DCC Out of School Care. This group is delivering the TTT programme to parents of children with additional support needs and referrals are made via Rowantree Primary through the Fort System
- The Yard developed new partnerships with the Health Inclusion Nursing Team (HINT), Decider Skills facilitators, and other local health services to support children with additional needs and their families
- Brooksbank expanded its offer to include crafting groups, wellbeing workshops, and smoking cessation services in partnership with NHS Tayside
- Dundee United Sports Club worked with schools and community partners to deliver inclusive physical activity programmes, which also included fire safety advice
- HINT nurses were present at Decider Skills sessions, which were delivered through the Yard and Brooksbank, offering targeted mental health support and early intervention
- A Linlathen Pram-pushing group was established by the Community Health Team, which developed into the Stay and Play Group for parents and babies
- 5 Ways to Wellbeing leaflets were co-produced with local people across the city to respond to the mental health and wellbeing impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. These were delivered across the wider East End ward with particular focus in Linlathen

- More active promotion in Linlathen of the Community Health Team East End programme including Wellbeing Workshops in partnership with Penumbra and the HINT nurses

"Such a good day- loved the yoga session, had a blast making soup, and just felt great all around. Can't wait to come back"

6.2 Number of individuals provided with health information and advice

- The HINT team provided nursing advice, including health checks to 24 people in Linlathen.
- CAB supported 218 clients, many of whom received advice related to health, wellbeing, and financial stress. 69 reported increased self-efficacy, an indicator of improved wellbeing
- Brooksbank provided informal wellbeing advice through drop-ins, referrals, and peer-led groups, including support for those in crisis
- 14 people from took part in three Penumbra Wellbeing Workshops (Sleep, Anxiety, Self-care)
- 6 parents and 6 babies took part in the Community Health Team Stay and Play Group

"Really enjoyed the group today. The play activities and singing were lovely, and it was great to share stories and experiences and spend time with other parents and babies"

6.3 Participation in health and wellbeing activities

Dundee United Sports Club reported:

- 249% increase in physical activity participation
- 149% increase in female participation
- 88% pupil engagement in school-linked activities
- 60% of pupils reported feeling safer at school
- 10+ families supported with employment and wellbeing

Brooksbank Centre hosted regular crafting groups, volunteering opportunities, and family events that promoted social connection and mental wellbeing.

The Yard supported children with autism and their families through:

- Dramatherapy sessions
- Decider Skills workshops
- Parent/Carer support groups

Other health and wellbeing outcomes from multi-agency work included:

- 10+ families supported through employment-related wellbeing interventions
- Reduction in fire-related behaviour through targeted community safety initiatives

Case Study: supporting children with additional support needs at The Yard

Child B recently relocated to Dundee and attends a Primary School in Linlathen. Their parent was the sole carer and reported high stress levels, low confidence, and limited access to support networks. Child B had a diagnosis of autism and faced challenges engaging in mainstream activities due to sensory sensitivities.

The school's Additional Support Needs Coordinator referred Child B to The Yard, which supported the family at weekly play sessions, Dramatherapy, and wellbeing workshops such as Decider Skills. This was made possible through investment from the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund for a part-time Wellbeing Coordinator and the development of a parent and carer support group to improve mental wellbeing, increase participation in physical and social activities, strengthen peer support networks, and enhance access to mental health resources.

Child B now regularly attends sessions and has shown improved emotional regulation and social interaction. The parent has reported reduced stress and increased confidence and now co-facilitates

the Carer Support Group. They have returned to part-time employment aided by their improved wellbeing and access to childcare during sessions.

The Yard has since developed new partnerships with local health services, including HINT nurses and Decider Skills facilitators, enhancing the availability of mental health support. This case study demonstrates the impact of targeted, inclusive community support in addressing health inequalities and promoting long-term wellbeing.

4. THE INTERVENTION APPROACH AND ROLE OF THE LFI TEAM

It is important to acknowledge the role of the LFI team in both the process of change and the ways in which this influenced outcomes. The value-based approach adopted by the intervention centres around social justice, capacity building and collective action with a key role for the LFI team in supporting involvement from a range of service providers and local partners, including members of the community.

4.1 STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH STUDY

The approach of the team was the subject of a small-scale research study undertaken by a Masters CLD student early 2025 aiming to:

- Develop a better understanding about how a CLD approach can drive positive social change
- Learn more about the impact of a CLD approach in shaping decision-making mechanisms
- Understand why local people chose to get involved with the project and its process

The student reviewed key literature, policy frameworks, and theoretical underpinnings of community development, and undertook two stakeholder focus groups; one with practitioners/ service providers (7 participants) and the other with community members (5 participants).

Findings from the study showed that the LFI brought together a wider and more diverse group of stakeholders than usual through the formation of a local Steering Group as the driving force for developments, and via a range of interventions and processes such as Narrative Inquiry, community events, and delivery of local projects. A community member said:

“I think it’s certainly an initiative to get everyone...it’s a lot of groups together whether statutory, third sector voluntary, whatever you can to lift people out of poverty. People who have never got involved in anything from any age.”

Evidence showed that working together collaboratively helped build strong relationships and break down barriers, including scepticism that things would change and perceptions of “them and us”. Consequently, this helped develop trust through listening, learning, and equity of status. A community member said:

“It’s not been like that for a long, long time, ay. That’s like but why bother with that, nobody cares. But now we can see that local people are willing to come together. Coming together. Council listening to them. It’s not them vs. us. We listen to them too.”

Information gathered from stakeholders demonstrated that collaboration did not only involve those within the Steering Group but extended to the networks of individuals and groups that the LFI team, partners and community representatives fostered more broadly using the group as a platform for the voices of local people to be heard directly and indirectly. A community member said:

“Well, you know, the ongoing issue with the housing and stuff, but at least we can be conduit to people and say, look, it’s coming. Okay? So just, you know, let’s just calm down, it will happen.”

