



Evaluation of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund: community involvement, social outcomes and success factors



PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Evaluation of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund: community involvement, social outcomes and success factors

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RESEARCH SCOTLAND
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Photo by Coimhearsnachd Bharraidh agus Bhatarsaidh (Barra & Vatersay Community) Limited

Contents

Executive Summary	i
1. Introduction	1
1.1 About this report.....	1
1.2 Evaluation aims.....	1
1.3 Research questions	1
1.4 Methodology	2
1.5 Study limitations	5
2. The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund	6
2.1 Policy context	6
2.2 About the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.....	7
2.3 Applying for RCGF	7
2.4 RCGF monitoring and administration.....	8
2.5 RCGF awards	9
2.6 Intended social outcomes	11
2.7 Intended physical and economic outcomes	13
2.8 Intended outcomes for the focus projects	13
3. Community involvement	17
3.1 Introduction	17
3.2 Approaches to community involvement	17
3.3 Experiences of community involvement.....	25
3.4 Success factors.....	28
3.5 Challenges	30
3.6 Outcomes of community involvement.....	32
4. Social outcomes	35
4.1 Introduction	35
4.2 Theme One: Community identity, networks and aspirations	37
4.3 Theme Two: Access to facilities and services	41
4.4 Theme Three: Safety	45
4.5 Theme Four: Health and wellbeing	46
4.6 Theme Five: Vibrant towns and high streets.....	49
4.7 Theme Six: Employment.....	50
4.8 Wider social outcomes	52

5. Factors affecting project delivery	54
5.1 Introduction	54
5.2 Success factors.....	54
5.3 Challenges	58
6. Project monitoring and evaluation	64
6.1 Introduction	64
6.2 RCGF processes	64
6.3 The RCGF monitoring process	65
6.4 Project approaches to monitoring and evaluation.....	66
6.5 Factors affecting monitoring and evaluation	67
7. Conclusions	69
7.1 Introduction	69
7.2 Key findings.....	69
7.3 Key learning points	72
Appendix 1: Sustainable communities outcomes	78
Appendix 2: Method and research tools	79
Appendix 3: Awards by local authority.....	98
Appendix 4: Draft logic model for regeneration.....	105

List of tables

- 1.1: Profile of 14 focus projects
- 2.1: RCGF awards by year
- 7.1: Monitoring and reporting issues identified

List of figures

- 1.1: Fieldwork interviews
- 2.1: Priority given to expected outcomes
- 2.2: RCGF awards by local authority area
- 2.3: Social outcomes
- 2.4: Intended mix of outcomes for the 14 focus projects
- 2.5: Social outcomes selected by 14 focus projects
- 4.1: Social outcomes selected by 14 focus projects
- 7.1: Working draft logic model

Executive Summary

About this report

The Scottish Government commissioned Research Scotland to conduct research as part of an evaluation of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF). The RCGF is an annual £25 million fund, delivered in partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). The fund supports locally developed regeneration projects to help build sustainable communities.

Since its launch in 2014/15, 138 projects in 29 local authority areas have been recommended for funding, with offers totalling over £138 million¹. The fund is used to tackle inequalities and support inclusive growth in Scotland's most disadvantaged and fragile areas and remote communities. RCGF focuses on funding projects that:

- focus on areas with high levels of deprivation and disadvantage
- deliver large scale transformational change with strong regeneration outcomes
- have the potential to lever additional private sector investment and address market failure
- demonstrate clear community involvement

Projects must align with the Scottish Government's regeneration strategy² and local regeneration plans, contributing to the development of economically, socially and physically sustainable communities³ (see [Appendix 1](#)).

The research aims were to:

- assess whether and how RCGF has achieved its aims to date
- assess community involvement
- assess social outcomes
- investigate factors affecting successful delivery of projects
- investigate factors affecting effective monitoring and evaluation of projects

¹ To date 6 projects have been withdrawn. The total amount of funding offered to 132 projects is £136 million.

² <https://www.gov.scot/publication/achieving-sustainable-future-regeneration-strategy/>

³ See also Annex A of the regeneration strategy for list of supporting outcomes

- generate learning to help ensure future funding rounds deliver as much value as possible, achieve desired outcomes and avoid undesired outcomes

This executive summary presents the key findings by each of these aspects, followed by key learning points.

Social outcomes and community involvement were explored in the context of Scotland’s National Performance Framework indicators – particularly perception of local area; influence over local decisions; social capital and places to interact⁴. The importance of place as being at the heart of realising the full potential of communities and addressing their needs is also emphasised by the Place Principle, adopted by the Scottish Government and COSLA in 2019.

Research method

The research focused on a sample of 14 focus projects, to allow in-depth exploration of social outcomes, success factors and lessons learned. Projects were selected from a short list agreed between Scottish Government and COSLA, with input from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). The projects were selected taking account of geography, award level, project stage, project focus and partners involved. Most of the projects had completed the RCGF funded element of their project, two were ongoing and one had been withdrawn.



The projects focused on types of facility and service, including community space, culture, business and enterprise, heritage, sports, office space, public and civic space, play, equality, tourism and commercial space.

The fieldwork involved interviews with 141 people, including individuals managing RCGF funding, individuals managing the project, partners involved in managing and delivering the project, members of the community who had

⁴ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

been involved in the development of the project, and/ or service users following completion of the project.

The research provides an in-depth understanding of the experiences and outcomes of the 14 focus projects and allows valuable insights to be generated. However, it should not be assumed that the findings are generalisable to all RCGF projects. The research is entirely qualitative. Throughout the report, a simple broad scale is used to describe the rough proportion of participants giving a certain viewpoint:

- all – everyone made this point
- most/ a majority – more than half
- some/ a minority – less than half but more than three
- a few – just two or three participants
- one/ an individual – just one person

Where bullets are used to summarise responses, points are listed in order of frequency mentioned.

Key findings

The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund has been generally successful in supporting locally developed regeneration projects to help build socially sustainable communities. The RCGF has supported and enabled locally developed regeneration projects, encouraged the involvement of local people and communities and helped build sustainable communities.

Most project leads from the sample highlighted that RCGF is a very useful grant, offering significant amounts of money to deliver large projects – which few other funds were able to do. Project leads and partners were pleased that RCGF could fund a significant proportion of the costs for a project, and felt it was often a lever to unlock money from other funders.

In most projects, partners felt that the project may not have happened without RCGF. Some felt that the project may have gone ahead without RCGF, but the project may have been smaller, taken longer, been done in more phases, or been lower quality.

Social outcomes

A key focus of this research was on whether the RCGF had achieved its aims in terms of the social outcomes it intended to bring about. The sections below summarise the main social outcomes achieved by the 14 focus projects, as

reported by the research participants. These outcomes support socially sustainable communities⁵.

When reading this section, it is important to remember that all RCGF projects are different. The RCGF aims to support a wide range of social outcomes, but it is not expected that each project contributes to each outcome. Few projects reported any undesired outcomes. Overall, the research found evidence that most projects were supporting and contributing towards most of their intended outcomes⁶.

Community identity, networks and aspirations

Most of the focus projects had a significant impact on how communities felt about their area. The projects helped to build a positive identity, improve the perception communities had about their area and encourage visitors to the area. Research participants also enjoyed learning more about the history of their area, and investment in local facilities helped people feel valued and worthwhile.

In some projects, community organisations involved in or leading the project have become more sustainable – reporting increased service use, new opportunities to generate revenue, increases in community membership and success accessing further funding sources for future activity. In some projects, the new facilities had helped to develop and strengthen community networks.

Access to facilities and services

Most of the focus projects had provided local people with new or improved places to meet and connect, in some instances this was free of charge. This provided people with opportunities to socialise, develop skills, use services and reduce isolation. Facilities were largely perceived to be well used.

In some projects, facilities provided opportunities for public services to co-locate. Community members found this useful and for public sector organisations it helped build local connections and improve quality of services.

Safety

Overall, project leads, partners and communities felt that the projects helped to create safe spaces. Most facilities were described as relaxing, open and inclusive – welcoming a range of different people. Communities felt safe using new facilities – and enjoyed the better lighting, safe routes and outdoor space, and CCTV. In a few projects, facilities being well used and having better community connections helped people feel safer.

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/achieving-sustainable-future-regeneration-strategy/pages/8/>

⁶ See Section 2.8 of main report for details.

Health and wellbeing

Some projects supported people's mental health by giving people a place to go – to use services or volunteer. This provided some with an opportunity to be part of the community, reducing isolation and improving mental health. There was less evidence of impact on physical health, with the exception of one project which involved new sports facilities and helped improve physical activity levels.

Vibrant towns and high streets

Research participants from some projects indicated that the new facilities, programmes and services helped to develop vibrant, active towns. In some projects, participants indicated that the RCGF funding helped to improve the appearance of towns and high streets, provided a central focal point and encouraged visitors to the area.

In some cases, the investment was felt to have created a domino effect with more investment in other buildings, public realm and streetscaping works, and new services coming to the area. Some research participants reported greater use of local cafes, shops and public transport.

In a few projects where buildings were restored, the building has been nominated for or has received awards. These have helped to raise the profile of the projects and the local community.

Employment

Some projects helped deliver a range of employment and employability options for people in the community. These opportunities arose both through the construction of the new facility, and through service delivery – with local people involved in working in community cafes and bars, community gardens and servicing at events. Some community members have also had opportunities to develop their skills through focused employability support and wider activities to build skills for life, learning and work. The new facilities have also provided valuable volunteering opportunities. Some projects also reported supporting the local economy by providing business space and supporting tourism by encouraging visitors to the area.

Community involvement

The research also explored experiences of community involvement. Across the 14 focus projects, community involvement in assessing need for the projects was strong. In most projects, the community was a driving force in identifying need. In some projects ideas came from the community naturally, through local groups or elected members, while in others needs emerged as part of wider public sector led regeneration, town planning or masterplanning activity.

In almost all projects, communities had opportunities to get involved in planning or designing facilities through public meetings, surveys, drop-in events, design events and workshops. In a few projects, community groups were intensely involved as future service users, in influencing the design of the facility. Some partners indicated that community input brought about good ideas, sometimes around issues that the design team hadn't thought of.

In most projects, community involvement focused on people living in the local area. However, a few were led by communities of interest including local businesses, creative organisations or sports groups.

In most of the projects which had reached service delivery stage, the communities had been involved in influencing service provision in some way. In some projects, community organisations or social enterprises were managing the facility, while in others communities had responsibility for a proportion of revenue costs or led on participatory budgeting. However, there was limited involvement in influencing service delivery in two projects which were largely public sector driven.

Most community members had positive experiences of community involvement and felt listened to, respected and fully involved. In some projects, communities had influenced the final design, level of community use, pricing structure and/ or management arrangements. Some felt they had achieved personal outcomes such as building confidence, developing skills, making connections and feeling more empowered.

In some projects, some community members had mixed views on their experience of involvement. For example, some felt although they had enjoyed the process, their ideas were not taken into account. In a few projects, most of the community members involved in the research expressed strong concerns about their involvement, mainly that they felt they had not had an influence and were unhappy with the outcome.

Community members and partners recognised that community involvement was challenging. It required a lot of work, time and support and people often had different and competing views.

Key success factors for effective community involvement included:

- partners proactively reaching out to communities
- passionate activists and strong community organisations
- time, resources and investing in capacity building
- working in partnership
- being flexible and learning from mistakes

Challenges to community involvement included:

- getting and keeping people involved
- managing expectations
- tight timescales for engagement
- level of responsibility placed on community organisations
- sustainability of community organisations

Factors affecting project delivery

Project leads, partners and community members were asked about the success factors and challenges of delivering their RCGF project.

The main success factors (listed in order of frequency mentioned) were:

- **working in partnership** – the most commonly identified success factor. This was felt to bring expertise, skills and access to further funding during the build phase, as well as opportunities to own, run and manage facilities in sustainable ways with a wide range of services and a wider group of potential service users.
- **a clear vision** – shared among partners, and driven by a passionate organisation or individual.
- **clear decision making processes** – with good planning, project management, governance and risk management.
- **RCGF funding** – which provided large amounts of capital funding not available from many other funders, and helped to unlock access to other funds through reducing risk, validating the project and giving the project a higher profile.

Partners stressed that it was not always easy to work in partnership, but almost all felt that it was worth it as it helped to develop a high quality, sustainable facility.

The main challenges reported were:

- **the nature of the sites and buildings** – with old buildings bringing risks and unknowns, and complex sites presenting issues around ownership, contamination and safety.
- **securing and managing funding** – with challenges lining up different funders to required timelines and outcomes, and costs in most projects being higher than expected.
- **timescales** – some felt that the timescales for spending RCGF were tight, and that more flexibility was needed – particularly to effectively engage communities, enable decisions to be made in partnership and fit with wider regeneration activity.

- **partner capacity** – in some projects, the responsibilities placed on different partners – including architects and community organisations – were a challenge, and a few projects also experienced issues with capacity of contractors.
- **financial sustainability** – a few projects found it a little challenging to balance community use with business focused decision making.

RCGF processes

Most project leads felt RCGF processes were sensible, reasonable and proportionate. Most indicated that the two stage application process worked well, and that the application process was not overly burdensome. A few felt that it would be useful to have: shorter timescales for hearing the results of applications; more feedback on why applications are successful or unsuccessful; and better synchronisation between funders.

Some projects leads (and others responsible for monitoring and evaluation) felt that the monitoring arrangements were proportionate and easy to understand. Some project leads thought that the monitoring and completion forms were not focused enough on impact and outcomes and would welcome more clarity and focus on social outcomes. Few projects had systems and/or resources in place for measuring social outcomes and most found this challenging.

Learning points for future rounds

- **community involvement** – while community involvement in identifying need for RCGF projects was strong, the evaluation identified potential for more to be done to help some RCGF supported projects to be led or strongly driven by communities, beyond the stage of assessing need.
- **a logic model for the RCGF** – there is scope to develop a logic model setting out a rationale and framework for the short, medium and long term anticipated outcomes of the RCGF, and how each project fits in to this. A draft logic model has been produced as part of this research (see Fig. 7.1).
- **funding decisions and processes** – most involved in this evaluation were happy with RCGF processes and felt that RCGF was a very useful source of funding. However, as discussed above, there are some aspects that may benefit from further consideration and development.
- **monitoring and reporting** – the monitoring system could be adapted to encourage project leads to focus on a small number of specific outcomes each project intends to achieve. This would need to be accompanied by guidance and re-designed monitoring forms.

1. Introduction

1.1 About this report

The Scottish Government commissioned research as part of an evaluation of the outcomes and success factors of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF).

The RCGF, delivered in partnership with COSLA, supports locally developed regeneration projects that involve local communities, helping to support and create jobs and build sustainable communities.

This report focusses on findings from the commissioned research, which was conducted by Research Scotland. The purpose of the research was to assess:

- community involvement
- social outcomes
- factors affecting successful delivery and monitoring of projects

The report also includes discussion of physical and economic outcomes, which were assessed separately by Scottish Government⁷.

1.2 Evaluation aims

The evaluation aims were to:

- assess whether and how RCGF has achieved its aims to date
- assess community involvement in RCGF projects
- assess social outcomes of RCGF projects
- investigate factors affecting successful delivery and monitoring of projects
- generate learning about effective and successful monitoring and evaluation arrangement
- generate learning to help ensure future funding rounds deliver as much value as possible, achieve desired outcomes and avoid undesired outcomes

1.3 Research questions

There were four core research questions, explored through this research:

- what have projects achieved in terms of social outcomes and community involvement (in both the project and the asset)?
- what difference has RCGF made to projects?
- what are the key factors affecting successful delivery of projects?
- what are the key factors affecting the quality of project monitoring and evaluation?

⁷ See [Section 2.7](#) of this report

1.4 Methodology

The research focused on 14 projects, to allow in-depth exploration of social outcomes, success factors and lessons learned. The broad approach is outlined below. More detail on study limitations and support from the Research Advisory Group is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

1.4.1 Desktop review

The first stage of the desktop review covered RCGF background information and its policy context. Specifically, this included reviewing the context for the fund; the templates for application, monitoring and completion forms; guidance provided to applicants; and the number and profile of funded projects. The main aim of this review was to set the context for the research and help inform the development of the research tools.

The next stage of the desktop review was an in-depth review of relevant documentation relating to the 14 selected focus projects. Specifically, this included reviewing application forms, monitoring forms, completion forms and any related supporting documentation. This in-depth review helped to inform fieldwork for each project, as well as allowing existing evidence on social outcomes, success factors and lessons learned to be built into the research.

1.4.2 Selecting 14 focus projects

A sample of 14 RCGF projects was identified for in-depth fieldwork to be undertaken with project leads, partners and communities. Projects were selected from a short list agreed between Scottish Government and COSLA, with input from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). The projects were selected from the 95 projects funded through the first four rounds of the fund⁸, to ensure a mix of:

- **geography** – including coverage across Scotland, in both urban and rural areas
- **award level** – taking account of the size of award, and the proportion of the project costs made up by RCGF funding
- **stage** – taking account of when the award was made, and whether the project was ongoing, completed or stalled
- **project focus** – including projects focused on culture, equality, heritage, community space, civic space, training, employment, office space and tourism
- **project partnerships** – including different arrangements and involvement of private, public and third sector organisations

The projects participated in the study anonymously, and a full list of projects taking part is not provided. However, the broad profile of projects is summarised below.

⁸ A note of all projects funded from 2014 to 2019 is available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/regeneration-capital-grant-fund-supported-project-list/>

Table 1.1: Profile of 14 focus projects

Geography	Award Level and % of project costs	Project theme
City	Up to £0.5 m 100%	Cultural, equality and community space
City	£1 - £1.5 m 37%	Community spaces and enterprise
City	£1 - £1.5m 12%	Community space
City	£1 -£1.5m 74%	Public and civic space
Large town	£0.5m -£1m 26%	Sports and community space
Large town	£0.5m - £1m 63%	Community, business, play, sport
Large town	Up to £0.5m 20%	Training, community space, health and equality
Large town	£1.5 - £2m 40%	Office space and heritage
Town	£1 - £1.5m 26%	Cultural and commercial
Town	£0.5m - £1m 29%	Civic, heritage, office space
Small town	Up to £0.5m 66%	Creative and business
Rural	£0.5m - £1m 27%	Community space
Rural	Up to £0.5m 13%	Community space, business and tourism
Rural	£0.5m - £1m 10%	Cultural and community space

Most of the projects (11) had completed the RCGF funded element of their project (which could be up to the entire cost of delivering the project). Two were ongoing, and one had been withdrawn. Most projects (12) were led by local authorities, and two were led by Urban Regeneration Companies.

1.4.3 Fieldwork

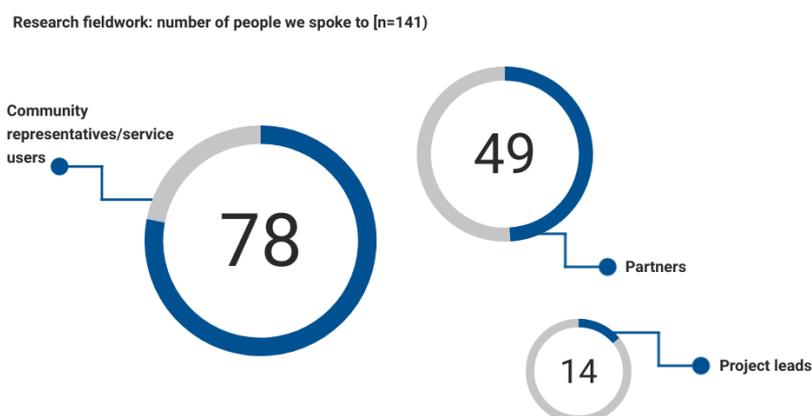
The fieldwork in each project varied, depending on the nature of the project. In each case, the research involved an in-depth interview with:

- the individual who had managed the RCGF funding
- the individual who had managed the project
- partners involved in managing and delivering the project

Where possible, the research also involved face to face fieldwork with members of the community who had been involved with the development of the project, and/ or service users following completion of the project. This occurred in a range of ways including individual and group discussions, with people who had been involved in planning, designing or using the project.

In total the fieldwork involved 141 research participants.

Figure 1.1: Fieldwork interviews



Discussion was undertaken face to face (98), over the phone (39) and by email (4).

The fieldwork was carefully planned to ensure all participants gave clear informed consent to take part in the interview. The participant information sheets, consent forms and discussion guides used are all included at [Appendix 2](#).

1.4.4 Analysis and reporting

Research Scotland undertook a robust analysis of all of the data gathered using a process of 'manual thematic coding', which is an effective approach to interpreting rich, complex data. As part of this process, verbatim quotes and examples were identified to help demonstrate key points. Quotes are used to express the balance of opinion – and are not highly unusual or outlying in terms of the views expressed.

Although the report is qualitative, throughout this report a simple broad scale is used to describe the rough proportion of participants giving a certain viewpoint:

- all – everyone made this point
- most – more than half
- some – less than half but more than three
- a few – two or three participants
- one/ an individual – just one person

Where bullets are used to summarise responses, points are listed in order of frequency mentioned.

It is important to note that the research involved interviews with a sample of partners and community members involved in the projects. Not everyone involved in every project was interviewed.

1.5 Study limitations

The research used qualitative methods to gather an in-depth understanding of the experiences and outcomes of 14 focus projects which had received an offer of grant from the RCGF. However, when reading the report it is important to be aware:

- the findings from the 14 focus projects are not necessarily generalisable to all RCGF projects
- research participants were recruited through the project lead – which has the potential to allow project leads to act as ‘gatekeepers’
- research participants had one-off contact with researchers and may not have felt comfortable talking about all aspects of their experience with someone they had only recently met

The limitations of the research are explored in more detail in [Appendix 2](#).



Photo by John Gordon, Argyll and Bute Council

2. The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund

This chapter explores the background to the RCGF. It also sets out the profile of RCGF funded projects over six rounds of funding between 2014/15 and 2019/20.

2.1 Policy context

Regeneration of Scotland's most disadvantaged, fragile and remote communities is a key priority for the Scottish Government⁹. Certain communities in Scotland have experienced relative deprivation for decades, with some areas facing challenges breaking out of cycles of multiple deprivation and disadvantage related to social, economic, physical and other barriers.

While some areas have seen improvements in reducing deprivation, some have remained the most disadvantaged communities in the country for a very long time. Scottish Government's Regeneration Strategy document *Achieving a Sustainable Future* reaffirmed and reinvigorated the focus on regenerating and strengthening communities across the country. The strategy built on previous approaches, with a stronger focus on community led regeneration, and a commitment to realising the economic potential of communities through focused funding and other support.

Community led regeneration is at the heart of the approach, in recognition that the changes required to build sustainable communities can only be achieved when people themselves play a part in delivering change. Over time the regeneration approach in Scotland has focused on increasing partnership between organisations (both public and third sector); community capacity building and social capital; encouraging the use of community assets; and looking at physical, social and economic regeneration in the round, rather than separately.

The Place Principle¹⁰, launched by Scottish Government in 2019, also recognises the importance of place as being at the heart of addressing needs and realising the full potential of communities.

⁹ Achieving a Sustainable Future: Regeneration Strategy, Scottish Government, 2011

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction/>

2.2 About the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund

The RCGF, delivered in partnership with COSLA, supports locally developed regeneration projects that involve local communities, helping to support and create jobs and build sustainable communities. It provides financial support to projects that will help to deliver large scale improvements to areas of deprivation. It is a capital fund, aimed at providing new or refurbished infrastructure to improve the physical, economic and social environment. It does not provide long-term or revenue funding.

The RCGF focuses on supporting projects that:

- focus on areas with high levels of deprivation and disadvantage
- will deliver transformational change with strong regeneration outcomes – physical, social and economic
- have the potential to lever in private sector investment and address long term market failure
- demonstrate clear community involvement

Projects must align with both the Scottish Government regeneration strategy and its supporting physical, social and economic outcomes, and local area regeneration plans.

The fund has supported a wide range of projects, recognising the breadth of need across Scotland and the varied nature and scale of regeneration interventions required, depending on local circumstances.

The RCGF was launched in 2014/15 with an annual budget of £25 million. Since its launch to 2019/20, more than £138 million has been offered to projects across Scotland.

2.3 Applying for RCGF

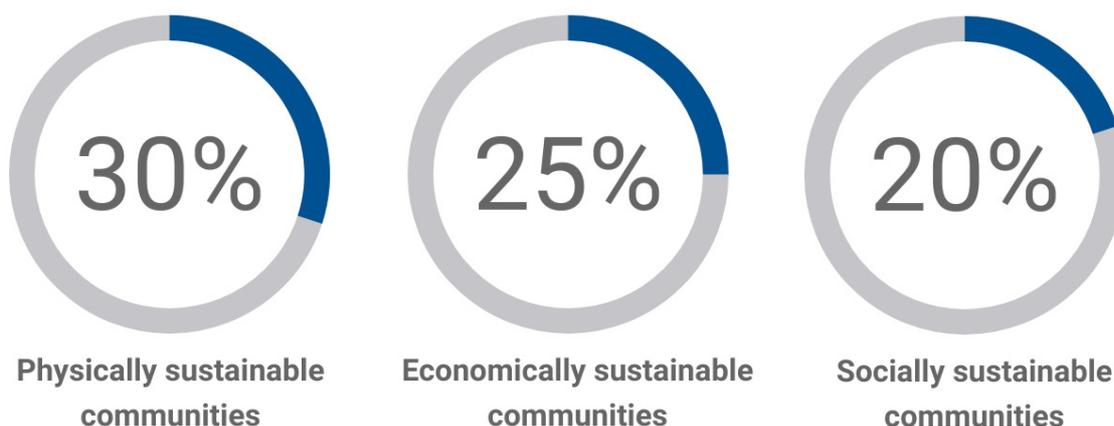
The RCGF is open to all 32 local authorities in Scotland (including those exercising their functions through Urban Regeneration Companies and other Special Purpose Vehicles).

Applications to the RCGF are made over a two-stage competitive process. There is no restriction on the number of applications that may be submitted by each eligible organisation. The RCGF Investment Panel makes recommendations to Scottish Ministers and COSLA leaders on the projects to be offered grant support. The Investment Panel includes ten members from across a range of partner organisations including Scottish Government, COSLA, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum, Scottish Enterprise, Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Scottish Futures Trust, Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED), Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) as well as a local government Head of Planning and a local government Director of Finance. The Panel is co-chaired by Scottish Government and COSLA. There is an Investment

Panel meeting at each of the two application stages, to support the decision making process.

When applications are assessed, a range of factors are taken into account. There are three key project criteria – viability (10%), evidence of community involvement to date (15%) and expected outcomes (75%). The expected outcomes section is split into the subsections of physical, economic and social outcomes – with most weighting going towards physically sustainable communities.

Figure 2.1: Priority given to expected outcomes



Priority is given to projects where the funding can be spent within a single financial year. However, organisations can apply for funding over more than one year – with a clear rationale explaining why this is needed. It is expected that the main infrastructure works, which are the focus of the RCGF support, will be underway within the year (or at least have gone through full procurement, with a successful contractor appointed and a legally binding contract signed). Where grant is requested over more than one year, the grant must be claimed according to the profile provided in the application form.

There is no minimum request, and projects can request 100% of the total eligible project costs – although leverage is considered when assessing applications.

2.4 RCGF monitoring and administration

RCGF funded projects are required to submit regular monitoring forms, in line with an agreed schedule. The routine requirement is that projects must submit a monitoring report at least every four months. At the end of the work, funded projects are also required to submit a final monitoring form and claim. A project completion form is required 12 months after the certificate of completion of building works has been issued.

Funding is drawn down in line with an approved profile and is usually paid in arrears – once projects have spent funds. Funds can sometimes be claimed in advance if projects have entered into a legal or binding contract to deliver the work, and evidence of this contract is provided. Projects are required to claim the RCGF grant in full within the financial year it was offered for.

2.5 RCGF awards

The first round of RCGF funding was in financial year 2014/15. To date, 138 projects have been recommended to receive an offer of grant, totalling over £138 million. This works out at an average of around £1 million, but the amount requested by different projects can vary significantly. In some circumstances, projects can request RCGF funding over more than one financial year.

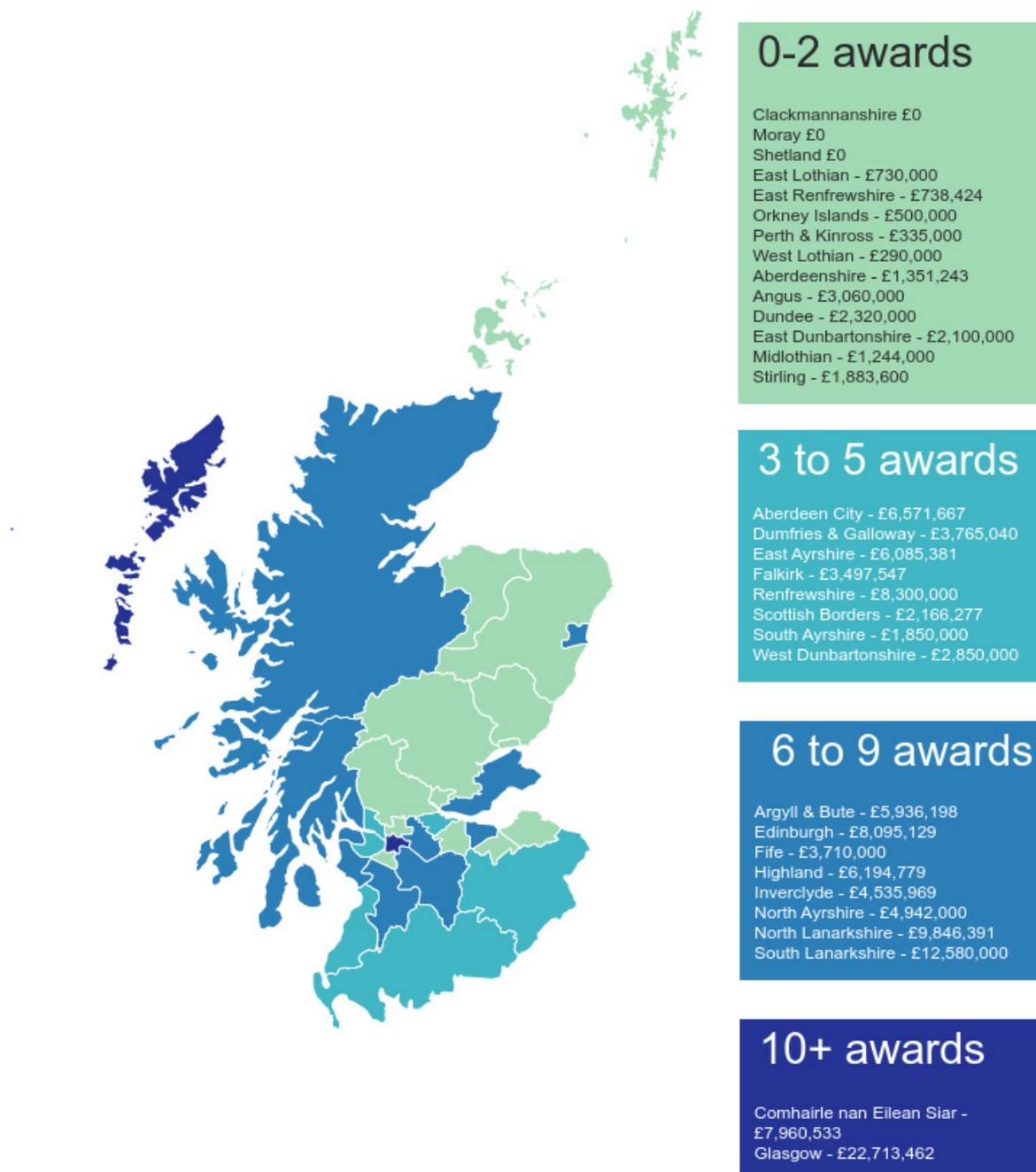
Although 138 projects have been recommended to receive a grant, not all of the projects have been completed and six have been withdrawn (two in Round 3 and four in Round 4). The projects cover 29 of the 32 local authorities in Scotland. A summary of the awards per authority is below. A detailed table and list of projects awarded funding is included as [Appendix 3](#).

Table 2.1: RCGF awards by year

Round	Year	Number of projects recommended for support	RCGF grant awarded*	Average award level	Award range
Round 1	2014/15	22	£27.6 million	£1.25m	£200k - £5.8 m
Round 2	2015/16	18	£14.3 million	£797k	£200k - £1.6m
Round 3	2016/17	26	£23.3 million	£960k	£290k - £2.9m
Round 4	2017/18	29	£23.4 million	£871k	£335k - £2.5m
Round 5	2018/19	25	£27.1 million	£1.1m	£100k - £4m
Round 6	2019/20	18	£20.5 million	£1.1m	£150k - £2.3m

*At the time of writing these are the actual awards for the 132 projects that went ahead – excluding the 6 withdrawn projects.

Figure 2.2: RCGF grant awarded by local authority area¹¹



The RCGF awards are driven by the supply of applications from each local authority area, as well as decisions made by the RCGF Investment Panel in line with the selection criteria (see section 2.3).

The RCGF focuses on projects in areas which have high levels of deprivation and disadvantage. Deprivation and disadvantage can be defined in various different ways. The Scottish Government’s official tool for identifying spatially concentrated areas of multiple deprivation is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Analysis of the correlation between RCGF awarded (in Rounds 1 to 6) and local

¹¹ These figures are for the 132 projects that went ahead, excluding the 6 withdrawn projects.

and national share of deprivation within the local authority (based on the SIMD) is included within [Appendix 3](#).

The analysis shows that some of the areas with the largest national or local share of datazones in areas of multiple deprivation received the largest shares of RCGF. However, there is not a direct correlation. Some areas with relatively low levels of spatially concentrated multiple deprivation also received relatively high levels of RCGF funding. Not all people and communities experiencing disadvantage live in spatially concentrated areas of high multiple deprivation. For example, two thirds of income deprived households do not live in the most deprived areas¹². Some of these local authority areas were in areas facing other types of disadvantage – for example in fragile, remote and rural communities.

This analysis is provided to provide an indication of the correlation between local authorities with high levels of deprivation, and level of RCGF award. It should be noted that disadvantage is a wider concept than deprivation, and that not all people and communities experiencing disadvantage live in areas of high multiple deprivation.

2.6 Intended social outcomes

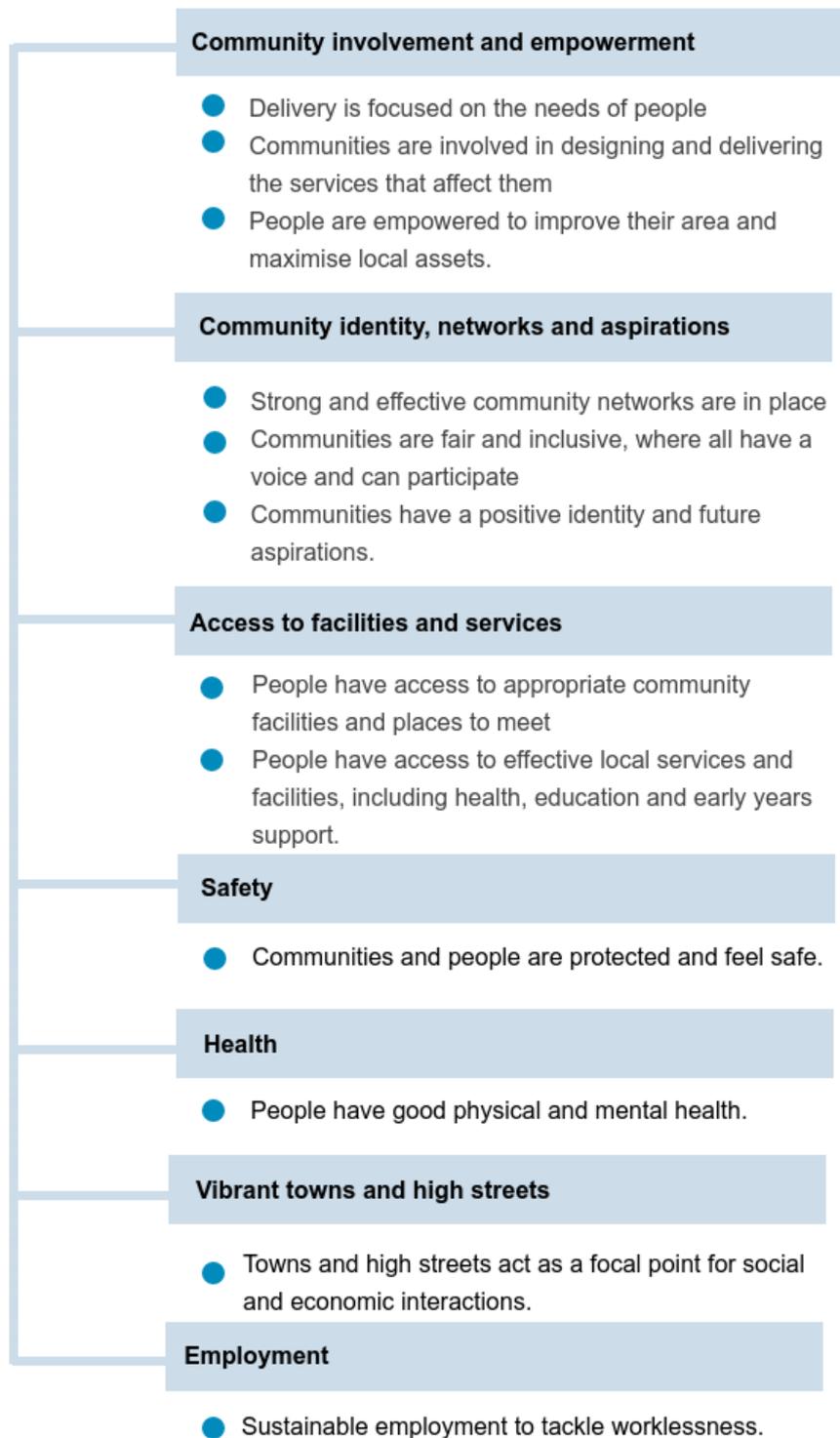
The focus of this research is on social outcomes and community involvement. When organisations applied to the RCGF, they were asked to set out their intended social outcomes. The core social outcomes which the Scottish Government wished to achieve through the RCGF were set out within the guidance accompanying the application form.

These social outcomes related to the Scottish Government Regeneration Strategy 2011 – *Achieving a Sustainable Future*. Together, the overarching purpose was to build socially sustainable communities.

The social outcomes are set out below. For the purposes of this report, they have been sorted into seven themes.

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-interim-guidance-public-bodies/pages/2/>

Figure 2.3: Social outcomes



Across all funded projects, applications suggest that the projects had the potential to support more than 380 community facilities involving around 650 volunteers.

2.7 Intended physical and economic outcomes

While this research has focused on social outcomes, a key purpose of RCGF projects is to bring about physical and economic outcomes.

Scottish Government analysis of application forms for funded projects highlights that across the 132 projects which received an offer of grant from the RCGF to date¹³, there was potential to:

- create or support around 10,700 jobs
- create or support around 6,000 training places
- bring 175 buildings back into use
- create or refurbish almost 200,000 square metres of buildings
- bring just over 100 hectares of land back into temporary or permanent use
- support more than 2,100 businesses or enterprises
- support around 200 energy or renewable projects

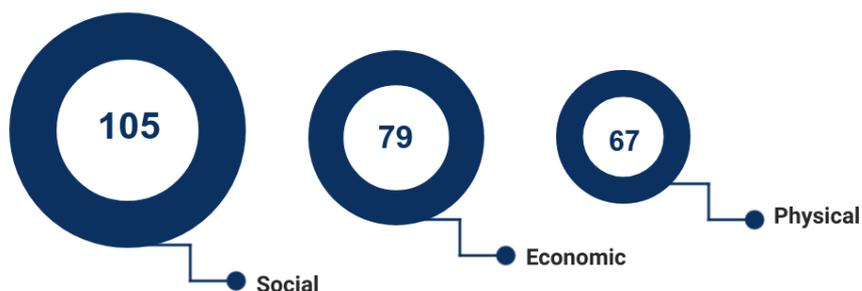
It is important to recognise that projects changed and developed over time, which in some instances may result in changes to the types or levels of projected physical and economic outcomes.

Scottish Government analysis of the available final reports and completion forms for all 132 projects (of which there were very few) found that it was not possible to compare anticipated physical and economic outcomes with actual outcomes.

2.8 Intended outcomes for the focus projects

Each of the 14 focus projects¹⁴ intended to achieve a mix of physical, economic and social outcomes.

Figure 2.4: Intended mix of outcomes - focus projects



In total, each project selected an average of 18 intended outcomes, across the physical, economic and social themes. Projects were therefore working to achieve a wide range of changes in relation to building sustainable communities.