Service providers reflected that the equitable model influenced their relationship with local people:

“So I would say it's been transformational, I say that from a community perspective, but also from a professional perspective, what's been done and how this initiative has changed the way we work is based on the feedback we've had from people in the community.”

The study found that equitable, value-based partnership working enabled a listening and learning culture where everyone's input was recognised and decisions made jointly. In this environment, community members could feed in their own experiences and what they were seeing and hearing locally:

“a lot of people with anxiety and we know that, but mental health as well...so even folk who are hungry, their anxiety at leaving the house is still more of a factor”

Many examples were provided to demonstrate the positive impact of this more collaborative way of working. In terms of improved service delivery and new ways of working, A service provider commented:

“I was embarrassed that actually people struggled with putting up with so much more than was necessary just because they didn't know who to contact, or the person who they had contacted wasn't providing them with an appropriate response or because they're embarrassed about a situation. So we've changed how we work and we've redesigned a particular service area within the department to be more available.”

There was evidence from the focus groups that service providers were targeting their work more in Linlathen and that accessing additional funding had helped facilitate this:

“It's been the first time that she's [manager] ever got awarded funding for just one area, one specific thing with no real hard outcome at the end of it either, just about breaking down barriers, finding opportunities and changing perceptions of what education is really or can be.”

Some service providers felt that new ways of gathering data and evidence, and not working to strict pre-set outcomes and indicators, enabled organic growth and creativity including when telling the performance story:

“Not focused on hard outcomes, what are the statistics? But I think what I've learned as a professional is that, you know what? Sometimes the software is just not as good, it's how we feel and how we capture the stories.”

And there was a multitude of evidence that the community members who participated in the LFI had grown in numerous ways and were taking action and responsibility for their area:

“so we've got to help them and make sure they don't get overwhelmed...you can be the only people they spoke to all week. Yeah, most of them appreciate it...so that's a good feeling for us as well. You can tell them the other groups are on, because you know what's going on.”

There was reference to the Values Based Leadership Training provided by Columba 1400 in terms of strengthening relationships, sharing information about what services in the area do, and identifying shared goals and values.

“Well, it really got us together and to go away from your norm, take you out your comfort zone.”

However, the ongoing approach of the Steering Group, the LFI team, and the intervention in general appears to have been more significant for partnership working.

In summary, the service providers that took part in the focus group reported encountering and working with local people in different ways and settings, with shared values and equitable contributions. This, combined with fewer constraints and more flexibility, resulted not only in cumulative gains and transformational change, but in high levels of job satisfaction and hope for the future:

“it’s just getting bigger in the sense that it’s reaching out to more people all the time...and we’re just feeding into the community and much more...there’s so much more available in the community... it’s certainly not slowed down, I was wrong to think it might. It’s been brilliant so far, because it’s got more to go, I’m quite sure, and other people feel hopeful as well.”

The research established that working with community development values and principles inspired hope that things can change for the better and resulted in opportunities for improvements. Stakeholders were empowered to work differently and in organic ways, grow relationships, and share ownership and leadership, which enabled success. This indicates that the way things are done is an important factor in achieving behaviour changes in service providers and the community, which points towards a positive trajectory of change.

4.2 STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

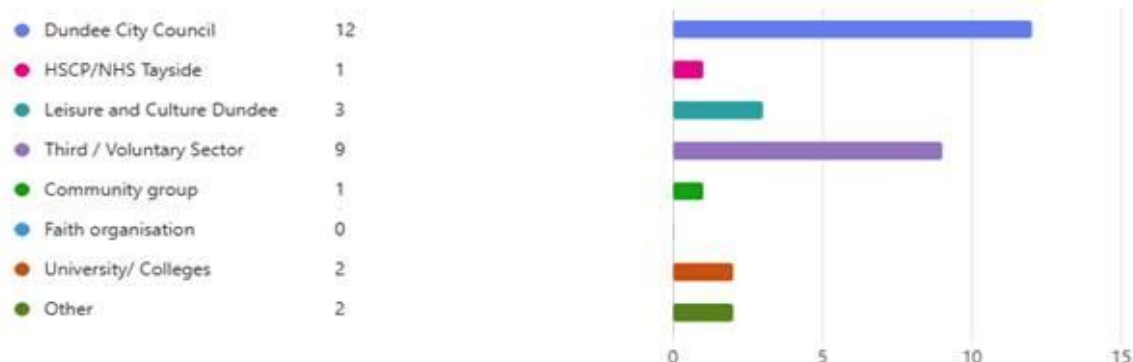
To gather views from a wider range of stakeholders, an on-line survey was produced by the evaluation team and circulated in May 2025. The questions drew on the themes from the student research and a similar survey undertaken to evaluate the Equally Well test site, which pioneered the theory of change. The survey assessed how partners were involved in developments, whether changes had occurred as a result, and in what ways. It explored the role of the LFI team and how this may have supported or influenced improvements.

The survey was sent to members of the Linlathen Steering Group, which generated and coordinated local responses to poverty-related issues. The group was led by the Communities Officer and met quarterly. Approximately 50 individuals were invited to meetings with a cohort of 20-30 attending regularly. Thirty stakeholders completed the survey with all, or almost all, providing comments when prompted.

Who responded?

Results showed that respondents came from a range of organisations and sectors, with Dundee City Council being the most common. This helped corroborate the findings from the research study that a more diverse set of stakeholders was involved than might usually occur through traditional Council-led place-based models.