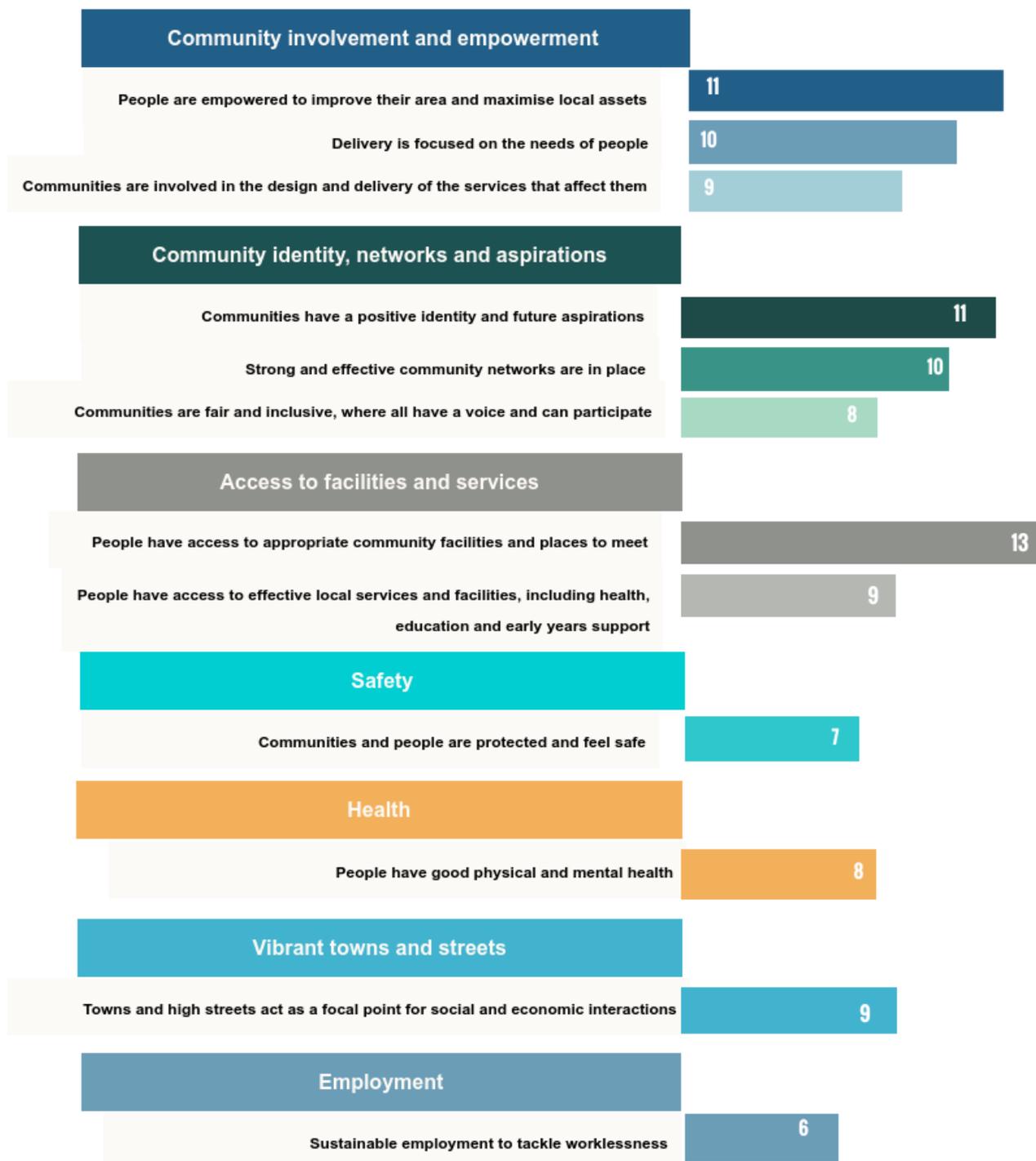
¹³ Data from the six withdrawn projects is not included in this analysis

¹⁴ This analysis excludes one project which did not express its intended outcomes using the regeneration strategy supporting outcomes.

The most commonly selected physical outcomes related to quality design, well planned neighbourhoods, places with a positive appearance, and addressing vacant and derelict land and property. The most commonly selected economic outcomes related to providing access to jobs and support for business, providing learning and development opportunities, building a thriving private sector and social enterprise and ensuring sustainable employment and reduced welfare dependency.

This evaluation focused on social outcomes. Figure 2.5 below shows the social outcomes selected by the 14 focus projects.

Figure 2.5: Social outcomes selected by 14 focus projects



Note: One of the focus projects used its own phrasing to describe its social outcomes. These have been re-allocated to the relevant outcomes by Research Scotland.

Across the projects there was a strong focus on the social outcomes of providing access to facilities, focusing on needs, empowering people and building a positive community identity. There was slightly less focus on sustainable employment within projects' descriptions of their social outcomes.

Most of the focus projects also intended to achieve placemaking outcomes of:

- communities have a positive appearance and are places where people want to live, work and invest (11)
- well planned neighbourhoods and local areas, with accessible facilities and amenities (10)
- people have access to quality public spaces and appropriate greenspace (8)



Photo by Scottish Canals

3. Community involvement

3.1 Introduction

A key requirement for RCGF grant support is for projects to demonstrate clear community involvement. RCGF projects are expected to ensure that:

- delivery is focused on the needs of people
- communities are involved in designing and delivering the services that affect them
- people are empowered to improve their area and maximise local assets

RCGF funded projects are expected to engage with and involve the people living in the communities in the areas the project will be delivered. There is an expectation that local people are involved in planning and developing the project, playing an integral role in deciding how the project will be delivered, how it will meet their aspirations and how they will benefit from the outcomes. The community involvement process should embody the principles set out in the National Standards of Community Engagement. All funded projects had to demonstrate that they had undertaken community involvement activity as part of their application for RCGF.

This chapter explores what community involvement looked like across the 14 focus projects, what went well, and what kinds of challenges had to be overcome.

3.2 Approaches to community involvement

The 14 focus projects took a range of different approaches to community involvement, in terms of:

- assessing need
- planning and designing facilities
- influencing service provision

3.2.1 Assessing need

In most projects, the community was a driving force in identifying need for new or improved facilities. Need was identified from within the community – as part of a community action planning process; as part of a wider consultation on a community land buy-out; as an idea from a local community group; as part of a discussion about what an ideal new facility would look like for an existing service; or through community members expressing to elected members what they wanted to see happening in the area. In one case, need was identified by local sports clubs, and in another by local businesses.

Example: Community driving the project

In one project, a need for a community centre emerged as part of a local community action planning process approximately 8 years before the project opened. The community identified a derelict and dangerous building and planned to buy the building and renovate it.

“We decided to be strategic, take control and do it for ourselves.”

(Community member)

A local community organisation led a detailed options appraisal exercise and consulted with local people and agencies. This involved public events as well as volunteer community researchers leading door to door surveys, knocking on every door in the community.

Community members felt that the process was led by local people, and that without the involvement of local people, the project would not have gone ahead.

“We started by building an engagement process and ended up with a fabulous community building.”

(Community member)

In other projects, need was identified through wider regeneration, town centre planning or masterplanning activity. The process of gathering community views on wider plans for the area resulted in a specific need being identified to save a derelict building, create a community facility or space, or provide local services. A few projects held design events over three or four days, with hundreds of people, to involve community members in plans for regeneration or masterplanning for the area.

Most projects then went through an options appraisal or feasibility study phase. These involved a wide range of activities including public meetings, workshops to explore ideas, and surveys.

Example: Exploring need within the town centre planning process

In one project, need for the project was initially driven through the town centre planning process – involving local people, local business and local elected members. The local authority organised four workshops where key stakeholders were brought together to explore the town's assets and discuss future priorities. There was then a feasibility study for the new facilities, which helped provide the context and rationale for the project and helped get buy in from a wide range of organisations.

Example: Using surveys to demonstrate local demand

In one project, sports clubs identified a potential need for a new facility. An initial survey of 300 people was undertaken to demonstrate local demand for the facility, followed by a second consultation focusing on children and young people. This helped to inform and strengthen the RCGF application.

Following the RCGF award, there was a further survey of 240 local residents, more than 130 members of community and sports groups and over 200 school children. This helped to inform how the project developed and was used in applications for other funding streams. The surveys focused initially on whether additional facilities were needed, and then explored how people would use the facility, when they might use it, and what type of activities and provision should be provided.

Although the need for some projects was very much led by the community, some of the focus projects had to work hard to balance community need with other factors – including the sustainability of the planned facility, the needs of other communities, and the needs of public services. For example:

- in one project, the community was clear that it wanted to save a local building which was a focal point of the town. Although the original idea from the community was for community space, the local authority reviewed its portfolio and also included high end events space, office space and public service space within the building. This ensured it was sustainable and met the needs of communities across the local authority area.
- in another project, people running local businesses were concerned about the closure of an important local building. They achieved funding for a feasibility study to explore the re-use of the building as a community and enterprise hub. However, the group then decided it was unable to continue its involvement at this level as it was such a large undertaking. At the same time, both the local authority and a national partner were reviewing service delivery. The national partner wanted to co-locate with other public services, in a number of accessible locations across Scotland. The main focus shifted to providing office space and service delivery points for public services. The project was driven by the local authority and national partners.

In both of these projects, the facility the communities were concerned about was saved, but the original ideas the communities had about how the buildings would be used changed along the way. In both instances, partners indicated that they felt communities were positive about the outcome.

Example: Design events and options appraisal

In one project, the community consultation activity took place over a long period. Three design events were run involving over 200 people over a four day period. The events took place in 2015. This involved people living in the area, and local businesses – largely creative arts organisations. A masterplan for the area was developed as part of the design event. The ideas taken forward within the project were consistent with the principles identified by the design event, and further shaped by a network of residents' groups, creative businesses and cultural organisations.

Before this, an options appraisal was undertaken in 2011, focused on what should be done with blocks of flats in the area. The residents requested that ground floor voids should be made available for community use. The work to flats is commencing, and the general plan is to have some space for a community gardens project, a pop-up area for community groups (such as arts or health and wellbeing), and a meeting space. This has not yet been decided, and the tender for work to the ground floor is likely to commence in 2019/20.

3.2.2 Planning and designing facilities

In almost all focus projects, communities had opportunities to get involved in planning and designing RCGF funded facilities. The most common way of involving communities in planning and design was through meetings, workshops or drop in consultations which gave communities the opportunity to review plans, 3D models or digitally produced designs and provide feedback.

In some projects, these events were flexible and drop in, with people available to talk through the plans with communities, explain them and hear feedback. In some existing services, models and plans were put on the wall or in the entrance way so that visitors would see them and could talk about them with staff. In a few projects involving large scale regeneration, a local authority officer was based in the area, and able to talk to communities about the plans as they dropped in. In a few projects, there was a focus on informal, sociable opportunities to provide feedback – including barbeques, pop up events, community lunches and on street consultation with shoppers and passers-by. In one project, community members were invited to walks through the grounds of the facilities, to discuss their experiences of the facility and hopes for the future.

In other projects, there was an ongoing structured programme of community involvement in design. Approaches included:

- a series of public meetings – feeding into local democratic decision making structures
- workshops involving community members, architects and partners – exploring design possibilities
- establishing a local community advisory group – which was a consistent group of community members to explore design, and which sometimes had a seat on the project board
- community members (who were members of a community action group) having the opportunity to go on visits to other countries to explore their approaches to civic space
- a series of targeted focus groups and events with specific communities
- a two year research programme involving 50 members of the community

Example: Range of community involvement approaches

In one project, a range of innovative community involvement approaches were used, including:

- a community engagement officer running focus groups and events with specific communities
- involvement with local schools, colleges, businesses and business organisations
- walks through the grounds discussing experiences of the facility and living near it
- social events such as barbeques for local people as informal learning exchanges
- supporting community learning about the history of the facility – in partnership with universities and oral history experts
- a two year research programme built around three themed activity days for 50 people, including a visit to the site and sharing findings
- establishing a local community advisory group, and a range of interest groups

“Everyone had the opportunity to share in the narrative... It created a positive mood and lifted people’s aspirations.”

(Project lead)

One project ran a design event¹⁵ to explore public art elements of their regeneration work. While some felt this worked very well and was interactive and inclusive, a few felt that it was not useful as the local authority had already made up its mind about what would happen. Another project applied for funding to run a design event so that the community could co-design some public realm works, but the funding application was not successful. Instead, the architect attended meetings with local people and used a 3D model to present ideas and gain feedback.

¹⁵ "The Scottish Government published a separate evaluation of community-led design initiatives In Oct 2019 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-community-led-design-initiatives-impacts-outcomes-charrettes-making-places-funds/>

Example: Involving communities on the project board

In one project, the community management group made up of local people was directly involved in planning the new centre. There were also regular consultation events and opportunities for local people to have their say. The community group sat on the project board, alongside key partners, architects, teachers and pupils.

In a few projects, architects worked closely with clubs, groups and organisations who would be using the facility to ensure that the facility met their needs.

Example: Local groups leading design

In one project, sports clubs were able to state their precise requirements for running their activities in the facility, and this was included within the specification.

“I helped to design the room – it has a very high quality floor and a separator to allow different age groups to be in the same room but partitioned off.”

(Community organisation)

Most projects also proactively reached out to a range of local groups, services and businesses. For example, some worked closely to engage local schools – both pupils and teachers – and ask what they wanted from the facility. Some spent time visiting businesses nearby the new facility, or affected by the plans, to gather their views. A few visited local cafes, libraries, chemists and other services to gather service user feedback informally. One project had a community bus which travelled around the area, encouraging people to come in and chat about the plans for the neighbourhood.

“It was good that the local children were able to get involved in the design workshops that were held in the local primary school.”

(Community member)

Some projects also used surveys at this stage, to explore what communities wanted to see in the new facility, and how they might use it.

Example: Involving staff, volunteers, service users and others

In one project, the idea for the new facility came out of a discussion about a “dream” facility, involving staff, volunteers, project users and wider audiences. There were then three drop-in community consultation and design events – as well as more informal consultation. At the events, people from the partner organisations were present, as well as the design team.

Community members were able to see the proposals and give their input. The focus was on what people wanted the building to feel like, and what kind of place people wanted it to be – rather than specific design issues.

The events were useful and gave a good insight into what people wanted from the space. Through the community consultation, the project developed the ideas of a community room, quiet space and gallery space.

“The community was keen on a quiet space, so the architects pushed the archive space up into the roof and created a mezzanine area.”

(Partner)

An outreach worker also visited local businesses and other local groups within a one mile radius of the new facility, gathering their feedback and alerting them of the plans. This helped to connect the project with the local community.

All members of staff and volunteers were also invited to contribute ideas, as people who would be using the space.

Following completion of the work, the project ran another feedback session with community members to explore how the building actually made them feel. Feedback is also gathered through a visitors' book, comments book, social media and evaluation of events. Staff also gather feedback informally through direct contact with service users.

People have also been actively involved in helping to shape the programme of events, leading to a range of targeted programmes for women and minority ethnic people. Three times a year there is a programme planning and reflection day, open to all project volunteers.

Some projects specifically mentioned following the National Standards for Community Engagement, ensuring that their engagement was not a tick box exercise.

“We used the ‘joining the conversation’ approach. It was very much a two way conversation. It was not about fixing the area and moving on, it was about ensuring the structures were in place to continue the conversation.”

(Partner)

In terms of engaging communities, some projects focused on ensuring that community members had all the information that they needed so that they could get involved or hear about the plans. Some used newsletters, social media, and displays in local facilities. For example, in one project they set up a communication

sub group looking at how to communicate with the wider community. There was a regular newsletter and a range of ways to promote meetings and events.

However, in one project the project lead, partners and community members all indicated that communities had no opportunity to get involved in planning or design due to the short timescales within which the local authority had to spend its RCGF funding, and the procurement routes available to the authority at the time. In another project, some research participants indicated that did not feel involved or consulted.

Example: Young people not feeling involved

In one project, pupils indicated that they didn't hear anything about the changes until they got a letter from the school to say the shops were being demolished and they had to take a different route to and from school. Community involvement had been undertaken – with young people and schools – but this group of young people did not feel involved.

“It came like a bolt out of the blue when they came to knock down the old shops at the centre.”

(Community member)

3.2.3 Influencing service provision

Two of the projects included in this research had ongoing RCGF funded work and were not yet at service provision stage. In addition, one of the projects had been withdrawn and a fourth project had completed its RCGF work but had not yet reached service delivery stage.

However, within seven of the ten remaining projects, communities were involved in influencing service provision:

- in five projects a community organisation or social enterprise managed the facility, with a board predominantly made up of local people
- in one project the facility was run by a third sector organisation and the community has responsibility for £16k revenue a year – with priorities decided by the local tenant and resident association
- in one project local people received £30k from a participatory budgeting grant fund (through the Scottish Government) and the community decided how to allocate this – through a community engagement day and community vote

Example: Owning and managing facilities

In one project, a community group had recently been set up to own and manage land and buildings across the area. The idea for the facility came from this new community group, supported by evidence of need identified as part of a wider consultation on a community land buy-out. All the directors on the board are from the local community.

In two of the ten projects, the focus of the new or renovated facilities was largely on public service delivery and there was limited or no community involvement in service provision. In one of the ten project, the community did not have a role in designing local services as the approach was led by a public sector agency.

3.3 Experiences of community involvement

3.3.1 Reasons for involvement

Overall, most community members involved in this research reported that they got involved in the project to give something back to their community. This applied whether people had lived in the area all their lives or were new to the area.

Most research participants said they had a specific reason for getting involved in the project - wanting a particular facility for their area, wanting the facilities to be better for their children, feeling their community was left out or overlooked, concern about the reputation of the area or believing existing facilities were not fit for purpose.

“We felt left behind. The area had never been regenerated and there were no facilities.”

(Community member)

Often within the same project, the reasons for getting involved were very different. For example, in one project community members got involved each for a range of reasons - to get a new play park, improve housing, reduce antisocial behaviour and have a new community centre.

A few community members said that they felt they had to get involved, as nobody else was doing it. A few felt dragged in to more involvement than they had intended, in order that the community view was heard. However others felt that initial involvement inspired them on to further involvement which they were happy with.

3.3.2 Quality of involvement

Most of the community members involved in this research had positive experiences. The main reason for people having a positive experience was that they felt listened to, respected and fully involved.

“We felt genuinely involved and respected for our views. We felt listened to, otherwise people would have lost interest.”

(Community member)

“It made us feel valuable and valued. We helped shape these events.”

(Community member)

A few mentioned that they had a good relationship with other partners, which meant that even if all the ideas put forward by the community were not progressed, everything was carefully considered. This helped people to feel that the involvement would make a real difference.

“It didn’t feel forced, it felt genuine.”

(Community member)

“It gave me a real sense of achievement.”

(Community member)

Some community members had been able to get involved in physically creating the facilities. This gave people a sense of involvement and achievement.

“I loved getting involved in painting the park. I got to learn how to use spray paint. When I look at it now, it reminds me that I was part of the park...”

(Community member)

Some community members mentioned that although they had enjoyed the consultation process, which felt inclusive and involving, they didn’t necessarily feel that their ideas were taken into account. For example, a few community members in one project said their ideas about better accessibility, transport and links to local heritage and history were not taken forward. These community members were not sure if or how these ideas had been considered by the local authority, after the community consultation events. A few said they felt partially listened to, in relation to some decisions.

In a few projects, a few community members and project partners indicated that they felt in some instances decisions were being led by public sector agencies due to other drivers, beyond community need. For example, most partners in one project felt the need for a new facility was largely driven by planning and co-location of services priorities, rather than community needs. All partners interviewed in another project stated the facility was driven by planning and funding, with no community input.

“The intention is not right. The feeling is that they (the council) are bringing something to us.”

(Community member)

In a few projects, most of the community members involved in the research had strong concerns about the community involvement process and did not feel listened to. In one of these projects, this resulted in some participants feeling demoralised, feeling that they had lost local facilities and feeling that the heart had been taken out of the community. In another project this meant that community members were particularly unhappy with the design and management of the new building.

In a few projects, a few community members felt local elected members should have been more involved - attending local meetings and advocating for the community. A few said that the involvement process had made them tend not to trust the public sector, as the things they were promised (like revenue funding, facilities, or support) were not delivered. However, in another project all partners felt that an elected member had been key to the project, listening to community members and advocating on their behalf.

Example: RCGF timescales impacting on community involvement

One project was part of a much larger project, which had an element of community involvement. However, the RCGF funded element of the project had to be built very quickly (before the rest of the centre) to ensure that funding was spent in time. The timescales did not allow for the local community or partners to be involved in planning or design. Community members and partners felt that it had not been designed with community use in mind, and so did not meet their needs.

“The local community had no say in the [facility]. It was built quickly in order that the funding could be spent. It was out of kilter with how the community wanted things to happen.”

(Partner)

The funding did enable a high quality facility to be built, but it was not based on local needs or views.

3.3.3 Balancing mixed views within the community

Community members and partners recognised that community involvement was challenging due to local people often holding different views, or different groups wanting to influence the project in different ways. Some pointed to divisions within the community, which created challenges. For example, in one project one condition of funding related to removing an invasive plant from the site. A local resident objected and threatened to go on hunger strike and tie himself to the plants if anyone tried to remove it. These divisions were overcome, and the project was able to progress. One community member felt that the protest showed that people cared. In another project, a community activist was strongly opposed to the project which caused some challenges, as key decisions were challenged at every stage.