1. Which organisation do you work/ volunteer for? (select one)

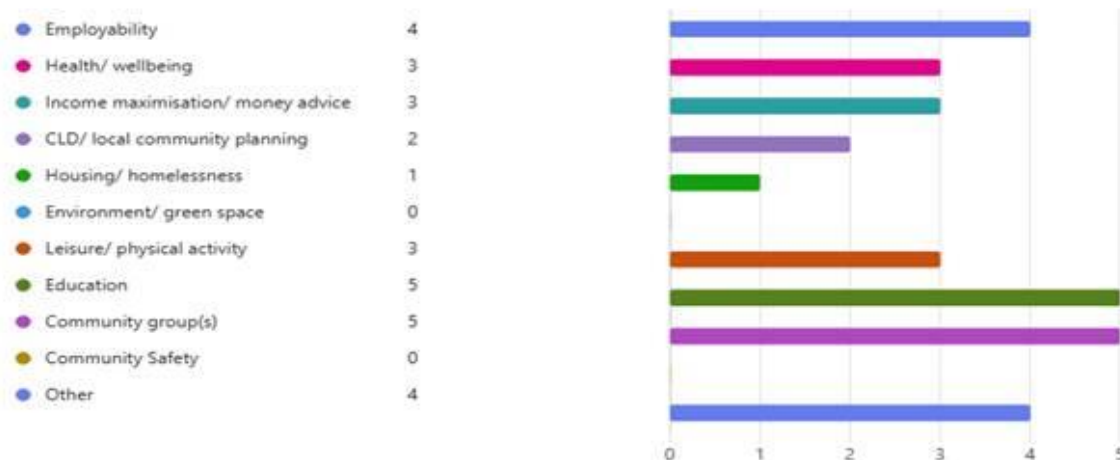


Respondent roles

Respondents had a diverse range of roles, relatively evenly spread across the options provided, with employability, education and community groups being most common, followed by health and

wellbeing, income maximisation, and leisure/ physical activity. This ensured good coverage across the range of factors affecting poverty, directly and through its wider determinants.

2. What is the primary focus of your role? (select one)



A further question explored at what level respondents worked. The majority provided frontline services (17) with almost one-third in a strategic or management role (9) and a smaller number of volunteers/ community members (3). This helped provide a focus on delivery and local action with appropriate escalation of issues when required and a high level of assurance and progress reporting.

How respondents were involved

Results showed that many partners were involved in multiple ways, most commonly as a member of the steering group and through direct delivery of interventions.

4. In what ways have you been involved? (select all that apply)



A subsequent free text question asked respondents to share specific activities or projects they had been involved with. Results showed a broad range of input across the factors and services relevant to people in poverty including money advice, health and lifestyle, education, employability, environmental projects, and access to basic amenities such as food and fuel:

“Support community pharmacy to deliver smoking cessation support...and deliver training to local workers to signpost people into support for stop smoking, link local organisations into my colleagues at public health”

“In collaboration with Dundee Carers we delivered our Family Read Talk and Play Programmes to 15 families with caring responsibilities in the Linlathen Area... we gift books into the community through partners in Linlathen.”

Many reported being involved in multiple activities:

“Litter-picking, community family activities, Columba 1400, toolbox, MUGA, Rowantree PS Crew, public consultations.”

The combination of activities that stakeholders supported covered the lifespan and different demographics including parents, families, children and young people, refugees, those out of work, carers, and older people, with many projects aimed at the whole community.

Awareness of role in tackling poverty

Over three-quarters of respondents reported good self-awareness of the role they played in tackling poverty prior to becoming involved in the LFI; however, this increased for over 90% of respondents because of their participation.

7. Since being involved in the LFI, my awareness of my role in tackling the causes/ effects of poverty has...



Impact of the focus on Linlathen

26 respondents (87%) reported working more in Linlathen due to their involvement in the LFI. A subsequent free text question asked whether there had been any impact on respondents' roles or services due to this focus. There was little evidence of detrimental effects although one respondent commented that they were dedicating less time to other parts of the city. Predominantly, respondents reflected that the effects had been positive, and similar to the results of the research study, evidence showed this was due to increased partnership working, engagement and connections with the community, more networking, awareness of local issues and other services and community projects, and improved signposting:

“We have been able to incorporate the learning from community work and feedback into how our service is delivered and how we plan projects eg childcare concerns, how we frame employability within a broader support journey, understanding the barriers...”

“We have been able to network with other groups and have bigger events and also a better understanding of what's happening in the area and who to contact if we need them”

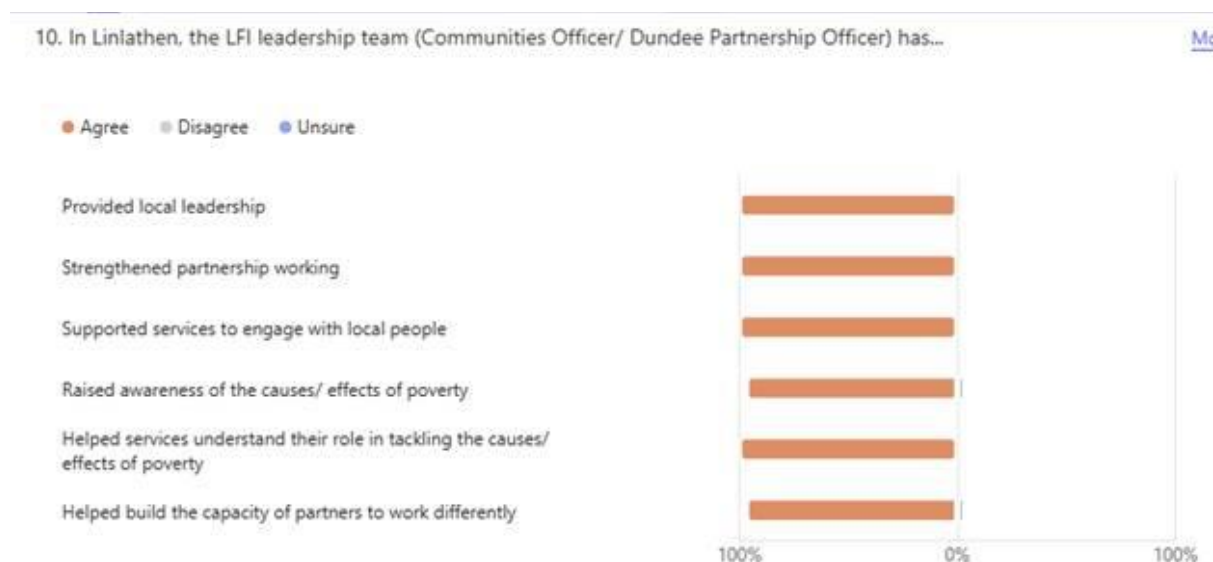
Other positive impacts included bringing additional funding into the area to improve targeting and enable appropriate prioritisation relevant to the level of deprivation experienced by residents:

“Through funding, we have been able to dedicate time and resources to working in Linlathen, to support community members to engage in informal learning and college opportunities”

“We were awarded a specific grant for Lifting Linlathen Investing in Communities. Most of our work is now targeted as a priority at Linlathen residents including Benefit uptake campaigns.”

Role of the LFI team

The following questions relate to the role of the LFI team and whether the tasks and approaches – **how** the intervention was delivered as well as **what** had been done - had supported implementation and involvement from stakeholders, and in what ways. Some of the options correlated with the early stages of the results chain; engagement, raising awareness, and building capacity – whilst others aligned with the process of getting partners involved through local leadership and provision of support.



Results showed that respondents felt almost exclusively that the LFI team had supported partners involved in the intervention in line with the options provided. This indicates that whilst there was equity of investment and shared ownership of the LFI there requires to be a person or team to instigate developments and act as a catalyst for change.

The subsequent two questions explored the role of the LFI team further. First, respondents were asked to give an example of something specific the LFI team had done to support them. Comments included help with project development and accessing funding, support to engage with the community and target activities relevant to need, and increased understanding of the range of barriers that residents faced in different aspects of their life due to poverty.

“Helping me to access funding for local provision and also supporting delivery of local provision.”

“Raised my awareness of the level of work taking place in Linlathen to address poverty and the determinants of health and the powerful impact of the synergy that has been created through the initiative – more than the sum of the parts.”

The most common response was that the team had provided opportunities for networking and making connections, which led to improved awareness and understanding of the range of services and support available, as well as increased signposting and opportunities for partnership working.

“Opportunities for networking and also community asset information gathering. We have been able to build new partnerships through help from the Leadership Team who have actively introduced us to those most likely to benefit from our work.”

“Connected in and available for support and signposting.”

In addition, the learning that took place from being immersed in a small significantly deprived area, and identification of gaps that could be addressed by those present, led to creative responses shaped by a diverse range of partners.

“Facilitated training to gain fresh perspectives and ideas, to build networks within and made services more accessible for families.”

Changes to ways of working

The next question asked respondents to provide information on how the LFI had changed or influenced the way they worked, with the option of stating no change had occurred. Of the thirty stakeholders that completed the survey, two chose this option and another stated that the question was not applicable to them, meaning that 90% of respondents felt there had been changes to their practice. The examples provided showed that these changes were positive, with some relating to previous comments around increased awareness, more focus, better collaboration and partnership working, and more investment.

However, the responses to this question went deeper in terms of the learning experienced by stakeholders and the impact this had on how they viewed and worked with local people and other partners. Increased understanding of what it was like for those living with poverty was mentioned frequently, and how this had transformed the way people worked.

“The LFI helped me build a better picture of how the small decisions I make in my role affect every member of a family and in lots of different ways. It has brought me closer on a personal level with people living in Linlathen which has meant I give that little bit extra in my work to ensure their problems are resolved a bit quicker.”

“With having a better understanding of the area it has helped me change my perception and be more empathetic towards families.”

Not only did stakeholders change their views and provide more compassionate responses to people in poverty they also felt a greater sense of unity, motivation and job satisfaction from being part of a supportive collective with shared goals, inclusiveness and openness to ideas.

“It has given me a real sense of purpose and opportunity... it has spurred me to support people in this community.”

“The LFI influences the way I work by showing me there is a great sense of togetherness, support and forward thinking for the community in Linlathen. I feel very passionate about the work we are doing for young people in the area and that passion is reciprocated from all members of the LFI.”

Has the LFI been worthwhile?

All thirty respondents agreed that all things considered, the LFI had been worthwhile. Final comments showed how much they enjoyed being part of the work and how grateful they were to be part of the collective:

“It has been a great pleasure to work alongside so many who are committed to bringing about change for this community. We shall continue to keep Linlathen as a focus for the work we do...thanks to all for including us.”

Some comments restated the benefits mentioned previously such as improved partnership working and a positive learning environment, whilst others reiterated the importance of the LFI team and the work they supported:

“Inspirational leadership and implementation from the team.”

“The LFI has been instrumental in strengthening collaboration between all partners involved in Linlathen. Excellent work.”

Other comments demonstrated hope that the work would continue as an ongoing approach rather than a time-limited intervention:

“I hope that it remains over the long term to address and prevent intergenerational health inequalities and enable Linlathen to flourish.”

Another respondent felt that even if the formal partnership came to an end the learning experience and course of action supported by the LFI would continue to make a sustainable difference:

“The LFI will end at some point and it will leave a legacy above and beyond all that has gone before. The challenges are huge but the optimism is also huge that I have no doubt lives have been transformed. This will continue long after the LFI has moved on.”