There was recognition that views may change over time. For example, a few community members involved in this research indicated that they did not initially want a new facility – but had since changed their mind.

*“I’ll be honest, the community centre, I didn’t want it.
I didn’t think we had the people to run it.”*

(Community member)

In a few projects, community members and partners indicated that community organisations were not always as open as they could be at involving local people. This meant that they did not always represent the range of views held within the community. One community member was concerned about the level of in-fighting within his local group (a community council), which led them to question whether their type of community organisation structure really works.

3.3.4 Time and effort involved

Some community members involved in the research indicated that even if they had a positive experience of community involvement, it took a lot of work and a lot of their time. Communities often felt they needed to persuade, fight, volunteer and lead – and this was challenging.

*“Fighting takes a lot out of you. I used to have black hair!”
(Community member)*

*“It was a huge ask for volunteers. We had to give up a lot of our time, and it took its toll on some people.”
(Community member)*

*“The engagement process was great, but it was hard work.”
(Community member)*

3.4 Success factors

Project leads, partners and community members identified a number of key success factors in relation to community engagement.

3.4.1 Reaching out

Most projects indicated that going to communities, wherever they are – in groups, shops, businesses, schools and streets – was successful.

3.4.2 Passionate activists

Having strong community activists helped to drive the process. In some projects, activists were already very experienced, often from involvement in other regeneration activity. In other projects, the process of participation provided a learning opportunity and helped to develop skilled and passionate activists.

3.4.3 Strong community organisations

Some projects benefited from having a strong community network and a large number of active volunteers. It helped when there was a strong and focused community group with clear ideas and aspirations about what it wanted.

3.4.4 Capacity building

A few projects emphasised the importance of supporting the community through the process of planning and designing a facility and understanding the decisions that had to be made.

“Don’t underestimate the support that is required to build the capacity of community groups.”

(Project lead)

3.4.5 Taking your time

Some projects emphasised that it takes time to build trust and skills - particularly if relations with the community are not strong, or there is no strong community network. A few also stressed that it takes time to ensure that all voices, not just the loudest, can be heard.

“It worked because the architects had over a year to work with local people. If they had less time they would not have delivered.”

(Partner)

“It took a long time to get people to open up and talk about what they wanted.”

(Partner)

3.4.6 Funding for capacity building and engagement

A few projects managed to access funding to undertake community engagement work, which greatly helped with early engagement stages.

3.4.7 Working in partnership

In a few projects, communities felt it was important for funders and public sector bodies to recognise that communities could not do everything, and that they had to work with third and public sector partners to share responsibilities. For example, in one project, involving a third sector organisation in managing the facility helped to take the pressure off the community. In another project, the local authority seconded a member of staff to support the community organisation and lead the project.

3.4.8 Recognising and learning from mistakes

In most projects, approaches had to be changed along the way. This included approaches to community involvement. For example, in one project the project lead (from the local authority) indicated that initially the local authority told local people what they were going to get, and thought they knew best. The local authority research participant then realised they had not listened to or respected the views of

local people and consequently changed their approach to engagement. The research participant felt that it took a while to gain trust and respect of the local people.

3.4.9 Having a member of staff based in the area

In two projects, local authority staff members were based in the area over the period of the project. This was felt to be very useful, acting as a single point of contact for the council and helping to get the community on board.

“Having a local presence in the area and having someone who knows the local area really helps.”

(Project lead)

3.4.10 Helping communities visualise

Having a 3D model of the building, or visits to other similar sites, helped people to imagine and explain what the space would or could look like, and how it would be used. It helped people to imagine the possibilities and express their views and aspirations.

3.5 Challenges

Community members, partners and project leads also identified key challenges around community engagement with regard to motivation to get involved and managing their expectations. The challenges were interconnected.

3.5.1 Getting people involved

It could be hard to energise and motivate people to be involved, particularly in areas where there was no established community infrastructure. In one area, it was reported that there was lots of ill feeling towards the council and a lack of trust, which made it hard for the authority to work jointly with the community.

“There was a lot of scepticism about the consultation... and a general apathy towards consultations.”

(Partner)

3.5.2 Managing community expectations

Partners found it hard to balance the need to involve communities in early stages of projects – to inform funding applications – with managing expectations when funding had not yet been secured. This could impact on trust and relationships with the community and contribute to consultation burn out.

“It is a struggle to know how far to involve the local community in certain things.”

(Partner)

3.5.3 Balancing community views with other factors

Once projects were funded, there were also other factors to consider alongside community views – such as sustainability, budget, accessibility and environmental factors.

“People didn’t understand that they couldn’t get everything that they wanted.”

(Partner)

3.5.4 Differing views

Community members and partners found it hard to balance the range of different needs, interests and ideas from different people within the community.

3.5.5 Keeping people involved

Some mentioned that once the facility was developed, it could be hard to keep people involved. Some project leads and partners highlighted that people retire from community activity or community groups become less active and one research participant noted the risk of burnout. Part of this is positive, as people feel they have achieved what they wanted. However, it can create challenges around community involvement in service design, delivery or management. Partners also mentioned that as facilities open, staff need to focus on managing the facility which reduces the amount of time they have available for community engagement.

“I would like to see more robust engagement around the centre...

Just now it is ticking over.”

(Project lead)

3.5.6 Level of responsibility

Some community members had concerns that too much responsibility was placed on communities and community organisations, without funding and support. There were examples of community groups deciding that running and managing facilities would be too much pressure, challenge or financial risk. Some partners were keen to explore how to engage communities more meaningfully, taking account of what they can reasonably do, and what they cannot.

“Community involvement needs to be proportionate to what communities can be expected to do.”

(Partner)

3.5.7 Timing

Some found the timescales for involving communities challenging, alongside the requirement to spend RCGF within the financial year. For example, one project had eight weeks to consult local people on one element of the project, which was too short. Another project reported being unable to involve local people in one element of RCGF funded activity because of the timescales for spending the money.

3.6 Outcomes of community involvement

The research identified some examples of community involvement influencing RCGF funded facilities.

3.6.1 Influencing design

In some projects, communities were able to influence facility design. For example:

Examples: Communities influencing facility design

- in one project, the community really disliked the architect's suggested ideas due to concerns about safety. The community ended up with a solution they proposed, and managed to influence the plans.
- in another project, a P6 pupil came up with a practical solution for providing access for bin lorries, avoiding the pedestrianised area. This was taken on board by the project architects.

in one project, community views resulted in a change from a part-demolition part new build project, to a completely new build project.

- in one project, community members identified the need for a community room and quiet space, and this was incorporated into the design. Staff also came up with ideas for some of the spaces within the building.

Partners felt that this led to better outcomes in terms of useable, accessible public spaces. Some partners indicated that community input brought about good ideas, sometimes around issues that the design team hadn't thought of. Being able to action these ideas made a difference to how people felt about the building.

"The involvement of the community was carried through in the design of the building. It is very accessible."

(Project lead)

“We are doing what people asked us to do, by creating spaces and facilities that they said they wanted.”

(Project lead)

“We took ownership of the project and built what we wanted to build.

The [facility] is ours!”

(Community member)

In one area, the name chosen for the centre was suggested by a primary school pupil. In another, the community really disliked the initial name suggested by the local authority and managed to change the name.

3.6.2 Community use, management or ownership of facilities

In a few projects, communities have access to a number of free lets in the facility. For example, in one area the facility is provided for community use free of charge for 12 days a year. In another, the community influenced the pricing strategy. Some community members were concerned that original prices proposed were not affordable and would impact on the ability of local people to use the facility. The pricing strategy was therefore adapted to reflect community views.

In a few projects, communities have taken ownership and/ or management responsibility for facilities or parts of facilities. Project leads, partners and communities recognised that the process of community involvement helped achieve this, as it would be harder for communities to take ownership if they were not involved in designing or planning the facility.

“The community wouldn’t want to take ownership if they hadn’t had their say.”

(Partner)

3.6.3 Outcomes for individuals

Community involvement also brought about some positive at individual level. Some felt that they had got to know more people, become busier, developed new skills, got a new focus in life and built their self-confidence.

“I’m busier and I’ve met a lot of people and made a lot of new friends.”

(Community member)

“It brought me out of my shell. Before I was never able to speak up at meetings, now I am involved with organising the Gala Day.”

(Community member)

"I feel a sense of ownership and pride when I come in."

(Community member)

In some projects, involvement has helped those who were new to the area feel part of the community and encouraged social cohesion in communities which were previously divided. In a few projects, community members felt their involvement had inspired them to connect with their environment and heritage.

A few felt more empowered and confident. One community member indicated that her involvement gave her the confidence to go to college and then on to university.

"It has developed me as a person and academically, and most of all it has improved my children's lives."

(Community member)

In one area, community representatives have gone on to get involved in other projects – such as local planning processes and local democratic participation groups. One community representative said they were no longer scared of the council and now had a more positive relationship with public bodies.



Photo by John MacDougall

4. Social outcomes

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the social outcomes achieved through the RCGF. It is based on interviews with project leads, partners and communities within a sample of 14 focus projects.

The RCGF requires that funded projects contribute to supporting the outcomes within the Scottish Government regeneration strategy – *Achieving a Sustainable Future*. The social outcomes that projects are expected to contribute towards are listed below in Figure 4.1, grouped into seven main themes. Projects select the outcomes they aim to achieve. The number of the 14 focus projects that selected each outcome is also shown.

Figure 4.1: Social outcomes selected by focus projects



The first theme - community involvement and empowerment - is covered in detail in [Chapter Two](#).

4.2 Theme One: Community identity, networks and aspirations

This section focuses on the following outcomes:

- communities have a positive identity and future aspirations (selected by 11 projects)
- strong and effective community networks are in place (selected by 10 projects)
- communities are fair and inclusive, where all have a voice and can participate (selected by 8 projects)

4.2.1 Positive identities and aspirations

Where completed, most RCGF projects had a significant impact on how communities felt about their area.

“It is changing kids’ perceptions of their area. No-one will say anything negative about the place now.”

(Community member)

“The community have generally taken the project to their hearts. There is now a real pride in the community for the building and what it is being used for now.”

(Partner)

Communities highlighted that the new facilities were bringing visitors to the area, who would not have come before. For example, people were coming to neighbourhoods in the outskirts of towns and cities to visit cultural facilities, cafes and sports facilities. In some projects, this was because the facilities had a national or regional importance, in others it was because there was a gap in existing services in the wider area, or the quality of building and services was high. Communities felt that this helped to develop and support local businesses, helping to create a more positive feel in the area.

Some community members felt that in the past, their neighbourhood had a poor reputation, was seen as a tough area or had suffered from a lack of investment. In almost all projects, community members and partners believed that the new facility had helped to build a much more positive identity for the community.

“It did suffer from a bit of a reputation. It was a perception; it wasn’t always true. But people are coming into the area now. That perception is gone.”

(Community member)

“I think it improves the image of the area, and how people feel about coming here.”

(Community member)

Community members also indicated that through learning more about the culture of the area and sharing this with others, they had changed and developed their own perception of the area. For example, one project had art installations developed by a local community art project that depicted the area’s history, and another project integrated the history of the area into the building design and streetscape. This has helped to inspire and motivate people and change how they feel about the area.

“It has changed how people feel about the area. The change is unbelievable. In the garden you could be anywhere.”

(Partner)

“It has helped connect local people to the building and they now recognise the value of heritage and the arts.”

(Project lead)

Example: Understanding the local area and heritage

One project set up a programme for people who want to explore local history and culture, with curators and artists providing expert knowledge and support. This helped people to gain a better understanding of the area and to promote the positive aspects of the locality.

In addition, seeing investment in the area had made some research participants feel valued and worthwhile.

“To have seen the investment in the building has brought people into a sense of value... that the area is worthy and so they are valuable.”

(Community member)

This sense of value and pride was enhanced where community members had been involved in designing and planning the building. For example, community members felt particularly positive and proud when they saw their own suggestions developed within the building. This involvement also meant that people were more able to speak to others about how the area’s heritage and history had been incorporated into the design of the building.

Some of the projects were part of wider regeneration work happening in the area. However, in some of these projects, community members felt that it was the RCGF funded facility itself which had led to positive changes in perception of the community. Some felt that the RCGF funded facility had created a domino effect – with more investment in other buildings, public realm and streetscaping works and new services coming to the area.

“(the town) is becoming a real centre again.”

(Community member)

“The community has a much more positive focus. The community hub is open, the environment is fabulous, there is a good local school and the stigma has gone.”

(Community member)

In some projects, community members believed that more people were choosing to live in the area – pointing to new homes being full and a reduction in empty homes in the area.

However, one community member felt there were still issues with self-esteem in the community. Another was concerned that it may be people from other areas, rather than local people, who used the facility most.

“Some people think the building is too posh for them. That makes me weep.”

(Community member)

4.2.2 Community networks

In some projects, the new facilities had helped to develop and strengthen community networks.

Examples: Developing and strengthening community networks

- a few organisations with better facilities, more space or a new local base as a result of RCGF projects have focused on developing community networks, acting as an anchor organisation and proactively developing links with and between community groups.
- a few projects have more space, allowing more volunteers, and better connection between different volunteer teams. Having a local base has also connected some organisations with new volunteers, who are able to volunteer within their own communities.
- a few projects act as hubs or focal points for community activity, building greater links between groups, avoiding duplication and supporting one another.

In some projects, the new facilities have also helped to improve links between local groups, by providing shared spaces and opportunities for joint working and shared events.

In some projects, the RCGF facility has helped community organisations to become more sustainable. For example:

- some organisations have seen increased service user membership, due to having more space, better facilities, a local base and a wider range of times for service delivery
- some organisations have more opportunities to generate revenue through the new facilities – for example through charging rent, running community cafes or hosting events
- some organisations have seen an increase in community involvement or board membership, as local people see the facility as a clear example of what can be achieved

*“We are delighted when we get 40 or 50 people turning up for our AGM. There is a real buzz, people get a chance to chat and socialise too.”
(Community member)*

Example: Expanding community organisations

One club connected to a new facility previously had one adult men’s team, and one adult women’s team. It now has two adult men’s teams, two adult women’s teams and four youth teams. Originally teams were drawn from all over the region. Now, there is a very strong engagement with local people – particularly for the youth teams. This fits absolutely with the values of the club, which focus on community identity, teamwork and inclusiveness.

A few community organisations indicated that they had been able to access other funding sources, as they became stronger and more sustainable. For example, one community organisation went on to achieve regular funding from Creative Scotland, around the time of completing the RCGF project. Having a fit for purpose building has positively impacted on what they can achieve across all intended outcomes. Another community project received funding from the Scottish Government Climate Challenge Fund, as their new facilities were completed. The facility provides the space for them to develop their climate challenge work, and a strong base from which to engage with the community.

However, in some projects sustained community involvement has been a challenge. More detail on this is provided in [Chapter Two](#).

4.2.3 Fair and inclusive communities

In a few projects, research participants highlighted that the new facility brought together people with lots of different backgrounds. A few felt that through the process of community involvement in the project, they had become more open to hearing and understanding other viewpoints. A few had proactively worked to engage with a range of equality focused organisations.

A few projects specifically focused on fairness and inclusion:

- one project was focused on equality, with targeted work with equalities groups, a vision around equality, and a key role in connecting a range of equality groups in the area.
- one project was specifically designed to be accessible and welcoming for people with mental health needs but is not branded as a place particularly for people with mental health issues. This means that a wide range of people come to the café for its peaceful and welcoming environment. People from across the region are successfully using the facilities in an inclusive way – including people with mental health needs, learning difficulties and physical disabilities, local children, families and workers.

“It is somewhere people can come and feel comfortable, with all different capabilities.”

(Partner)

4.3 Theme Two: Access to facilities and services

This section explores the outcomes in relation to access to facilities and services. It covers two of the regeneration outcomes:

- people have access to appropriate community facilities and places to meet (selected by 13 projects)
- people have access to effective local services and facilities, including health, education and early years support (selected by 9 projects)

4.3.1 Community facilities and places to meet

Most projects which were completed at the time of the fieldwork had provided local people with new or improved places to meet and connect. Most felt that the project had provided a space which had not previously been available.

“If it wasn’t for this place, there wouldn’t be anything for local people to do here.”

(Community member)

The facilities were used by communities in a range of ways – including running community gardens, community cafes and community shops; clubs, lunch clubs, youth clubs and bingo nights; sports activities and fitness classes; and creative activities, arts activities and film nights. Communities also used the spaces to run charitable activities, such as food banks and free meals; and enterprise activities such as plant and book sales.

“It makes our community feel even better, and it gives something for our kids to do.”

(Community member)

In some projects, the facilities provided space which could be rented by communities for social events, parties and celebrations.

Some projects enabled communities to access to the facilities free of charge or for a reduced rate. For example, in one project communities could use the facilities for free for 12 days a year.

Example: Informal free community use

In one project, local people and schools are able to use the sports facilities for free, when they are not being used by paying users. This approach has led to an increase in local people using the facility and more interest in local clubs and organisations.

Projects also provided spaces for people to develop their skills through community based learning opportunities – including classes on healthy eating, cookery, computing skills or English language. In one project, learning new IT skills had helped some older people to build connections with their family in other countries.

Example: Skills development opportunities

In one project, the facility has allowed the community to access skills development opportunities. There are arts classes and workshops in the centre, involving community members and pupils from local schools. The project has also worked jointly with the community learning and development team to provide opportunities for young people aged 16 to 25 who are not in education or employment. There are four-week artistic skills development blocks available for these young people free of charge.

Some mentioned how important it was that the new facilities were within their community, and easily accessible by walking or public transport. This was particularly important for disabled people, people with long term illnesses, young people and older people.

“I can see the importance of providing things in the local area, people will turn up. It is much harder for people if they have to travel into the town centre.”

(Community member)

For some, the facilities helped people to get out of the house. Some research participants reported that otherwise they would not have had a reason to go out.

“Without the centre I wouldn’t leave the house or see anyone.”

(Community member)

“It gets us out of the house... The [facility] gives us a reason to go out and meet people.”
(Community member)

Some indicated that the facilities were very well used and had an active programme of events and activities. For example, one project indicated that it had a footfall of 30,000 in the first 18 months. As well as formal events, the projects were well used informally – for example by nurseries and schools walking through the grounds or groups of friends meeting at community cafes.

“People now have somewhere to go and there is a full programme of events held at the centre throughout the year.”
(Partner)

“There are now places to meet and use local services.”
(Project lead)

Some felt that the new facilities helped to bring the communities together, acting as a focal point for the community. Facilities helped to build a sense of community, providing people with places to eat, watch films, play sports, undertake cultural activities, meet friends and socialise.

“It acts as the focal point in the community. It has been very positive for the community.”
(Community member)

“It brings people from all walks of life together to learn, share ideas and inspire each other.”
(Partner)

In some instances, communities got involved in enhancing and developing the spaces themselves. For example, in one area the local tenant and resident association arranged a bingo night to raise funds for outdoor seating – so that people could make more use of the garden space outside the new facility. In some projects, space was available for community groups to let, allowing for a wider range of services and activities. One project was particularly careful about renting space only to people and groups which shared the project’s values, particularly in relation to promoting equality and fairness.

One project was largely focused on office space provision (with long term public sector lets) and provided limited additional opportunity for communities to meet. This had been an original ambition, but was impacted by resources and availability of janitorial staff at times when communities may wish to use the facility.

4.3.2 Access to services

In some projects, the new spaces provided a hub or shared space in which services could be co-located. This included services such as health, housing, education, social work and employability, as well as nurseries and schools.

Community members said that they found this useful, as they could access a range of services in one place. One community member particularly liked that people could walk into the building, and because of the range of services available, other users would not necessarily know what the person was there for.

Similarly, service providers found it beneficial to be part of a hub. Partners felt that being based with other services helped them to build their joint working arrangements and be more easily accessible for local people. Some found that being based locally helped them to gather and share local knowledge and connect better with the community.

“Being based at the hub has helped us to capitalise on and strengthen local partnerships.”

(Partner)

“We are now at the heart of the community and have access to a wide range of people, as well as local knowledge and intelligence.”

(Partner)

This approach has facilitated joint working initiatives, data sharing and better partnership working.

Some partners felt that having more space available in the right location allowed them to improve the services that they were able to offer, while also being more efficient in their ways of working. For example, in one project having more space available helped to empower staff to deliver training services themselves, rather than contract services to consultants.

Example: Empowering staff and enhancing service provision

In one project, the new facility provided enough space for council staff to provide training for clients, rather than contracting this out to consultants. This has empowered staff and enabled them to provide a more holistic service.

Sharing the building between similar providers has helped improve service provision. Employability services have started to provide joint programmes, share data and work in partnership with other providers. This was facilitated by early ‘speed networking’ sessions between partner staff in the building, to allow them to liaise and better understand each other’s roles. The local authority also hosts a monthly employability practitioners forum, to share good practice between partner agencies.

A few partners also felt that having services based in the same place helped to reduce isolation for staff and provide a better and more modern working environment.

Example: Co-locating services

In one project, local authority services that were previously spread across five different buildings and three towns were brought together. Now the community can access a wide range of local authority services in one place. Bringing local services together has also helped to integrate services, such as housing and social work, improving communication and reducing isolation for staff.

4.4 Theme Three: Safety

This section focuses on the following outcome:

- communities and people are protected and feel safe (selected by seven projects)

Overall, project leads, partners and communities felt that the projects helped to create safe places where the community was supported. Most facilities were described as welcoming, open, relaxed, friendly and easy to access.

“It is a safe, welcoming and inclusive place where I feel safe and cared for, and which offers somewhere where everyone is welcome and treated with respect and care.”

(Partner)

Some spaces were carefully designed to be inclusive and approachable, and to reduce stigma for people accessing services. Some projects have taken measures to ensure that the community would feel safe, such as better lighting, safe play areas and CCTV. One project has worked to nurture the night time economy by providing well-lit spaces for people to use safely in the evenings.

“The centre is more open, it feels safer and better to walk through.”

(Community member)

In some projects, research participants reported that previously they didn't feel they had safe spaces in the community, but that the new facility had helped to change that. In one area there were local issues with sectarianism and some local people said that they could feel the tension and did not feel safe. The project introduced an artistic programme and heritage walks with guided trails and maps, to encourage people to walk in the area. Getting to know the area and people within it has helped community members feel safer.

“Before it felt like a scary place, it feels much safer now.”

(Community member)

“The town centre feels safer. It is more open, and there is less anti-social behaviour now.”

(Community member)

In some projects, facilities have helped people who are new to the area feel safer and more confident. For example, one woman who had moved to Scotland from another country found that the project and facility helped her greatly in terms of building confidence and connecting with others.

“I am a newcomer here, so I was scared. But they welcomed me, and all my fears vanished. I feel safe under this roof.”

(Community member)

In one project, there were reports that the process of community involvement made people feel safer using the area and enjoying it – even though the project itself has stalled.

4.5 Theme Four: Health and wellbeing

This section focuses on the following outcome:

- people have good physical and mental health (selected by eight projects)

4.5.1 Mental health and wellbeing

In some projects, programme delivery was focused on mental health and wellbeing.

Example: Mental health and wellbeing

One building was designed from a mental health perspective, to make sure everyone in the community can take part. People using the new spaces, both indoor and outdoor, commented that their mental health and wellbeing had improved. For some, this was because the new facility provided a place to go and to be part of the community, taking part in shared group and volunteering activities, particularly in places where there was previously no opportunity to do so.

“If it wasn’t for (the centre) I’d go mad... This place has saved me. I’d be lost without it.”

(Community member)

“All of the young people who have been on the courses have said that it benefited their mental wellbeing.”

(Partner)

“It has opened up lots of new opportunities, and it’s on my doorstep.”

(Community member)

For some people who had previously felt isolated, the space helped them transition back into community life.

“It has vastly increased mental health.”

(Community member)

“People in the houses nearby didn’t get out. The buses stop at 6.15. We needed something, primarily for the older ones – although the schools and nurseries are also getting involved.”

(Community member)

A few projects had introduced work which focused specifically on mental health. This included projects focused largely on sports and cultural issues, as well as mental health focused projects.

Example: Health and wellbeing activity

One project runs a weekly story café with a focus on health and wellbeing. The café is designed to be a safe space for people to discuss any issues, and sometimes there are specialist authors to focus on a theme such as mental health or menopause.

Some projects reported that they provided community members with opportunities to volunteer. The opportunity to volunteer, work and develop skills helped provide structure, and contributed to improvements in mental health. Research participants who were working or volunteering said that they felt the buildings provided a good environment and they felt good about coming to the place. It was often particularly important to people that opportunities were available locally and were easily accessible. Some were anxious about travelling, going outwith their own neighbourhood, or walking through other unfamiliar areas.

One volunteer – at a mental health focused project - commented that coming to the facility had a significant impact on her life, providing a place to do supported, structured, positive activity.

“I suffer from major recurrent depressive disorder... I found myself completely lost in despair and depression. Working at [project] gave me back a purpose in life – with structure in my day again; feeling motivated to do something for the first time in a long time; rekindling an interest in learning; feeling satisfaction and pleasure again; and boosting my self-esteem and self-confidence.”

(Volunteer)

In a few projects, staff found the new working environment positive for their mental health.

“I love working in the building! It makes me happy being here and being heard... It’s a place of comfort, inspiration and learning.”

(Staff member)

4.5.2 Physical health

Outcomes around physical health were mostly reported by participants at one project, which focused on sports facilities. Few physical health outcomes were reported in other facilities. However, some partners emphasised that facilities were designed to be accessible through public transport, walking and cycling, which encouraged physical activity.

In the project focused on sports, the new facilities have also provided increased opportunities for people to take part in physical activity. Sports clubs have been able to encourage increased activity by delivering targeted or more inclusive sessions (e.g. women and girls, or football for all). Clubs have also become more accessible by offering a wider range of more flexible sessions. More people have been encouraged to attend and be part of the community through social events, making creative use of new indoor spaces.

“We have increased our training from two one hour sessions, to two 90 minute sessions for each team.”

(Community organisation)

“We are now better able to cater for families. They can all train together, people of all ages.”

(Community organisation)

In one sports club people are now able to join as a social member, rather than a playing member, which has encouraged increased membership and engagement. In another club there is a scheme to allow local community members to play, regardless of their ability to pay.

“We have also tried to accommodate non paying users, local kids. Usually that means they can play up until 6, although some evenings people are using the pitches. They just come off if a paying user comes.”

(Community organisation)

Community members and sports organisations indicated that the new facilities had become popular and were well used. They also felt that there had been a positive impact on young people using the facilities, as they were spending time with positive role models in the adult teams. One sports club found that more young people were engaging in education relating to physical activity, such as Higher PE,

coaching courses or college courses, due to the interest they had developed through the club.

“We stay over the road. At the weekends, he’s always wanting to come round with his dad. There’s a bit of a buzz.”

(Service user)

“I definitely do a lot more physical activity.”

(Service user)

4.6 Theme Five: Vibrant towns and high streets

This section focuses on the following outcome:

- towns and high streets act as a focal point for social and economic interactions (selected by nine projects)

Research participants from some projects indicated that the new facilities, programmes and services helped to develop vibrant, active towns.

New or refurbished buildings helped to improve the appearance of towns and high streets and provided a central point for activities and services. The new spaces have encouraged increased activity in the local area, bringing the community together and encouraging visitors.

“The town seems busier at the weekends. More people are coming into the town.”

(Community member)

One project has been included in signage from the local train station and cycle route and is working to receive brown heritage signs to signpost visitors to the facility. In another project, project partners felt that the development of office space had led to the development of a number of local cafes in the town, and an increase in use of public transport to the town centre.

“There’s something on every week. It is bringing people to the town centre.”

(Elected member)

One project established an active café in a previously derelict building, used by people working in the area. The café has built contacts and networks among people working in the area, including a large number of creative and arts organisations. Approximately 50 creative organisations are now associated with the project or wider arts and music activities in the building.

Research participants also said that they enjoyed using new civic spaces, such as town squares, and they valued the improved aesthetics of their area.

“The town looks and feels so much better. It is modern and friendly.”

(Community member)

Example: Restoring an iconic building

In one project, an iconic building in the town has been restored and brought back into use. As a result, the local authority has also been able to attract funding for street scaping, art works and work on the train station – building an attractive route from arrival in the town by train, through to the facility. The building is very visible in the town and can be seen clearly by visitors arriving by car or train. The building is now a focal point for events involving the local community, such as when the Christmas lights are switched on.

4.7 Theme Six: Employment

This section covers the following outcome:

- sustainable employment to tackle worklessness (selected by six projects)

Monitoring information gathered by Scottish Government indicates that the 14 projects collectively anticipated supporting 413 constructions jobs, creating 143 new jobs and supporting 318 existing jobs. Interviews with project leads indicate that the new jobs include a range of roles in project management, catering, horticulture, culture, event support and administration. It is not clear whether these estimates were realised as not all final reports and completion forms were submitted, which means it is not possible to compare anticipated outcomes with actual outcomes.

The projects have helped to facilitate a range of employment and employability outcomes for people in the community. These include:

- employment for local people as part of the building construction and landscaping
- paid employment or apprenticeships in service delivery and management
- internship opportunities
- volunteering opportunities – in building, landscaping and service delivery
- business space – available to let
- opportunities for skills development

Example: Employment opportunities for local people

One project used a small to medium sized enterprise for the building works, which used local trades as much as possible. They supported the development of over 30 construction jobs during the build and five jobs within the completed facility, three of which are local people.

Another project created two training places and six jobs for local people as part of the construction contract.

The new facilities have provided employment opportunities in service delivery. Local people have taken on roles working in community cafes and bars, community gardens and servicing at events. In some projects, existing staff have expanded their hours due to the new facility, while in others the facility has provided opportunities for new members of staff, apprentices or interns.

The new facilities have also provided valuable volunteering opportunities, which have helped develop people's skills and confidence to do more. In some instances, the opportunity to volunteer or complete an apprenticeship gave people the confidence to move into further positive activity or employment.

"People see the work they've done and have more confidence to try out another wee job."

(Staff member)

Skills development activity at some of the new facilities has also often been focused on skills for life, work or learning – including literacy, English language, translation, digital skills, librarian skills, crafts, gardening and landscaping. Some facilities also offered specific training or the opportunity to gain qualifications, such as CV development or access to CSCS card training.

"I've known all my life that my reading is poor. After coming here, I was advised to go to the Big Plus and that's helped my reading come along."

(Community member)

Community members appreciated having these opportunities available locally so that they could improve employability skills while still meeting other commitments.

"Having this place on your doorstep means that you have time to pick the kids from school."

(Community member)

Having a range of local skills development opportunities was particularly valuable for young people, showing them a wider range of potential careers and helping them to develop a wide range of skills.

Example: Skills development

Partners in one project felt that it offered young people the opportunity to learn new skills, how to make things, build their confidence and self-esteem and meet new people. They felt that the creative activity had been good for mental health and wellbeing. The project was supported by the Community Learning and Development team, who attend and support the activity.

Young people reported that it was beneficial and would help them as they progressed beyond school.

“It will help with my application for university.”

(Community member)

Example: Employability opportunities

One project which provided space for an employability project has supported 1,000 job outcomes since the new facility opened.

A few facilities have been able to offer space for businesses to let, encouraging entrepreneurship and providing an accessible place for people to work. In one project all the business units have been let and there is now a waiting list.

“The business units have given people confidence to set up their own businesses in the area.”

(Partner)

Longer term, one project aimed to set up an incubator programme to attract artists to the facility, who could then set up their own businesses and stay in the area.

In addition, in some areas there has been a subsequent improvement in tourism or business opportunities, because the new facility has attracted more people to the area. For example, one project reported a 30% increase in trade among local businesses over the period of a large project event.

4.8 Wider social outcomes

The projects also contributed to wider social outcomes, which have had a positive effect on the local community. In a few projects where buildings were restored, the building has been nominated for or has received awards. These have helped to raise the profile of the projects and the local community.

In one area, the development of a new RCGF funded centre was part of wider development of a site, which included a small number of new affordable houses in a very rural area. Community members and partners report that this has helped to increase the population base and build a new community. Alongside wider changes locally, this has helped the population to grow - particularly the school population.

However, the success has also increased house and land prices across the area, bringing both positive and more negative impacts in terms of affordability.

Few research participants identified any other negative unintended outcomes. In wider discussion, a few mentioned that new facilities could be perceived to be not for local communities, because they were new, high quality, and attract people from other areas. When discussing experiences of community engagement, in a few projects, community members felt tired out from their experience or demoralised because their views had not been heard.



5. Factors affecting project delivery

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the key factors affecting project delivery. It explores the success factors and challenges, as expressed by project leads, partners and community members. It should be noted that research participants were simply asked to comment on the success factors and challenges that they experienced. Many of the success factors and challenges identified were not unique to RCGF funded projects and could equally apply to other capital programmes.

5.2 Success factors

The main success factors identified by project leads, partners and community members were:

- working in partnership
- clear vision and decision making processes
- RCGF funding

This section covers each of these in turn.

Community involvement was also identified as a key success factor. This is covered in detail in [Chapter Two](#).

5.2.1 Working in partnership

Project leads and partners felt that working in partnership brought the following benefits:

- expertise in managing capital projects, funding bids, design, managing contractors and architects, project management
- expertise and skills in other areas of service delivery
- opportunities to access a wider range of funding sources
- opportunities to own, run and manage facilities in sustainable ways
- opportunities to introduce a wide range of services within the new facility
- access to staff secondment opportunities within the new project
- opportunities to include partners as anchor tenants within the facility

- opportunities to connect with a wider group of potential service users
- clear links to local and national strategies
- greater recognition and awareness of the project

“Working in partnership means that you can pull in expertise and new ways of thinking and delivering.”

(Project lead)

Partnership was felt to be effective when:

- partners have clear, distinct roles
- partners are passionate and have a clear vision
- partners have good relationships and consistent involvement
- partners communicate well
- there is strong support across partners (including, in larger organisations) at senior level
- council teams are well connected and work together

“Everybody was truly passionate about the building and the project.”

(Partner)

Partners stressed that it was not easy to work in partnership, but almost all felt that it was worth it as it helped develop a high quality, sustainable facility.

“If the different services hadn’t worked together, we wouldn’t have got the result.”

(Partner)

However, one partner in one complex project reflected that some partners did not fully share the same vision, and that it may have been better to involve fewer partners, who all shared the same vision.

“A more modest scheme would have worked better. Having multiple partners did not benefit the project in the end, it constrained it.”

(Partner)

Most projects experienced some challenges in partnership working. For example, in one project partners were at the stage of needing to shift their activity from management of the construction phase, to managing the project on a day-to-day basis. This required a change in ways of working for the partners, which took some time. In another project, a change of senior staff in one partner organisation towards the end of the design phase caused tension as some of the decisions were unpicked. A few partners highlighted that working effectively in partnership took time, and that this was challenging within the timescales for spending the RCGF grant.

Example: Working in partnership

In one project, the council, leisure trust and local sports clubs worked together.

The sports clubs saw the advantage of harnessing the council's experience in dealing with capital grants, and it was agreed that the council would lead on grant applications, and then deliver the capital project. The council brought expertise in planning applications, grant applications, tendering and project management.

The project was overseen by a project board involving sports clubs, the council and the leisure trust. There was strong communication and support between the partners. The site remains in council ownership, with the project paying a peppercorn rent and taking responsibility for all repairs and maintenance.

5.2.2 Clear vision and decision making processes

Most projects highlighted that having a clear vision, good planning and a clear programme to manage expectations were critical. Where the vision was shared among partners this helped to build a joint understanding of the purpose of the work.

"We set out a high level programme from the outset."

(Partner)

The vision worked most effectively when it linked well to wider local and national strategies, and the priorities of public sector organisations and services.

Projects also worked well where there was a driving force bringing passion to the project – whether a social enterprise, community group, community activist, council officer or elected member. For example, one project was driven strongly by one very passionate individual – and some partners felt the project would not have happened without them.

"There was a real determination."

(Partner)

Partners and projects leads stressed that this vision needed to be balanced by a realism, and clear understanding of what was feasible. This required an ability to make tough and good decisions.

"We were all very clear about our aims, and realistic about what we can achieve."

(Project lead)

Partners and project leads emphasised the importance of good project management, governance, risk management and project planning to help inform decision making.

5.2.3 RCGF funding

Project leads and partners were asked what difference receiving RCGF funding made to the project. All felt that it was a key success factor in delivering the project, through:

- providing large amounts of capital funding not available from many other funders
- unlocking other funds – for that stage of works, further phases of work, or service delivery
- reducing the risk for other funders, by validating the project and providing security for funders
- strengthening and clarifying local authority funding commitments and giving the project a higher profile within local authority decision making processes

“It made an enormous difference, and it was critical to unlocking the project and making the project happen, when other funders wouldn’t budge.”
(Project lead)

“It provided a rubber stamp and validation for other partners.”
(Project lead)

In most projects, partners felt that the project may not have happened without RCGF.

“I remember it (RCGF) being hugely important when it came through, and that it was on the cusp of not happening without it.”
(Partner)

“It wouldn’t have happened without RCGF.”
(Elected member)

“If RCGF funding had not been available, I am 100% sure that project would not have gone ahead.”
(Project lead)

Some projects felt that their project may have gone ahead without RCGF, but that without the funding the project may have been smaller, taken longer, be done in more phases or been lower quality.

“I think the success would have taken much longer to achieve if at all.”

(Partner)

“We might not have put all of the things in place, especially not to the same specification.”

(Partner)

“Other funders wouldn’t have understood it... All funders found it complex.”

(Partner)

Some found it hard to know what would have happened without RCGF, and where the priority would have fallen in terms of local political processes. In one project, partners felt that the project was so important they would have eventually found a way to do it – but it could have been quite difficult and taken much longer.

In a few projects, RCGF funding opened up access to wider funding opportunities for wider activities – including streetscaping, town centre regeneration, public realm improvements and artwork.

“The project has now acted as a catalyst for the regeneration of the rest of the street and has unlocked private sector investment.”

(Partner)

A few projects emphasised that while RCGF funding was very important, it was also very important to have a range of funders. In one project, the community group had a source of income through local wind turbines, which also helped greatly with sustainability of the project over the longer term.

5.3 Challenges

The main challenges identified by project leads, partners and community members were:

- the nature of the sites and buildings
- securing and managing funding
- timescale
- partner capacity
- sustainability

This section covers each of these in turn.

5.3.1 The nature of the sites and buildings

The main challenge for most partners was the nature of the sites and existing buildings that the RCGF projects focuses on.

Projects focusing on renovating old buildings found that these buildings brought significant risks and unknowns. In a few projects, the original aim was to refurbish the buildings but after more detailed exploration a decision was made to develop new build facilities instead. In some other projects, despite extensive planning and surveying, unexpected issues still arose in relation to the physical fabric of the building. Often these issues came up as works were underway.

“You can do as much survey and pre-development work as you like, but until you get to site you never know what you’re going to deal with.”

(Partner)

These issues added to the cost, and some projects had to compromise on other elements of the work because of this. The issues also meant that the build stage took longer.

Example: Complications due to concrete structure

One project was complicated by a concrete structure which had been built at a time before there was a full understanding of the structural requirements for using concrete. For example, the concrete floors are too thin to safely put holes through without collapse. This led to extra costs in putting services into the building. Costs increased by about £350,000.

Example: Complications due to rot and structure

One project had planned to fit a lift against a gable wall. However, this was actually an internal wall, which had been part of an earlier larger structure. The internal wall structure wasn’t able to support the lift, so extra unplanned work was needed to reinforce it. Rot was also found in the walls and ceilings. This added to the cost, impacted on the way in which funding was directed to design, and added to the overall construction time.

In a few projects, it was the site itself that presented challenges. For example, in one project there were issues with the ownership of the land. It was owned in pockets of land, some by the local authority, some entrusted to the people of the town, and some by other public sector agencies. It was also on a foundry, and the site was contaminated. This meant that instead of owning the land as planned, the third sector organisation rents it. Sorting out these land ownership issues caused a delay.

In another project, the site and building were large and derelict. The costs involved in making the site safe and accessible were significant. There were also concerns about safety, which restricted community access to the site. A plan to bring parts of

the site and building into use and leave other parts derelict was in the end found to be too challenging and risky for the partners to progress with and it has stalled.

*“It was a huge project. If it came off it would have been massive...
Nothing like that exists. It would have had lots of international
interest...”*

(Partner)

However, some project leads and partners indicated that these sites and buildings present challenges, but also helped to build motivation.

*“It (the building) has an intangible magic to it, and it makes people
want to get involved and do more than they normally would.”*

(Project lead)

*“Old buildings come with unknowns, but also high ceilings and
beautiful stonework that you can’t get now.”*

(Partner)

In another project, it was challenging to keep the town centre open and functioning whilst large scale demolition work was happening. This meant the work had to be phased which was more complicated – but otherwise existing retailers may have had to move to other premises and people would not have had anywhere to shop.

5.3.2 Securing and managing funding

Partners, project leads and community members all highlighted challenges around securing funding, beyond the RCGF.

Most projects had a range of funders in place, with different requirements in terms of priorities, funding conditions, timescales and monitoring and evaluation. Often different partners were in control of different pots. Some projects found it challenging to line up all the different funders to the required financial timelines and intended outcomes and had to manage this carefully. Some funders were felt to be more flexible than others. This was a particular challenge where projects were led by small community organisations, which also had to ensure they had core funding in place to continue their everyday work.