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Linlathen Fairness Initiative was established to focus activity within two SIMD data zones experiencing persistent poverty across multiple domains. Between 2021 and 2024 a small team from the CLD service and Dundee Community Planning Team, with leadership from the local Communities Officer, coordinated a place-based approach. This was supported by the LFI Board and wider governance structures.

The evidence in this report demonstrates that a wide range of interventions were implemented with clear impact on income, employability and wellbeing aligning with the LFI’s core aims. It could be argued that the sheer number of activities from a minimal baseline could be reason enough to adopt the LFI model and focus efforts within a manageable priority geography. But as well as quantity, there was ample evidence that the bespoke nature of the programme impacted on the experience of living in the area and the quality of residents’ lives.

The six intermediate outcomes used to guide planning and evaluation were grounded in evidence on the drivers and effects of poverty. Activities aligned with these outcomes and helped strengthen protective factors such as financial resilience, social connection, and access to services, whilst also reducing risk factors that limit life chances.

The LFI Steering Group and associated sub-groups led by the Communities Officer and supported heavily by a member of the Dundee Partnership team were the driving force for local developments. The groups provided a safe space for stakeholders to share ideas and information, leading to strengthened collaboration and respectful relationships that acknowledged and valued everyone’s contributions and expertise. Some organisations were represented by multiple staff depending on the agenda and area of focus, for example, thematic discussions and planning outreach and events. The level of engagement sustained over the lifetime of the intervention demonstrates strong commitment to collaborative working and reflects the LFI’s emphasis on shared ownership, trust-building, and distributive local leadership.

The logic model and results chain provided a clear framework for planning and measuring change. Evidence showed impact at the early and middle stages of the results chain, including:

1. Services and the community more engaged in tackling child poverty
2. Community and local partners more aware of contributing factors and role in addressing these
3. Improved commitment and capacity from services and the community to tackling child poverty

There was also emerging evidence of impact at the later stage:

4. Changes in service delivery and community behaviours to address contributing factors

While long-term outcomes such as reduced child poverty will take time to fully realise, the LFI has laid strong foundations for sustainable change. The approach has demonstrated that how we work - with values, flexibility and shared leadership - is just as important as what we do.

The information below summarises evidence in terms of alignment with the LFI theory of change.

5.1 Changes in engagement

Engagement was a planned and important part of the LFI process, and although specified as the first stage of the results chain, happened consistently throughout the intervention lifespan. New partners were engaged proactively throughout the implementation process by the LFI team, and particularly the lead officer, as needs and opportunities emerged, leading to creative co-production of local responses and increased participation from residents in activities.

Engagement happened at all levels and in various formats for a range of purposes; for example, with residents in the narrative inquiry and film project, stakeholders in the LFI steering group and logic model events, for specific projects such as the housing consultations and green space improvements, and for dissemination of information and progress reporting. Questions asked during engagement processes did not centre around the overarching long-term goal of how to tackle child poverty but were couched in terms of *“tell us about life in Linlathen”* meaning that residents could frame the agenda relative to their own needs and experiences. Invariably, poverty-related issues such as struggling to make ends meet and the cost-of living, as well as the determinants of poverty, came up as priorities in discussions with residents. However, open-ended questions elicited detail around wider factors affecting people’s lives enabling a more holistic range of responses to be developed, which contributed nonetheless to pathways that help address low income.

The logic model event was heavily supported by the Community Planning Team and Council leaders lending status to this as an early part of the implementation process. This helped engage a broad range of stakeholders and resulted in an uptick in interest in the LFI Steering Group. The Communities Officer used the information gathered at the event to spot opportunities and gaps in local provision and reach out to partners not engaged to build relationships and encourage involvement. Proactive and ongoing engagement helped build buy-in and commitment throughout the LFI lifespan.

Lastly, but importantly, the diverse range of tailor-made activities that formed the local delivery programme across the LFI lifespan were successful in engaging local people. Although there is not a formal baseline to measure against, the evidence section of this report describes the considerable numbers of local people who benefited from a wide variety of new interventions and who also contributed to their delivery as shown by the cohort of volunteers and activists that emerged.

5.2 Changes in awareness

Involvement in the engagement process led to increased awareness – the next stage of the results chain - and again, this occurred across several facets of the LFI. In terms of professional stakeholders, they heard what mattered most to local people, the barriers to positive outcomes that they faced, the impact of poverty on wellbeing and life chances, and the difficulties encountered when trying to access support and services. This led to a reflective process of learning for service providers, particularly as many were involved directly in engagement processes, building relationships with local people and hearing of these challenges firsthand.

There is evidence from the stakeholder survey and focus groups that the impact of this learning extended beyond awareness to increased understanding, and that this could be construed as one of the critical success factors. Putting human faces to the experience of poverty, as well as expanding local understanding of the challenges faced by service providers in meeting needs within limited

resources, helped unify stakeholders and foster creative thinking in meeting shared priorities. The Steering Group led by the lead officer promoted a culture of listening, where more nuanced discussion could take place on how to develop realistic yet innovative responses. It appears that getting to know one another as people in the respectful and safe environment built by the team helped consolidate the local partnership, cultivate a shared vision and goals, and deal with conflict and delays to progress maturely and respectfully. The Coumba 1400 Values Based Leadership training was perceived by some as helpful in accelerating the process of partnership working, strengthening relationships and understanding, and supporting the development of a shared plan.

As well as being a useful tool for engagement, the logic model event raised awareness of the aims of the LFI, the findings of the narrative inquiry, and the links between local objectives and city-wide and national priorities. It shared the community profiles that had been produced by the Council's Research and Information team laying out the deep, diverse and damaging issues affecting the LFI data zones as measured by a wide range of indicators such as anti-depression medication prescribing, emergency admissions to hospital, attendance and attainment levels for young people in the area, school clothing grants, and number of people on means-tested benefits. It shared the intermediate outcomes developed by the LFI Board, mapped the role that stakeholders were already playing in contributing to these, helped participants to understand the breadth of protective factors that need to be in place to help tackle child poverty, the interactions between these, and how they and others "fitted in" to the implementation process. It encouraged new formal and informal partnerships to be initiated, validated by being part of the LFI performance framework, with a greater diversity of membership due to the wide range of stakeholders that attended.