In most projects, costs were higher than expected. This was because issues had been found in the building or site, or tender costs were higher than expected. Partners and project leads indicated that early stage surveys undertaken at RCGF application stage were unlikely to be detailed enough to get an accurate estimate of final costs.

This meant that additional funding had to be found or savings had to be made. In a few projects, partners – including private companies – did work pro-bono to make

the project happen. In two projects, a national partner was unable to provide funding and had to pull out of the project due to budget pressures.

“We had to make compromises to try and reach the vision within the budget.”

(Partner)

Example: Aligning funding with purchase of site

In one project, a community interest company had planned to acquire a derelict building and bring it into use. It had agreed the costs for acquisition and improvements and included these in the RCGF application. However, after the application was submitted the company which owned the site decided to sell. There was a competitive bidding process and the community interest company couldn't compete. The community interest company therefore developed its plans in another building in the area – using the RCGF funding and amending the work required to meet the needs of the other building.

5.3.3 Timescales

Some partners had concerns about the timescales for spending RCGF. Some felt that for complex capital works it was important to have more flexibility¹⁶. Some felt that many tasks were required to be completed within what could be too short a period of time – including planning, building control, preparation and agreement of tender documents, tendering, negotiating and signing contracts.

Some pointed to a wide range of issues which can impact on timescales, including:

- effectively engaging communities
- being part of a wider regeneration project
- decision making within large public sector organisations
- harsh climates – particularly in very rural areas
- drawing up complex legal arrangements

“The timeframes are very inflexible.”

(Project lead)

“Maintaining the momentum of projects is really important, but the timescales can kill the energy of communities and the officers who are leading the projects.”

(Project lead)

¹⁶ Guidance for the rounds in which some projects were funded states that all RCGF awarded for the year must be spent or legally committed in that year. More flexibility was introduced in later rounds – see [Application form guidance notes 2017/18](#)

5.3.4 Partner capacity

In some projects, the responsibilities placed on different partners was a challenge. For example, in one project, the architects were concerned that the project wanted to impose a very high level of liability on them, and nearly had to cease involvement. A few local authorities and third sector organisations had concerns that they were managing the project but were not able to cover their costs for this.

There were also issues with the responsibilities placed on community organisations, which meant that two community organisations had to pull out of managing projects. One community organisation pulled out because it reported that the local authority rejected its proposals for managing the facility itself, and another pulled out because of the financial risk. In one other project, the community organisation was very pleased to have a third sector organisation managing the project, to reduce pressure on community volunteers.

There were also issues with capacity of contractors. In one project, the original contractor went into liquidation. In another project, the contractor pulled out due to market uncertainties and the plans had to be reviewed. One project highlighted that some of their contracting had to be done using Scottish Government procurement processes which meant that sometimes they were not able to use local contractors.

5.3.5 Financial sustainability

Finally, there were challenges with sustainability once capital projects were completed. In particular, a few projects found it a little challenging to balance community use of the facility with the need to cover costs and operate as a financially viable business.

“We have struggled to get the right balance. At the end of the day you have to be able to pay the bills.”

(Project lead)

A few partners and community organisations were prepared to pay slightly higher usage costs in order to have the facilities they wanted. However, this caused some issues. For example, in one project one original anchor tenant found that the costs were high compared to other facilities, and they were reviewing their tenancy options for that reason.

Example: Balancing community need with sustainability

One project knew in advance of applying for RCGF that the cost of hiring a facility would be more than three times higher at the new facility, in order to make the finances work. However, they believed that the quality of the facility was worth it and were very happy with the result.

In some projects, partners were working closely together to develop new organisational structures and business plans to make facilities more sustainable over the longer term.

Example: Sustainability

One project which completed in 2015 is continuing to work on future sustainability. In 2019, the grant funding started to taper off. The project now needs to generate enough income to make it sustainable in the long term. Four years after opening, the centre's turnover is 50% traded, 50% grant funded. Some space in the centre is rented out, but this is not enough to cover costs. It can be very challenging to cover management, administration and utilities costs and it has been hard to find additional funding to help with running costs.



Photo by Norman Adams, Aberdeen City Council

6. Project monitoring and evaluation

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores feedback on RCGF processes in general, and then focuses specifically on monitoring and evaluation. It is largely based on feedback from project leads and partners with experience of RCGF processes.

6.2 RCGF processes

Overall, project leads and partners felt that the RCGF processes were sensible, reasonable and proportionate. Most felt that the two stage process worked well, and that the application process was not overly burdensome.

A few would welcome more feedback about why some applications are successful and others are not. A few felt that it would be useful for the RCGF to have more clarity and focus on the social outcomes, with the main priority currently appearing to be the building itself rather than the people who would benefit from it.

A few project leads indicated that they felt the timescales for hearing the outcome of applications was getting longer, and that this created a lot of uncertainty and could be hard to manage.

Most felt that it was a very useful grant, offering significant amounts of money to deliver large projects – which few other funds were able to do. Project leads and partners were pleased that RCGF could fund a significant proportion of the costs for a project, and felt it was often a lever to unlock money from other funders.

“Overall, it was a very positive experience. It is a good source of funding.”

(Project lead)

However, a few felt that major funders (particularly Scottish Government and other government agencies) could do a lot more to synchronise their application and reporting procedures, to reduce duplication. A few funders interviewed as part of this research (as project partners) indicated that they were aware that some felt that application and monitoring processes of funders should be better aligned.

One project lead felt it could be hard for local authorities to ring fence funding for a project which may be dependent on a grant application which may or may not be successful.

One project lead had concerns about the role of the national panel in decision making and would like to see a mechanism through which local authorities could strategically prioritise their RCGF applications. It was felt that this would reduce the planning and consultation time spent on projects which were not successful and allow the national funding to better connect to local strategic priorities.

A few project leads had concerns about the way the fund was allocated between local authority areas. While one felt there was a focus on central belt projects, another felt the awards were not made proportionately to the level of deprivation in the local authority¹⁷.

6.3 The RCGF monitoring process

RCGF funded projects are required to submit regular monitoring forms, in line with an agreed schedule – at least every four months. At the end of the work, funded projects are also required to submit a project completion form.

The monitoring forms cover:

- financial information – grant claimed, project costs, wider funding
- progress – key activities, delays and changes
- outputs and outcomes – progress towards outcomes (a brief commentary, and a table for numerical outputs and outcomes)
- project publicity

There is a final monitoring report and claim that should be submitted one month after the project is completed. All grant should be drawn down at this stage.

The project completion report should be submitted 12 months after the project end date (when the project received its certificate of building works).

Some project leads and partners thought that the monitoring arrangements were fine, proportionate and easy to understand. Most were well used to completing similar forms. However, some felt that the financial reporting requirements were over complicated or that the outputs focused information was complex.

Some felt that the monitoring forms were not focused enough on impact and outcomes. A few felt the monitoring forms were not very meaningful, particularly on social outcomes. A few project leads indicated that it was difficult to measure social outcomes using hard data, and that there should be a stronger focus on collecting people's stories and encouraging a qualitative approach.

¹⁷ See [Appendix 3](#) for analysis of RCGF awards by local authority.

“It can be hard to demonstrate outcomes, like community benefits.”
(Partner)

Funds such as The Big Lottery¹⁸ and Aspiring Communities Fund were highlighted as having more outcomes focused monitoring systems.

6.4 Project approaches to monitoring and evaluation

As projects were developing, project leads and partners largely focused on completing the forms required by their funders. There were a range of strong project management approaches in place to track delivery. For example, some used PRINCE 2 approaches to project management. A few projects were able to tap into specialist expertise within the council to help with financial monitoring and completing the monitoring forms.

As projects were completed, projects began thinking about measuring usage, footfall and outcomes.

Example: Measuring usage

In one project, the local authority used a project management approach which it developed from PRINCE 2. It provided inputs for the council’s internal financial and accountability process. It also fed information into the different monitoring arrangements for each funder.

The project itself uses a simple system for measuring the use of the facility – by adults and young people and men and women.

Some projects had systems in place for measuring social outcomes. A few used anecdotal evidence from speaking with service users. A few had started to ask service users to write down their stories, so that social outcomes could be recorded. A few were just beginning to think about evaluation. For example, in one project there is a plan to pull together a multi-disciplinary team to evaluate the project when it is complete.

In a few projects, work had begun evaluating the activities and services delivered within the new facility. For example:

- in one project, 900 people who had attended a community event at the facility were interviewed. This meant they got detailed feedback from a large number of local people, which was very useful for planning future activities.
- in one project the local authority paid for digital optimisation software to measure the impact of the town centre changes on people’s quality of life.
- in one project, the local authority is about to introduce a monitoring and evaluation system asking the project to report on its impact, outcomes and

¹⁸ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/monitoring-forms/Project-monitoring-form-EoF-i.pdf?mtime=20190109153027>

finances. It asks standard key questions, such as footfall and number of classes. It is linked to locality plans, and the community learning and development plan. This system has been tried out in other facilities and has worked well.

Example: Measuring health and wellbeing impacts

One project which was completed in 2015 undertook an evaluation once the building was complete and the local health improvement team is monitoring the health and wellbeing impacts of the project. This is done through NHS monitoring processes. They monitor participation levels and gather feedback pre and post groups and projects. They produce an annual report that is shared with the facility manager and produce evaluation reports at the end of every project. They use a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) methodology.

6.5 Factors affecting monitoring and evaluation

Project leads and partners were asked what helped and hindered in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

Project leads and partners felt that it was important to:

- involve people experienced in monitoring and evaluation
- be clear about your budget – and include contingencies
- set clear milestones at the outset and stick to these
- hear people's stories to gather evidence of social outcomes

“You need to have as much visibility over your programme and budget as possible. There is no wiggle room. There is an expectation to deliver the milestones on time.”

(Partner)

Some challenges with monitoring and evaluation were also identified:

- different partners can be responsible for different funds
- different funds require different reporting arrangements, at different times – this can result in duplication of effort
- it requires all partners to be open and share information
- some partners may have limited control of the budget, for example if they are administering it for third parties (such as social enterprises and community groups)
- it can be hard to demonstrate social and community outcomes.
- social outcomes can take longer to achieve than physical and economic outcomes
- social outcomes can be affected by much wider factors in society
- evaluation takes time, money and staff resource – all of which are limited

- there is no development fee to cover the cost of support, monitoring and evaluation
- third sector organisations and community groups can need a lot of support around monitoring and evaluation

Project leads and partners felt that it was important to recognise that monitoring and evaluation does require specialist skills. Some project leads received support from funding officers in local authorities to fulfil RCGF monitoring and evaluation requirements. A few said it was sometimes taken for granted that people have the skills to monitor and evaluate their project, but often they need support.

“A lot of support is needed to do monitoring and evaluation properly.

This is often underestimated.”

(Project lead)



Photo by Coimhearsnachd Bharraidh agus Bhatarsaidh (Barra & Vatersay Community) Limited

7. Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out key findings from the research, and key learning points. The key findings are set out under each of the four core research questions for this study.

The key learning points develop ideas for helping to ensure that future funding rounds deliver as much value as possible, achieve desired outcomes and avoid undesired outcomes.

7.2 Key findings

7.2.1 What have projects achieved in terms of community involvement?

Across the 14 focus projects, community involvement in assessing need was strong. In most projects, community was a driving force in identifying need. In almost all projects communities had the opportunity to explore ideas in more depth, through community-led design events, options appraisals and feasibility studies – sometimes led by community groups – and had the chance to get involved in planning or designing facilities.

RCGF projects used a wide range of innovative ways of involving communities, and most felt involved, listened to and respected. In some projects, communities had influenced the final design, the level of community use, the pricing structure and the management arrangements. In most of the projects, communities had been involved in influencing service provision in some way. In some projects, community organisations or social enterprises were managing the facility, while in others, communities had budget responsibility for deciding on community priorities. However, some reported that although they had enjoyed the process, they did not feel their ideas were taken into account.

Community members and partners recognised that community involvement was challenging. It worked best when the idea came from the community and was led by community organisations showed strongest ongoing support. Within the 14 focus projects, the strongest community driven projects were in small rural areas with strong community structures.

When projects were initiated by public sector organisations, these were more successful when partners proactively reached out to communities, and there was the time and resource available to invest in capacity building. Community involvement worked particularly well where there were passionate community activists and strong community organisations.

7.2.2 What have projects achieved in terms of social outcomes?

Most RCGF projects involved in this research had a significant impact on:

- **community identity and aspirations** – most projects had a significant impact on how communities felt about their area. The projects helped to improve the image and perception communities had about their area, built a positive identity and encouraged people to visit.
- **community spaces** – most projects provided local people with new or improved places to meet and connect, in some instances free of charge. This provided people with opportunities to socialise, develop skills, use services and get out of the house. Facilities were largely well used.
- **safety** – communities felt safe using new facilities. Most facilities were described as relaxing, open and inclusive.
- **skills development** – most projects provided opportunities for community members to develop their skills – either through focused employability support; wider activities to build skills for life, learning and work; or volunteering opportunities.

Some RCGF projects have had an impact on:

- **community networks** – the projects helped some community organisations to become stronger and more sustainable - with organisations reporting increased service use, new opportunities to generate revenue, increasing community membership, and success accessing further funding sources for future activity.
- **public services** – in some projects, facilities provided opportunities for public services to co-locate, offering services like health, housing, education, social work and employability from a single building. Community members and public sector organisations found this useful.

- **supported mental health and wellbeing** – some projects have supported mental health by giving people a place to go, an opportunity to be part of the community, reducing isolation, providing volunteering opportunities and enabling access to services.
- **built vibrant places** – some RCGF projects helped to improve the appearance of towns and high streets, provided a central focal point, increased visitors and encouraged visitors to the area. Some reported greater use of local cafes, shops and public transport. Some projects have also supported the local economy by providing business space and supporting tourism.

One of the focus projects had an impact on physical health, with new sports facilities providing more people with more opportunities to be active. Projects also helped to deliver a range of employment and employability outcomes for people in the community. Local people were employed during the construction phase in some projects. Volunteering and some employment opportunities also came from ongoing service delivery. Both during the construction phase and in ongoing delivery, there were opportunities for skills development. Few negative or undesired outcomes were reported.

7.2.3 What difference has RCGF made to projects?

RCGF funding was a key success factor in delivering projects. In most projects, it was felt that the project may not have happened without RCGF. RCGF funding was important in:

- providing large amounts of capital funding not available from many other funders
- unlocking other funds – for the project, or for wider works such as streetscaping, town centre regeneration, public realm improvement and artwork
- reducing the risk for other funders
- strengthening and clarifying local authority commitments

7.2.4 What are the key factors affecting successful delivery of projects?

The main success factors were:

- working in partnership
- a clear vision
- clear decision making processes
- community involvement
- achieving RCGF funding – and through this, other funding sources

The main challenges were:

- the nature of the sites and buildings
- securing and managing a package of funding
- timescales – with some feeling RCGF timescales were tight, and that more flexibility was required to effectively engage communities, enable decisions to be made in partnership and fit with wider regeneration activity
- sustainability – balancing community use with business focused decision making

7.2.5 What are the key factors affecting the quality of project monitoring and reporting?

Overall, the RCGF processes were broadly felt to be sensible, reasonable and proportionate. Some felt that the monitoring requirements were fine, but a few felt they were over complicated and not focused enough on impact and outcomes. Some said they found the discussions about progress with the regeneration team more useful than filling out the monitoring forms.

A few projects had systems in place for measuring social outcomes, and a few were thinking about evaluation arrangements for the future.

The main challenges around evaluation were:

- different requirements from different funders
- challenges demonstrating social and community outcomes
- the timescales required to achieve social outcomes
- attributing social outcomes to the project
- the time, money and staff resource required to monitor and evaluate

7.3 Key learning points

7.3.1 Community involvement

Community involvement in identifying need for RCGF funded projects was strong. This was clearly demonstrated at application stage. The requirement for projects to involve communities from an early stage is helping to enhance the focus on community involvement. However, there is often less focus on demonstrating community involvement as RCGF projects progress.

This research identified potential for more to be done to help some RCGF supported projects to be led or driven strongly by communities, beyond the stage of assessing need. Scottish Government could clarify whether ongoing community involvement is a priority – in planning, design and service delivery. If it is, RCGF processes could be adapted accordingly such as:

- asking projects to highlight whether community involvement and empowerment is a key intended outcome of their work
- asking for more evidence of planned ongoing community involvement if successful, at application stage – and explicitly incorporating this in the guidance and assessment process
- providing funding or linking to other resources which can support community capacity building
- providing more time for funds to be spent, to allow effective and meaningful community engagement in project design and delivery as the project develops after a successful funding application

7.3.2 Describing intended outcomes

The logic of funds like RCGF is that physical regeneration helps to bring about wider, longer term economic and social outcomes.

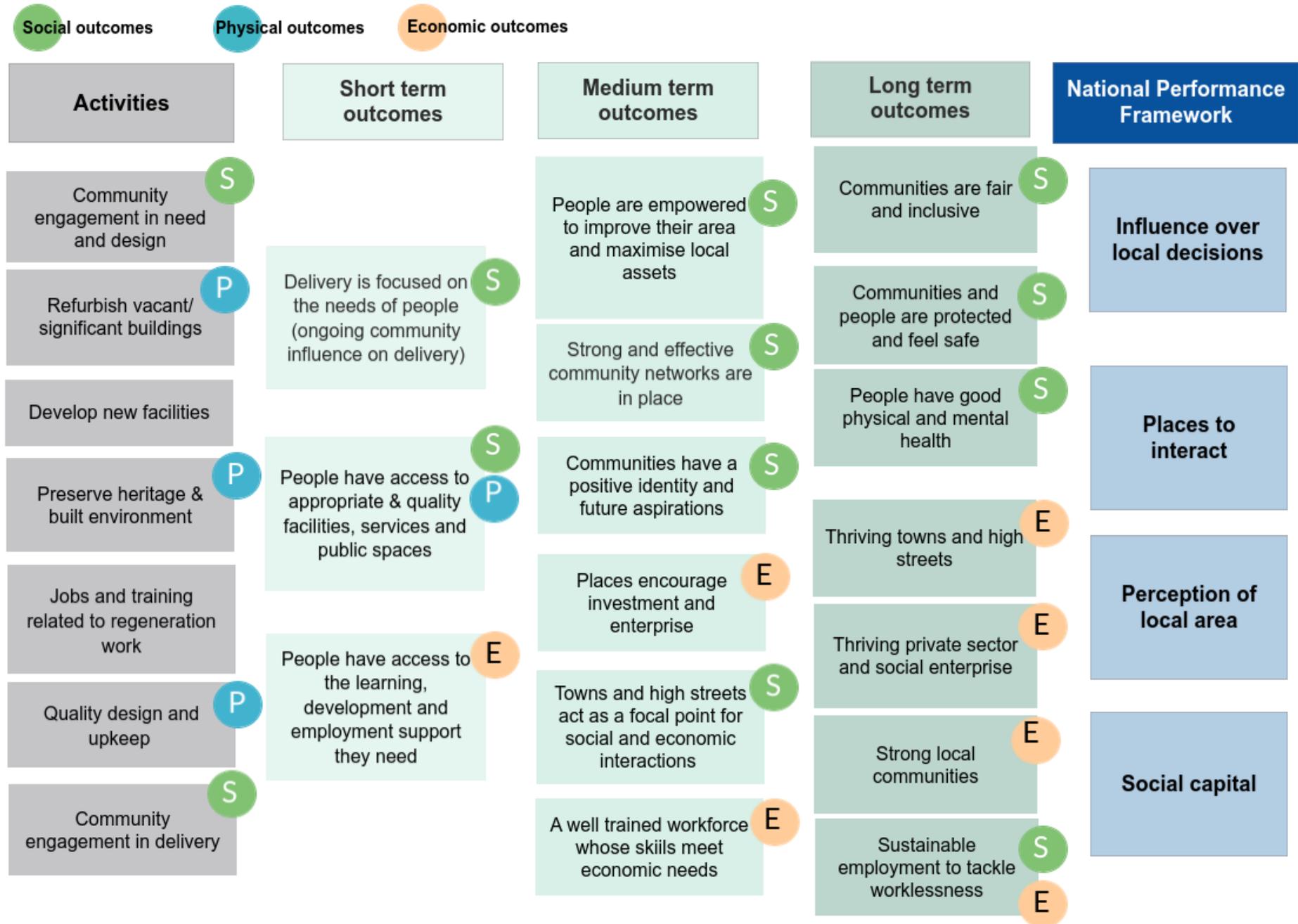
This is well articulated in the Scottish Government's exploration of how town centre regeneration works, which includes a draft logic model for regeneration¹⁹, provided as [Appendix 4](#). This logic model shows that by achieving physical outcomes, the logic is that economic and social outcomes follow – in the longer term. It also shows that some social outcomes are more likely to be achieved in the shorter term than others. For example, outcomes like providing community access to facilities and improving the image and perception of an area can be reasonably short term outcomes, while outcomes around economic, physical and mental health for residents and enhanced social capital may take longer.

Within the current RCGF application process, the weighting of outcomes between physical, economic and social may reduce the priority that funded projects and applicants give to these longer-term outcomes. It may be useful to be clearer that social (and economic) outcomes are the intended result of physical regeneration – the reason for the physical works being done.

Scottish Government may wish to consider using a logic model to describe the logic of key RCGF activities and outputs, the intended outcomes, and the anticipated time frames for these. A working logic model (for further development) is provided at Fig. 7.1. This model draws on Scotland's National Performance Framework, the Place Principle and the supporting outcomes within the regeneration strategy. RCGF applicants would then be asked to demonstrate how their project fits with the logic model for the Fund, and identify a small number of outcomes (say two to four) that their project is focusing on.

¹⁹ Town Centre Regeneration: How does it work and what can be achieved? Scottish Government, 2011

Figure 7.1: Draft working logic model



7.3.3 Funding decisions and processes

Most involved in this research were happy with the RCGF processes and felt that RCGF was an extremely useful source of funding. However, the research did identify some areas that may benefit from further consideration, including:

- **timescales for spending funding** – the timescales for spending funding were felt by some to be restrictive. Scottish Government should consider introducing more flexibility on when funding is spent by the project, to ensure adequate time for community involvement, working in partnership and effective project planning and delivery.
- **connections between funders** – the RCGF often supports projects alongside other national funding sources. There is potential to consider developing stronger links with other funders as part of the decision making process, to enable joined up decisions about which projects are of strategic importance.
- **exceptional projects** – the RCGF is very flexible, and enabled most projects to tackle large scale, complex regeneration. However, some sites and buildings are particularly complex and expensive, and require an experienced team of funders and deliverers from different organisations to work jointly over a number of years. It is worth considering whether in these exceptional projects there should be a strategic approach to bringing funders together around the project over a longer time period.

7.3.4 Monitoring and reporting

This evaluation highlighted that the current monitoring system provides little information about social outcomes. Scottish Government analysis of the monitoring information on physical and economic outcomes also raised questions such as:

- how useful is the submitted information?
- who uses it, why and when?
- how easy is it to collect?
- how reliable are the figures?

From a review of submitted monitoring, final and completion forms (which only includes very few completion forms) a number of issues with the current monitoring and reporting system can be identified. These are explored below.

Table 7.1: Monitoring and reporting issues identified

Issue	Solution	Implications
<p>Projects are selecting most outcomes – to try to fit with as many priorities as possible in application stage – which means reporting is across a wide range of areas in little detail</p>	<p>Develop a clear logic model for RCGF</p> <p>Ask projects to fit with a maximum of 3 or 4 outcomes and commit to reporting on these in depth</p> <p>Provide guidance on whether any outcomes are key priorities for Scottish Government</p> <p>Adapt assessment process accordingly</p>	<p>Funded projects may feel this is more directive than the current approach.</p> <p>It would need to be made clear that local organisations can prioritise whichever outcomes are most relevant to their local area – or clear guidance would need to be provided on why certain outcomes are a key priority for the fund.</p>
<p>The same form is submitted for quarterly monitoring, final reporting and completion reporting – despite the focus on what the Scottish Government wants from each stage shifting</p>	<p>Develop a simple quarterly reporting form focused on activities, finance, physical outputs and community engagement. Develop a separate completion form focused on outcomes (including empowerment).</p> <p>Encourage funded projects to take responsibility for self-evaluation over the longer term and to communicate findings with Scottish Government.</p>	<p>Evaluating outcomes is challenging. Support and resources may be needed to enable this shift.</p> <p>Some funded projects may not have the resources and skills to undertake self-evaluation.</p>
<p>There is little incentive to submit a completion form a year after the project is completed, when all financial claims have been made.</p>	<p>Introduce incentives – potentially including publicity / profile for projects to raise awareness of their successes;</p> <p>Be flexible – such as linking to other funder’s requirements and being flexible about the format of completion evidence to fit with what is being submitted to other funders;</p> <p>Continue to be proactive in requesting forms – emphasise the importance of this evidence from the outset and send reminders.</p>	<p>It still may be challenging to encourage funded projects to submit a completion form a year after the project is completed.</p>

There is limited evidence of the submitted information being used	Be clear why projects are being asked for this information, how it will be used by Scottish Government and partners nationally, and how it could be used by partners locally	A clear framework for how information requested will actually be used and shared would need to be developed.
There is little guidance on how projects might measure and report on social outcomes – which are complex	Develop written guidance and associated support with evaluation; and/ or Include a provision for evaluation / evaluation support within each award.	Resources and skills needed to develop guidance and provide support.

Over the time that RCGF has operated, there has been a strong shift in the approaches of many funders, to focus much more strongly on outcomes than processes. As RCGF forms have remained largely the same, it is understandable that these issues have begun to emerge.

There may also be opportunities to align or rationalise the range of government and government agency procedures around application, approval, monitoring and evaluation for this type of project.

There is potential to make a few simple adaptations to the monitoring system to ensure that it adequately captures outcomes as well as processes. However, this would also require clear guidance and some capacity building work to ensure that projects have the skills and support required to report effectively on outcomes. Evaluation of social outcomes is complex, and this may require capacity building, resources and support for projects and decision makers.

Appendix 1: Sustainable communities

outcomes

Achieving a Sustainable Future, Scottish Government Regeneration Strategy, 2011
- Supporting outcomes

Economically sustainable communities

- strong local economies, providing access to jobs and support for business
- a well trained workforce whose skills meet economic needs
- people have access to the learning and development opportunities that they need and the right support is in place to help people to work
- a thriving private sector and social enterprise
- effective strategies in place to link economic opportunity and demand
- the right affordable housing options with sufficient availability and quality of housing across all tenures
- places encourage positive and appropriate private sector investment and social enterprise which provides opportunities for businesses and jobs
- infrastructure fosters the right conditions for growth and community cohesion, including good transport and digital connectivity
- thriving towns and high streets
- sustainable employment and reducing welfare dependency

Physically sustainable communities

- people have access to quality public space and appropriate greenspace
- well planned neighbourhoods and local areas, with accessible facilities and amenities
- communities have a positive appearance and are places where people want to live, work and invest
- quality design and upkeep of buildings and spaces
- address vacant and derelict land and property and preserve heritage/ built environment for productive use
- use resources efficiently and respect the natural environment

Socially sustainable communities

- communities and people are protected and feel safe
- delivery is focused on the needs of people
- communities are involved in designing and delivering the services that affect them
- strong and effective community networks are in place
- people have access to appropriate community facilities and places to meet
- communities have a positive identity and future aspirations
- people are empowered to improve their area and maximise local assets
- people have good physical and mental health
- people have access to effective local services and facilities, including health, education and early years support

Appendix 2: Method and research tools

Research support and limitations, participant information sheet, consent form and discussion guide

Research support

This research was supported by a Research Advisory Group (RAG), comprising:

- Scottish Government officers from the Regeneration Unit
- Scottish Government officers from Communities Analysis Division
- a COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) representative
- a SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) representative

Study limitations

The research used qualitative methods to gather an in-depth understanding of the experiences and outcomes of 14 focus projects which had received an offer of grant from the RCGF. This approach allowed for an exploration of the range of experiences of involvement in RCGF projects, from the perspectives of project leads, partners, funders, community members, service users and others. However, it does not mean that the experiences within these 14 projects are transferrable to the experiences of other projects. RCGF projects are all different and develop in different ways, in different contexts.

The research method involved contacting the project lead initially, and from there building a network of partners, community members and others to contact. The project lead sought initial permission for the researchers to contact potential participants, to avoid cold contact – in line with good research ethics and data protection legislation. However, this approach had the potential to allow project leads to act as ‘gatekeepers’, signposting researchers to those who had a particular experience of the project. The ability of one individual to act as a gatekeeper was reduced, however, through researchers also asking other participants whether there were key individuals or groups that they felt should be involved in the research.

Finally, while discussions were led by experienced senior researchers, each interview was a one-off contact with an individual. While participants were encouraged to be open and honest in their reflections, and reassured about their anonymity, participants may not have felt comfortable talking about all aspects of their experience with someone they had only recently met.

Information sheet

Evaluation of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund Scottish Government, 2019

Invitation to take part

We would like to invite you to take part in our evaluation of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. Taking part is entirely up to you. Before you decide whether to take part or not, we would like to explain why the study is being done and what it would involve. If you have any questions, please contact Christina or Katy at Research Scotland. Our contact details are at the end of the document.

What is the study about?

We are evaluating the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, exploring the outcomes it has brought about and the factors which have contributed to this. This is to help the Scottish Government and COSLA to better understand the social outcomes the Fund has achieved, and what has helped and hindered with this.

The main focus of the research is on the social outcomes and community involvement aspect of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. The physical and economic outcomes will be explored separately by the Scottish Government.

The evaluation will take place between February and June 2019. It will involve fieldwork in 14 projects funded through the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund across Scotland. Views will be anonymised within the report, but the participating 14 projects may be listed as an Annex to the report.

It is important to note that these 14 projects have been selected to give an overview of the outcomes of the Fund, and enable in-depth exploration with project leads, partners and communities. The focus is on evaluating the Fund, not evaluating the performance of the 14 projects.

Who is organising and funding this study?

This study is being carried out by Research Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Research Advisory Group for the evaluation includes the Scottish Government, COSLA and SOLACE.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You've been invited to take part as you are a project lead for one of the 14 projects we have selected as a focus for the evaluation. These projects were selected through discussions with the Scottish Government, COSLA and SOLACE. We worked to try to involve a good mix of projects which were ongoing, completed or withdrawn; from different parts of the country; and which had different aspects of the project funded by the RCGF.

What does taking part involve?

Taking part as a focus project involves the project lead, project partners, community members and service users taking part in discussions with researchers, about their experiences of the project.

Your role as a project lead would involve:

- **a 90 minute individual interview** - this could be face to face or over the phone. The discussion would explore your views on community involvement within the project, the social outcomes you have achieved, and the key success factors and challenges you have experienced
- **support engaging with partners, community members and service users** - we would work with you to discuss and agree the best way to involve key stakeholders, in a way which suits them

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you. Participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to clearly give consent to confirm that you are happy and willing to take part.

Even if you tell us you want to take part or sign the consent form, you're still free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes, all information collected from and or about you will be kept confidential. We will store notes of our discussion in our IT system in an anonymised way, without your name or any other details about you.

You will not be identifiable in any study outputs, such as reports or presentations. We may use some direct quotes from what you say in

study reports and presentations but where we do this, we will make sure we do not include information that may identify you.

Although all information and views will be completely anonymised within the report, the 14 projects which take part may be identified as an Annex within the report. The staff involved on the Research Advisory Group (Scottish Government, COSLA and SOLACE) also know which 14 projects were involved.

What will happen to the results of this study?

Your anonymous data will be combined with that of other participants and this will be used to produce a research reports and presentations to be shared with the Scottish Government. At the end of the project, the research report will be available on the Scottish Government website. The report is expected to be available in autumn 2019.

Details on data protection

Information collected from you as part of the study will be processed by Research Scotland. The information collected will only be used for the purposes of this specific study. Your data will be processed only so long as is required for this study. One month after the research is completed, Research Scotland will delete all the personal information from its systems.

In order to collect and use your personal information as part of this research, we must have a basis in law to do so. The basis that we are using is that the research is 'a task in the public interest'.

During the study, your data will be stored in secure, locked cabinets or secure password protected servers for electronic data with access limited to the research team at Research Scotland. To safeguard your rights, we will try to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide, we will do this at the earliest opportunity. This means that personal details such as your name and contact details will be removed from the data, and a number will instead be assigned to it. That number will then be used whenever referring to it.

Withdrawing from the research

If you decide you don't want to take part before or after the interview or discussion group, please contact the research team (details below). We'd appreciate it if you could give us as much notice as is possible. If

you decide you don't want to take part during the interview or discussion group, simply let the researcher know you'd like to stop.

Please note that we will not be able to exclude the information you have provided after it has been combined with that of other people taking part and we will need to keep the information you've already provided. Your rights to access, change or move your information will be limited as we need to manage your information in specific ways for the research to be reliable and accurate. To safeguard your rights, be assured we will use the minimum amount of personally-identifiable information possible.

Contact details

If you have any concerns or questions at all about taking part in the study, please contact Christina Bruce or Katy MacMillan at Research Scotland on 0141 428 3972 christina.bruce@researchscotland.org / katy.macmillan@researchscotland.org

If you are still concerned or are unhappy about any aspect of the study, please contact the Scottish Government study lead, Nadine Andrews, Senior Social Researcher on 0131 244 2949 or at Nadine.Andrews@gov.scot

Thank you for taking the time to read this and considering taking part.

Participant Consent Form

Evaluation of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund Research for the Scottish Government, by Research Scotland

Participant Identification Number for this study: _____

Name of researcher: _____

This consent form is to ensure that you understand the nature of this research and have given your consent to participate. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to change your mind about taking part at any time. Just tell a member of the research team at Research Scotland if you wish to do this.

Please read each of the statements below. If you have any questions please ask a member of the research team at Research Scotland. Please only sign the form when you are happy with ALL statements.

By signing this form, you agree to take part in an interview or discussion group about your experiences of involvement in (x project – to be adapted dependent on nature of discussion).

1.	I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered to my satisfaction.
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, either during the discussion group or afterwards (up to the point my information has been combined with that from other people) without giving a reason and without there being any negative consequences.
3.	I understand that direct quotations from my discussion may be used in an anonymous way in the research report.
4.	I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.
6.	I understand that I do not need to answer any questions that I do not wish to.

7.	I understand that my views will be completely anonymised and reported in a collated way, but that the 14 projects involved in the evaluation may be identified.
8.	I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

Discussion Guide: Project Leads 90 minutes Regeneration Capital Grant Fund Evaluation

Set up and consent

Introduction

We have been appointed to evaluate the social outcomes of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. Economic and physical outcomes will be assessed separately - internally by the Scottish Government.

The evaluation is of the RCGF programme as a whole and is **not** an evaluation of specific projects. To inform the evaluation, we would like to focus on the experience of 14 **anonymised** projects. In each project, we would like to speak with:

- a project lead
- project partners
- community organisations involved in planning, delivering or managing the project
- service users or individuals supported by the project

This will allow in-depth exploration of social outcomes, community involvement and success factors. We can be flexible in our fieldwork, depending on the nature of your project and who you think it is most appropriate to involve.

About the interview with you

We would like to interview you as the project lead in order to:

- explore your views and experiences
- gain your views on the other key stakeholders to involve from your project

Taking part is **voluntary and up to you**. You can choose not to answer any questions and you don't need to give a reason. You can choose to withdraw your participation up to 28 June 2019. Just get in touch with Research Scotland at katy.macmillan@researchscotland.org After 28 June 2019 your views will have been amalgamated with the views of others, and so can't be removed.

Views will be reported **anonymously**. Our report won't state the names of the people who took part. It will not be possible for readers of the report to identify which individuals took part in the research. Any quotes or comments that potentially identify participating projects or individuals will not be used. However, the 14 projects involved in the research project may be identified as an Annex to the report.

This interview explores **your views**. Please tell us what you think in an open and honest way. Your views will only be seen by the Research Scotland team involved in this work and won't be passed on to anyone else.

Consent

Do you have any questions about the evaluation or this interview?

Do you understand that:

- your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time
- direct quotations from your discussion may be used in the research report, but your identity will not be revealed
- you do not need to answer any questions that you don't wish to

Do you agree to take part in this interview?

Background

Your role

1. What was your role in the RCGF funded aspect of the project? Did this change along the way? Are you still involved?

Aims

2. How would you describe the main aims of your project?
3. Did the project aims change along the way? Why? In what way?

Project delivery

4. What stage is the project at just now? What is your current focus?
5. What has helped you get to this stage? What factors contributed to delivering your project?
6. What key challenges have you faced? How have you worked to overcome these? What learning have you gained?

Community involvement

7. How would you describe the community or communities that this project aimed to involve?
Did this change along the way?
8. How did you assess need for the project? How were communities involved?
9. How were community members involved in:
 - planning and designing the facility?

- designing and delivering services in the new facility?
 - using the facility?
10. What worked well? What didn't? How could this be improved?
 11. Did your approach to community involvement change along the way? Why? In what way?
 12. Did you conduct a charette (or similar design event) as part of the community involvement work? When did this happen? How useful was it?
 13. How do you think community involvement influenced how your project developed?
 - what positive impact (if any) did it have?
 - what negative impact (if any) did it have?
 14. In what way, if any, have you:
 - focused delivery on people's needs?
 - empowered communities to improve their area and assets?
 - ensured everyone had a voice and could participate?
 - worked in partnership with the community?

Social outcomes

15. How would you describe the social outcomes that your project was aiming to bring about? Did these change along the way?
16. How would you describe the balance of priority in your project across social, physical and economic outcomes? Which of these was the main driver for the project?
17. To what extent do you believe you:
 - enabled people to feel safe and protected?
 - supported people to have good physical and mental health?
 - supported strong and effective community networks?
 - provided access to appropriate community facilities and services – including health, education, early years support and places to meet?
 - helped communities build a positive identity and future aspirations?
 - developed places as a focal point for social and economic interactions?
 - supported the development of fair and inclusive communities?
 - supported sustainable employment to tackle worklessness?

(Tailor based on social outcomes mentioned within application and monitoring forms)

18. How do you know this? What evidence do you have?
19. Do you believe you have contributed to any other social outcomes, beyond those already explored? *Probe.*
20. What helped you to achieve social outcomes? What hindered?
21. Did your project bring about any unintended social outcomes – positive or negative? In what way?

Partnership working

22. Who were the key partners in delivering your project? How much did you work with them?
23. What encouraged you to work in partnership?
24. Did working in partnership help you to deliver your project effectively? In what ways?
25. In your view, did all partners have the capacity to support the project effectively?
26. What challenges did working in partnership bring? How were these addressed?

Monitoring and evaluation

27. How did you monitor and evaluate your project? Did you use any good practice methods or approaches?
28. What skills and resources do you think were needed to effectively monitor and evaluate your project? Do you feel your project had access to these skills and resources?
29. Were communities involved in evaluation? How?
30. How was the information you gathered used to support future project development?
31. What worked well about your monitoring and evaluation approaches? Why? What doesn't work so well? Why?

Impact of RCGF

32. Have you any comments on the process of applying for RCGF?
33. Overall, what difference do you think the RCGF has made to your project?
34. Do you think the project would have gone ahead without RCGF? Would it have developed differently?
35. Did receiving RCGF make any difference to:
 - how you involved communities?
 - how you worked in partnership?
 - how you monitored and evaluated your project?

- the outcomes that your project brought about?
- the match funding that you were able to generate?

36. What advice would you give to organisations planning RCGF funded activity?

Discussion Guide: Partners 60 minutes

Regeneration Capital Grant Fund Evaluation

Set up and consent

Introduction

We have been appointed to evaluate the social outcomes of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. Economic and physical outcomes will be assessed separately - internally by the Scottish Government.

The evaluation is of the RCGF programme as a whole and is **not** an evaluation of specific projects. To inform the evaluation, we would like to focus on the experience of 14 **anonymised** projects. In each project, we are speaking with:

- a project lead
- project partners
- community organisations involved in planning, delivering or managing the project
- service users or individuals supported by the project.

About the interview with you

We would like to interview you as a project partner in order to explore your views on social outcomes, community involvement, success factors and lessons learned.

Taking part is **voluntary and up to you**. You can choose not to answer any questions and you don't need to give a reason. You can choose to withdraw your participation up to 28 June 2019. Just get in touch with Research Scotland at katy.macmillan@researchscotland.org After 28 June 2019 your views will have been amalgamated with the views of others, and so can't be removed.

Views will be reported **anonymously**. Our report won't state the names of the people who took part. It will not be possible for readers of the report to identify which individuals took part in the research. Any quotes or comments that potentially identify participating projects or individuals will not be used. However, the 14 projects involved in the research project may be identified as an Annex to the report.

This interview explores **your views**. Please tell us what you think in an open and honest way. Your views will only be seen by the Research Scotland team involved in this work and won't be passed on to anyone else.

Consent

Do you have any questions about the evaluation or this interview?

Do you understand that:

- your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time
- direct quotations from your discussion may be used in the research report, but your identity will not be revealed
- you do not need to answer any questions that you don't wish to

Do you agree to take part in this interview?