Co-location of staff at the Brooksbank Drop-in led to increased awareness of what partners organisations provided by way of support and fostered more effective partnership working, particularly through soft handovers, assisted access, and holistic wraparound support.

Increased awareness of local people regarding the changing landscape of available services and support was a product of regular and ongoing engagement and outreach, good channels of communication between services and local people, and routine feedback. There is evidence that staff and community members promoting opportunities through outreach and word of mouth, and acting as trusted sources of information, helped to enhance participation and uptake and enabled more disengaged residents to access support.

5.3 Changes in commitment and capacity

The third stage of the results chain is building commitment and capacity for stakeholders to tackle child poverty. As stated above, the logic model event linked existing work to LFI outcomes effectively extending the range of partners with a stake in this work. Furthermore, the analyses of outputs and completed logic model templates were used by the lead officer to encourage others to commit to involvement. Commitment to the LFI agenda was also evident from the sustained and growing involvement in the Steering Group, extending from a very small number of participants at the outset, to regular attendance from 30+ stakeholders.

In terms of building capacity, this arose from the practical assistance given by the LFI team, such as signposting to funding opportunities and support with applications, provision of networking opportunities to enable effective partnership working, and co-ordination of activities, events and engagement processes. The Communities Officer as the lead for the LFI acted as a connector for services to link up with each other and with community groups and third sector stakeholders. This officer also guided the development and planning for tests of change with partners, such as local delivery of courses offered by Dundee and Angus College. It was noticeable that the broad yet in-depth overview the Communities Officer had of the area – of those that lived and worked within it, and through the contribution maps produced at the logic model event - enabled insightful, imaginative and strategic responses. The lead officer, with support from Community Empowerment Workers and the Community Planning Team, was able to spot opportunities and identify gaps, working with others to build their capacity to address these.

Stakeholders in the focus groups and survey shared that they felt more informed, better equipped, and more motivated to target their work in Linlathen and help tackle the factors affecting child poverty. The commitment they felt to the local partnership and the stakeholders within it matched their increased ability to work together in new, equitable, and creative ways. There was a strong feeling that participation and involvement had created a head of steam and that those involved had become “more than the sum of their parts”.

Residents’ capacity to deliver local activities and projects was increased through the provision of formal and informal volunteering opportunities with support to fulfil these, as highlighted in the evidence section of this report. Ability to influence decisions was enhanced through local participation in the Steering Group where residents could share their views and ideas and those of the wider community that formed the network of groups they were involved in, and to which they demonstrated high levels of commitment.

Significantly, as evidenced by the wide range of new activities available within the priority data zones, residents’ ability to access services and activities was enhanced through the considerable uptick in local provision, increasing their capacity to address poverty-related issues and their wider impacts.

5.4 Changes in service delivery and behaviours of community

Changes in service delivery and community behaviours to address contributing factors is a later stage of the results chain where the LFI has influence rather than control. There was evidence that these kinds of changes were happening in several ways with partners involved.

In terms of service delivery, many stakeholders provided evidence that they were now doing things differently either independently or through working with new partners. This included housing, D&A College, schools, Leisure and Culture Trust, and third sector partners such as The Yard and the National Literacy Trust. Changes included working in new ways and more meaningfully with the community and other partners, focusing more on those in need, seeking funding for targeted developments, and applying the changes in attitude that had been instigated by involvement in the LFI to provide more compassionate responses. There was evidence that these changes would be sustained, particularly in terms of the shifts in mindset that had occurred, which would potentially be carried forward in professional roles regardless of which setting they were applied. It should also be noted that supporting attitudinal changes is not necessarily reliant on additional resources but is fostered by being part of a respectful listening culture and “learning by doing”.

Changes in behaviours of community members in the Steering Group ranged from personal growth and development to direct delivery of activities and projects in the locality and equal involvement in decision-making processes. There were reflections from professionals and local people that a degree of cynicism and mistrust existed in the early stages of the LFI process. A shift from this to belief and hope that things could be different was a fundamental and significant stage in the trajectory of change. The positive environment of the Steering Group and associated sub-groups, which took care to celebrate successes however small, and valued each member as an equal and important contributor, created the conditions for change, including in the behaviours and attitudes of those that attended. For example, it was clear from the research undertaken that community representatives felt strong ownership of the LFI and this commitment was accompanied by increased capacity through the skills, confidence, and knowledge they had gained whilst participating.

There was also evidence of behaviour change for individuals benefitting from activities and projects that resulted from the LFI. The evidence section of this report goes into some detail of how these changes looked, including increased participation, improved access to and awareness of services, and positive outcomes such as volunteering, employment, new skills and qualifications, income maximisation, improved social connections, and healthier living. Whilst it is possible to make connections between participation in new opportunities and behaviour change for those directly involved, it is more difficult to evidence impact on the community at large. There is an assumption, for example, that increased availability of new and well-maintained play areas and green spaces will

benefit the wider community and not only those that were involved in their design and development. Without a method of measuring impact on the wider community, evidence can only be anecdotal and observational.

-

5.5 Changes in the later stages of the results chain

This report includes some information that relates to the latter stages of the results chain where the LFI is predicted to have only indirect influence, that is, tackling influences on child poverty such as health and wellbeing, housing, childcare and employment. There was evidence of impact across a few of these areas through individuals entering training or employment, access to the Early Adopter Out of School Care Project, and in future, the scheduled housing developments. Similarly, there is some evidence of progress towards the “end state” of reducing child poverty through the considerable financial gains for individuals and families assisted by money advice services, and the cost of living supported by activities such as “feeding the family” and home energy grants.

However, these improvements in the life circumstances of individuals and families may not have an impact on deprivation and poverty as measured by existing indicators. That is not to say that the LFI contributions are insignificant. There is little doubt that those who saved or earned money, or accessed benefits they were entitled to, will experience a shift towards better financial wellbeing as defined earlier in this report. At the very least, there will be helpful mitigations, even if this does not pull people out of poverty.

Identifying more proximal and sensitive indicators to measure these kinds of changes is a challenge currently being tackled by the multi-agency Engine Room in Dundee. The evaluation activity undertaken to produce this report will provide helpful learning for this process.

6. KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

It is clear from the information provided by delivery agents as evidence of output and impact, and the findings from the research undertaken with stakeholders in the survey and focus groups, that there are multiple factors working in combination that contribute to the successes outlined in this report.

Many of the constituents align with the conclusions of previous evaluation and research studies undertaken for the Equally Well test site in Dundee. This report has not attempted to synthesise or compare findings, but it is worth noting that there are consistencies in the key success factors across both interventions.

The following were consistently identified across the evidence base as prominent contributors to the success of the Linlathen Fairness Initiative. These are not provided in order of importance nor are they independent of one another:

6.1 Focus on low income

Whilst this report describes a wide range of activities and projects and the utility of applying a community-led approach to the process, a consistent thread throughout the initiative has been a focus on addressing both the causes and consequences of poverty, particularly child poverty. The overarching aim of addressing child poverty was emphasised to stakeholders at the outset and throughout the implementation process with a focus on making this pertinent and valid in the context of their roles. It is important not to lose sight of the core aim of interventions such as this, whilst at the same time, recognising that local people’s motivations for participating may vary. Offering a variety of routes to involvement in a non-stigmatising, dignified and inclusive manner has been the bedrock of this work and should be a key principle at all levels and stages of implementation.

6.2 Focus on a small geography

There was evidence that focusing on a smaller geography than usual was not detrimental for the stakeholders involved in terms of resources and capacity; in fact, there were positive impacts around relationship-building, sharing information and knowledge, developing an in-depth understanding of

local services and other assets, and accessing funding based on the level of deprivation experienced by residents in the target data zones. The community profile and infographic produced by the Council's Research and Information and Communications Teams were helpful specifically in providing a case for funding. Whilst the small geography may have been an important factor in relation to this LFI, we cannot assume that there would be no negative effects if multiple LFIs were operating across the city at the same time, particularly as staff and other resources to support this kind of intervention become more scarce.

6.3 Community engagement and involvement

It is essential that future developments of this nature demonstrate strong commitment to community involvement and co-production at all levels. Community engagement should take place at the outset to help set the agenda using general open-ended questions that enable residents to share what matters to them in the broad context the intervention aims. Lived experience of poverty is shown repeatedly to involve more than lack of money (although clearly this is important and requires significant attention), and responses need to be aligned with residents' priorities to build credibility and trust. Community involvement in programme design, development and decisions has been shown to be critical, and this requires to happen in an equitable, value-based manner to ensure commitment and build capacity for community-led responses.

6.4 Diverse programme of activities

There was evidence that the intervention developed, designed and implemented a wide range of activities to help tackle poverty in its broadest sense and meet the expressed needs of local people, and that this positively influenced participation. Whilst there was a focus on a whole family approach, there were opportunities that met the needs of individuals more broadly. Many activities were community-wide and suitable for those with children or not, whilst others were specifically family-focused or targeted at another population group. This responsive, creative and iterative approach supported by a diverse range of stakeholders helped ensure that there was something for everyone, fostering community ownership and resilience more broadly.

6.5 Co-location and the No Wrong Door approach

The co-location of services at the Brooksbank Centre enabled services involved to get to know one another and residents to access multiple forms of support in one place, which ensured a holistic, person-centred approach to service user experience. Signposting and soft handovers fell out from this, which both service providers and individuals found helpful. The No Wrong Door approach ensured that individuals were not turned away based on geography or eligibility, fostering trust and increasing uptake. This model of inclusive, accessible support was central to the LFI's success more broadly and should be considered in future place-based work.

6.6 Strong leadership and support team

There is a clear requirement for a skilled lead officer to act as a catalyst to change. This officer needs to be able to straddle operational and strategic landscapes with the ability to make tackling child poverty relevant and important to a wide range of stakeholders. Key tasks include planning and co-ordination of activities, including community engagement and provision of networking and development opportunities. The officer sets the tone for the local partnership and leadership here needs to be value-based and distributive. The lead officer also provides support for the design and delivery of the place-based programme including tests of change. Doing this effectively requires support at a fieldwork and strategic level, as well as backhouse scaffolding around data, information, measurement and evaluation.

6.7 Local Steering Group

There is strong evidence that a multi-agency steering group with a diverse range of partners acts as an effective driving force for local developments, and as stated above, this needs to involve community members as equal partners. The existence of a steering group is not enough to ensure progress; findings from research with stakeholders show that the culture and atmosphere at meetings are vitally important too, and should incorporate learning, celebration, and respectful interactions to help foster creative responses to problems and issues. It takes time to build an

effective partnership, and understanding that starting small, building on a core membership, and creating space for members to get to know one another is an important part of the implementation process.

6.8 Implementation and evaluation framework

The results chain and theory of change have been evidenced not only as useful tools with which to align activities, but essential for providing a framework for implementation and evaluation, and to act as a blueprint for developments. The trajectory reflected in the results chain is evidence based, as are the intermediate outcomes produced to support the process of change, and any future Local Fairness Initiatives or other complex place-based programmes should seek to use or adapt this model. Additionally, logic model events help achieve several outcomes at various stages of the results chain, be this engagement, awareness, or commitment, and these types of events should therefore be arranged at an early stage of the implementation process.

6.9 High strategic priority and cross-sectoral reporting

This arose more subtly in the information and evidence provided by stakeholders to construct this report. There was a feeling from several stakeholders that involvement in the LFI as a high-priority intervention in the city provided status and a level of freedom and ability to work outwith usual service boundaries. Similarly, the diverse local partnership meant progress reporting at a range of strategic forums, which helped encourage buy-in and creative responses that may not have occurred within more siloed settings. Whether this is a critical success factor or not may become more apparent over time, as learning and findings are shared, and partners are asked to build this way of working into their daily business. Early feedback suggests that strategic visibility and cross-sectoral reporting help drive innovation and commitment.

7. LIMITATIONS

The application of the Local Fairness Initiative in Linlathen involved an enhanced place-based approach by channeling resources at a smaller than usual geography. Interventions such as these do not operate in a vacuum nor do they start completely from scratch and the area was already exposed to some local community planning developments as part of the wider East End ward.

Other external interventions were incorporated into the Linlathen landscape at various stages of the LFI timeframe. Linlathen was selected for a Scottish Government Child Poverty / Employability Pathfinder during the early phase of the LFI with both programmes collaborating closely throughout the period covered by this report. Partnerships with initiatives like What Matters to You, Together To Thrive, and Columba 1400 Value Based Leadership training aligned well with LFI efforts. The benefits to Linlathen residents from these external programmes are closely linked to LFI's enabling role, making it difficult to distinguish their separate impacts.

This evaluation attempted to identify changes resulting predominantly from the existence of the LFI and driven and supported largely by the LFI team. However, given the range of partners and concurrent interventions mentioned above it is impossible to have an evaluation in real-world settings unaffected by other factors and inputs. The evaluation recognises this complexity and suggests it as an enabler for creative, multi-faceted responses supported by the LFI team.

There was no agreed baseline for the LFI apart from indicators used within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, which cannot be used as a reliable measure for the activity taking place over a relatively short period of time. Many of the measures reflected in the community profile produced for the area, whilst useful for building understanding of the range of issues impacting on residents, may be too high level or long-term to be influenced by work taking place on the ground, and/or affected by factors outwith the control of the LFI.

The intermediate outcomes produced by the LFI Board in line with the theory of change provided a framework to measure progress and were available to stakeholders from the outset. However, the

shorter-term outcomes and indicators in this report were derived for the purposes of this evaluation, and evidence retrofitted accordingly. It remains to be seen whether this approach and the evidence of impact conveyed in this report are perceived by commissioners as adequately robust to justify future investment.

There was no independent mechanism to measure impact of the LFI on the wider community. A social survey would indicate whether some of the benefits felt by those directly involved in the development and delivery of the programme and those participating in services, activities and projects were experienced by the community at large.

There is a risk that the stakeholder survey and focus groups may have been subject to respondent bias. However, all stakeholders that completed the on-line survey were regular attendees at meetings and worked closely with the LFI team. There was no attrition, which provides some assurance that the themes and commonalities that emerged from the data were robust. A smaller number of stakeholders responded to the invitation to participate in the focus groups and there is a possibility that these individuals may have had more positive stories to share. The LFI lead officer was present for discussions which could have influenced the conversation.

Lastly, this evaluation was undertaken by an officer with public health, evaluation and research expertise who is an employee of Dundee City Council and therefore cannot be classified strictly as independent. Her public health background, however, provides some assurance that the methods undertaken can withstand scrutiny. The LFI lead officer was closely involved in constructing the report, providing context and additional information to allow evidence-based conclusions to be made. The Community Planning Team officer who drew down and synthesised information in the evidence bank was not heavily involved in the LFI for the timeframe that the evidence refers to. All attempts have been made to tell a performance story that reflects an accurate picture of the implementation process, and which is corroborated by evidence.

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Sincere thanks are given to everyone involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of the Local Fairness Initiative in Linlathen. Partnership working at every level was extensive and, as reflected in this report, the input of and synergy between stakeholders was vital in driving the intervention forward and contributing to its success. We acknowledge specifically members of the community who gave their time generously and without financial recompense, demonstrating their attachment and commitment to the local area.

A list of contributing stakeholders is provided below:

- Community Learning and Development service: Community Health, Youth Work, Community Empowerment, and Adult Learning Teams
- Dundee Partnership and Research and Information teams
- Money Advice Services, DCC
- Housing and Environment services, DCC
- Community groups, local people, activists and volunteers
- Health Inclusion Team Nurses, Occupational Therapy, Community Health Team, DHSCP
- Child Poverty/ Employability Pathfinder and Employability service, DCC/ Scot Gov
- Active Schools, LACD
- Brooksbank Centre
- The Yard
- National Literacy Trust
- Rowantree PS
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Dundee Energy Efficiency Project

- Dundee and Angus College
- What Matters to You/ Columba 1400
- Together To Thrive
- Friends of Linlathen
- The Hub
- Early Adopter Out of School Care initiative
- Dundee Volunteer and Voluntary Action
- NHS Tayside Public Health Team, CAMHS service and Speech and Language Therapy
- Dundee Carers Centre
- Aberlour Trust
- Dundee Rep Dramatherapy Service
- Social Security Scotland and DWP
- Dundee United Community Sports Club and Dundee Rugby Club
- Penumbra
- The Speech and Language Company
- CLD Masters Student, Dundee University
- Community Pharmacy/ smoking cessation
- Police Scotland
- Dundee Bairns/ Dundee Food and Health Network
- Wellbeing Works