Background

Your role

1. What was your role in the RCGF funded aspect of the project? Did this change along the way? Are you still involved?
2. What stage is the project at just now? What is your current focus?
3. What has helped you get to this stage? What factors contributed to delivering your project?
4. What key challenges have you faced? How have you worked to overcome these? What learning have you gained?

Community involvement

5. How would you describe the community or communities that this project aimed to involve? Did this change along the way?
6. How did you assess need for the project? How were communities involved?
7. How were community members involved in:
 - planning and designing the facility?
 - designing and delivering services in the new facility?
 - using the facility?
8. What worked well? What didn't? How could this be improved?
9. Did your approach to community involvement change along the way? Why? In what way?
10. How do you think community involvement influenced how your project developed?
 - what positive impact (if any) did it have?

- what negative impact (if any) did it have?
11. In what way, if any, have you:
- focused delivery on people's needs?
 - empowered communities to improve their area and assets?
 - ensured everyone had a voice and could participate?
 - worked in partnership with the community?

Social outcomes

12. How would you describe the social outcomes that your project was aiming to bring about? Did these change along the way?
13. How would you describe the balance of priority in your project across social, physical and economic outcomes? Which of these was the main driver for the project?
14. To what extent do you believe you:
- enabled people to feel safe and protected?
 - supported people to have good physical and mental health?
 - supported strong and effective community networks?
 - provided access to appropriate community facilities and services – including health, education, early years support and places to meet?
 - helped communities build a positive identity and future aspirations?
 - developed places as a focal point for social and economic interactions?
 - supported the development of fair and inclusive communities ?
 - supported sustainable employment to tackle worklessness?

(Tailor based on social outcomes mentioned within application and monitoring forms)

15. How do you know this? What evidence do you have?
16. What helped you to achieve social outcomes? What hindered?
17. Did your project bring about any unintended social outcomes – positive or negative? In what way?

Partnership working

18. What encouraged you to work in partnership?
19. Did working in partnership help you to deliver your project effectively? In what ways?

20. What challenges did working in partnership bring? How were these addressed?

Impact of RCGF

21. Overall, what difference do you think the RCGF has made to your project?
22. Do you think the project would have gone ahead without RCGF? Would it have developed differently?
23. Did receiving RCGF make any difference to:
- how you involved communities?
 - how you worked in partnership?
 - how you monitored and evaluated your project?
 - the outcomes that your project brought about?
 - the match funding that you were able to generate?
24. What advice would you give to organisations planning RCGF funded activity?

Discussion Guide: Communities 60 minutes

Regeneration Capital Grant Fund Evaluation

- consent process to be gone through separately with consent form
- choose relevant sections/ adapt/ add new sections dependent on focus of project

Background

1. How have you been involved in (the project)?
2. Have you been involved in:
 - planning and designing the facility?
 - designing and delivering services in the new facility?
 - using the facility?
3. Why did you get involved?

Planning and designing the facility

4. Were you involved in thinking about whether this project was needed and what it might look like? How?
5. What worked well? What didn't? How could this be improved?
6. How do you think community involvement influenced how the project developed?
7. Did you feel that:
 - the community was empowered to get involved in a meaningful way?
 - the community was listened to?
 - community views were respected?
8. How did being involved influence you personally?
 - health and wellbeing?
 - sense of community or sense of belonging to the area?
 - how you felt about the local area?
 - learning new things/ skills?
 - your aspirations and aims for the future?
9. How did being involved impact on your community?
 - connecting the community or strengthening relationships?
 - building a positive identity for communities or for the local area?
 - influencing aims or aspirations for the future as a community?
 - supporting fair and inclusive communities?

10. Were there any negative aspects of being involved? What were these? How could they be avoided?

Using the facility

11. Do you use the facility/ service? How? When?
12. What difference does the facility / service make to your life?
13. What works particularly well?
14. What could be improved?
15. Has the new facility impacted on your ability to:
 - access the services you need – health, education, early years, skills development, etc?
 - have good places to meet people and socialise?
 - make connections in the community?
 - use local businesses and services?
 - work, volunteer or learn locally?

In what ways? Why do you think this?

16. Has the new facility impacted on your feelings of:
 - safety in your community?
 - physical and mental health?
 - your community being fair and inclusive?

In what ways? Why do you think this?

(Tailor based on social outcomes mentioned within application and monitoring forms – and run as an interactive exercise using e.g. dot voting, statements on cards dependent on needs of the group)

Appendix 3: Awards by local authority

Number of awards and grant awarded per local authority area (Rounds 1 to 6)

Local Authority	Number of RCGF awards per local authority area	RCGF grant awarded per local authority
Glasgow City	19	£22,713,462
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	10	£7,960,533
Argyll & Bute	9	£5,936,198
Highland	9	£6,194,779
Fife	7	£3,710,000
North Ayrshire	7	£4,942,000
Edinburgh City	6	£8,095,129
Inverclyde	6	£4,535,969
North Lanarkshire	6	£9,846,391
South Lanarkshire	6	£12,580,000
East Ayrshire	5	£6,085,381
Aberdeen City	4	£6,571,667
Dumfries & Galloway	4	£3,765,040
Renfrewshire	4	£8,300,000
Scottish Borders	4	£2,166,277
Falkirk	3	£3,497,547
South Ayrshire	3	£1,850,000
West Dunbartonshire	3	£2,850,000
Aberdeenshire	2	£1,351,243
Angus	2	£3,060,000
Dundee City	2	£2,320,000
East Dunbartonshire	2	£2,100,000
Midlothian	2	£1,244,000
Stirling	2	£1,883,600
East Lothian	1	£730,000
East Renfrewshire	1	£738,424
Orkney Islands	1	£500,000
Perth & Kinross	1	£335,000
West Lothian	1	£290,000
Clackmannanshire	0	£0
Moray	0	£0
Shetland Islands	0	£0
	132	£136,152,640

Note: These figures are for the 132 projects which went ahead and exclude the six withdrawn projects.

Local and national share of deprivation and RCGF allocation (Rounds 1 to 6)

Local Authority	Local share of deprivation (2016 SIMD)		National share of deprivation (2016 SIMD)		% share of RCGF in £ (Rounds 1 to 6)		No. of RCGF funded projects* (R 1 to 6)
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	
Glasgow	48%	1	25.8%	1	16.7%*	1	19*
Inverclyde	44%	2	3.6%	10	3.3%	12	6
West Dunbartonshire	40%	3	3.4%	11	2.0%	17	3
North Ayrshire	38%	4	5.0%	6	3.6%	11	7
Dundee	37%	5	4.9%	7	1.7%	18	2
East Ayrshire	33%	6	3.8%	9	4.5%	9	5
North Lanarkshire	32%	7	10.3%	2	7.2%	3	6
Renfrewshire	27%	8	4.4%	8	6.1%	4	4
Clackmannanshire	24%	9	1.2%	17	-	30	0
South Lanarkshire	21%	10	6.4%	4	9.2%*	2	6*
Fife	19%	11	6.8%	3	2.7%	14	7
South Ayrshire	18%	12	2.0%	14	1.4%	21	3
West Lothian	16%	13	2.7%	12	0.2%	29	1
Falkirk	15%	14	2.4%	13	2.6%	15	3
Edinburgh	14%	15	5.9%	5	6.0%	5	6
Stirling	12%	16	1.0%	19	1.4%	21	2
Midlothian	11%	17	0.9%	20	0.9%	23	2
Argyll and Bute	9%	18	0.8%	22	4.4%	10	9
Dumfries and Galloway	8%	19	1.2%	18	2.8%	13	4
Aberdeen City	8%	19	1.6%	16	4.8%	7	4
Highland	8%	19	1.7%	15	4.6%	8	9
Angus	7%	22	0.8%	23	2.3%	16	2
East Renfrewshire	7%	22	0.6%	24	0.5%	24	1
Perth and Kinross	6%	24	0.8%	21	0.3%	28	1
Scottish Borders	6%	24	0.6%	25	1.6%*	19	4*
East Lothian	5%	26	0.4%	26	0.5%	24	1
East Dunbartonshire	5%	26	0.4%	27	1.5%	20	2
Aberdeenshire	2%	28	0.4%	28	1.0%	26	2
Moray	1%	29	0.1%	29	-	30	0
Shetland Islands	-	30	0%	30	-	30	0
Orkney Islands	-	30	0%	31	0.4%	27	1
Eilean Siar/ Western Isles	-	30	0%	32	5.9%	6	10

*Note: These figures excludes projects which were recommended for funding and then withdrawn - which were in Glasgow (4), Scottish Borders (1) and South Lanarkshire (1).

Note: The local and national share of deprivation is based on Scottish Government analysis of the 2016 SIMD. The local share takes all of the datazones within that local authority and illustrates what proportion of these datazones are in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland. The national share takes the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland, and illustrates what proportion fall into each local authority. Local share may be a better indication of how deprived areas are relative to one another, as national share in part reflects the size of the local authority.

The analysis shows that some of the areas with the largest national or local share of datazones in areas of multiple deprivation received the largest shares of RCGF.

However, there is not a direct correlation. Some areas with relatively low levels of spatially concentrated multiple deprivation also received relatively high levels of RCGF funding. Not all people and communities experiencing disadvantage live in spatially concentrated areas of high multiple deprivation. For example, two thirds of income deprived households do not live in the most deprived areas²⁰. Some of these local authority areas were in areas facing other types of disadvantage – for example in fragile, remote and rural communities.

This analysis is provided to provide an indication of the correlation between local authorities with high levels of deprivation, and level of RCGF award. It should be noted that disadvantage is a wider concept than deprivation, and that not all people and communities experiencing disadvantage live in areas of high multiple deprivation.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-interim-guidance-public-bodies/pages/2/>

List of all funded projects (Rounds 1 to 6)

ROUND	ORGANISATION	TITLE	GRANT
1	Irvine Bay URC	Ardrossan Quayside	£1,800,000
1	North Ayrshire Council	Saltcoats Town hall Restoration	£1,100,000
1	Fife Council	Gallatown Regeneration Project	£950,000
1	Fife Council	Lochgelly Town House Development Site	£550,000
1	Clyde Gateway URC	Rutherglen Low Carbon Zone - Anchor Tenant Office	£5,780,000
1	Clyde Gateway URC	Glasgow Women's Library (Phase II)	£461,882
1	North Lanarkshire Council	Cumbernauld Community Enterprise Centre	£4,000,000
1	North Lanarkshire Council	Forgewood Community Centre	£1,000,000
1	Angus Council	Baltic Mill, Dens Rd, Arbroath	£800,000
1	Scottish Borders Council	Burnfoot Community Hub, Hawick	£585,000
1	City of Edinburgh Council	Castlebrae Business Centre	£1,900,000
1	Renfrewshire Council	Russell Institute, Paisley	£2,000,000
1	West Dunbartonshire Council	Vale of Leven Industrial Estate Renewal	£900,000
1	North Ayrshire Council	Millport Marine Biological Station	£500,000
1	Argyll & Bute Council	Dunoon Pier improvements and Waterfront Lighting Strategy	£350,000
1	Glasgow City Council	Calton Barras Action Plan	£1,400,580
1	Glasgow City Council	Barmulloch Community Regeneration Project	£350,000
1	Glasgow City Council	Cadder Community Centre	£1,000,000
1	Riverside Inverclyde URC	Port Glasgow Enterprise Initiative - Scarlow St	£550,000
1	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	South Uist and Barra Regeneration Programme	£820,000
1	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	West Harris Trust - Community Enterprise Centre. Isle of harris	£200,000
1	East Dunbartonshire Council	Kirkintilloch town centre regeneration project	£600,000
2	Argyll & Bute Council	Redevelopment of Rothesay Pavilion	£625,000
2	Ayr Renaissance LLP	Ayr - North Hub, Riverside Block	£600,000
2	Clyde Gateway URC	Community Empowerment - Church House	£671,000
2	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Uist Heritage Regeneration Programme	£350,000
2	Dundee City Council	Menziesshill Community Campus	£1,320,000
2	East Ayrshire Council	Kilmarnock Town Centre Business Hub	£1,300,000
2	East Renfrewshire Council	Levern Works	£738,424
2	Falkirk Council	Denny Town Centre Regeneration	£1,400,000
2	Fife Council	Kirkcaldy Voluntary Sector Business and Community Advice Hub	£750,000
2	Fife Council	Stenhouse Street Community Centre – Cowdenbeath	£300,000
2	Fusion Assets	Coatbridge Enterprise Centre	£1,116,591
2	Glasgow City Council	Westmuir Street School: Community Enterprise Centre	£1,800,000
2	Highland Council	Merkinch Welfare Hall "Fit for the Future"	£200,127

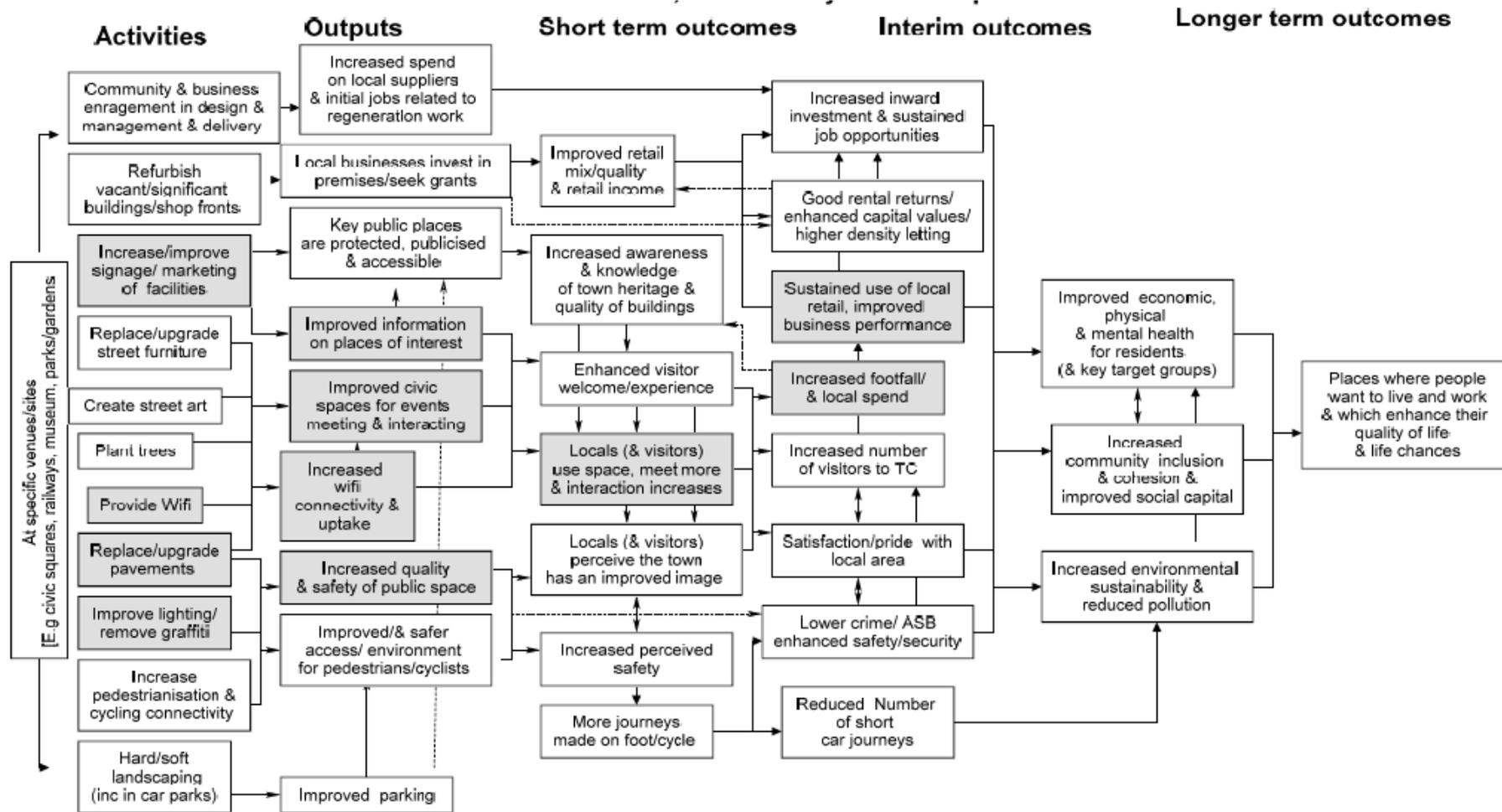
2	Inverclyde Council	Horticultural Training and Community Facility	£397,308
2	Riverside Inverclyde	Custom House – Enterprise Workspace	£649,332
2	Scottish Borders Council	Newlands Rural Business Units	£245,277
2	South Ayrshire Council	Girvan Community Sport, Leisure and Culture Facility	£250,000
2	Aberdeen City Council	Middlefield Community Project Development	£1,630,000
3	Aberdeen City Council	Station House Media Unit Redevelopment	£1,041,667
3	Aberdeenshire Council	Fraserburgh 2021	£1,056,243
3	Aberdeenshire Council	Siversmithing Revived in Banff	£295,000
3	Argyll & Bute Council	Redevelopment of Kilmahew/ St Peter's	£650,000
3	Ayr Renaissance LLP	The Corn Market	£1,000,000
3	City of Edinburgh Council	New Civic Heart for Pennywell / Muirhouse	£1,520,000
3	City of Edinburgh Council	Castle Mill Works - Creative Industries Incubator	£1,925,764
3	Clyde Gateway URC	National Business District Shawfield - Red Tree Business Incubator	£2,900,000
3	Clyde Gateway URC	Clyde Gateway East -Manufacturing and Engineering Hub	£1,000,000
3	Comhairlie nan Eilean Siar	Balivanich Business Hub	£350,000
3	Comhairlie nan Eilean Siar	Harris Marina Hub	£600,000
3	Dumfries & Galloway Council	Stranraer Town Centre Regeneration Initiative	£1,800,000
3	Dundee City Council	City Quay Project	£1,000,000
3	Fife Council	Lochgelly regional Cycling Circuit - Community Use Building	£300,000
3	Fusion Assets	4r Communities Enterprise Workspace	£989,800
3	Glasgow City Council	Growing Places and Spaces (Woodside, Hamiltonhill, Speirs Locks)	£1,330,000
3	Glasgow City Council	Royston Community Centre	£575,000
3	Highland Council	Ardgay-Gateway to Sutherland	£530,000
3	Irvine Bay URC	Fullarton Community Association Community Hub	£327,000
3	North Ayrshire Council	Irvine Community Enterprise and Leisure Hub	£965,000
3	Riverside Inverclyde URC	Port Glasgow - Town Centre transformation Lower Town Quarter	£852,200
3	South Lanarkshire Council	Clydesdale rural development centre	£1,000,000
3	West Dunbartonshire Council	Clydebank Community Sports Hub	£1,000,000
3	West Lothian Council	Craigsfarm Community Hub	£290,000
4	Aberdeen City Council	Tillydrone Community Hub	£1,900,000
4	Argyll & Bute Council	Ardrishaig Waterfront - Maritime Hub Phase 1	£580,000
4	Argyll & Bute Council	Oban Maritime Quarter - Transit Berthing Facility	£700,000
4	Argyll & Bute Council	Tobermory Light Industrial Park	£1,600,000
4	City of Edinburgh Council	Broomhouse Community Hub	£801,600
4	City of Edinburgh Council	Leith Walk Studios, Street Market and Community Partnership Service Hub	£750,000
4	Clyde Gateway URC	Arena District Industrial Development - Enabling Works	£600,000
4	Comhairlie nan Eilean Siar	Castlebay Harbour Initiative	£302,195

4	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Isle of Lewis Heritage Programme	£870,000
4	Dumfries & Galloway Council	Stranraer Millennium Centre	£987,735
4	East Ayrshire Council	Ayrshire Food from Ayrshire Folk	£920,000
4	East Dunbartonshire Council	Auchinairn Community Regeneration Project	£1,500,000
4	East Lothian Council	The Fraser Centre Capital Project: Achieving Change in Tranent	£730,000
4	Falkirk Council	Arnotdale House, Falkirk - Community Hub	£1,125,547
4	Glasgow City Council	Seven Lochs - Easterhouse Community Gateways	£675,000
4	Highland Council	Midmills Creative Hub	£1,200,000
4	Highland Council	Redevelopment of the Gairloch AAOR Site	£350,000
4	Midlothian Council	Track 2 Train	£360,000
4	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Research Campus Phase 1	£500,000
4	Perth & Kinross Council	Creative Exchange Perth	£335,000
4	Raploch URC	Kildean Employability & Enterprise hub	£900,000
4	Renfrewshire Council	Mossedge Village Project	£800,000
4	Renfrewshire Council	Paisley Town Centre Regeneration: Learning & Cultural Hub	£1,500,000
4	Riverside Inverclyde URC	Micro-Business Enterprise Community Hub, Greenock	£900,000
4	Transforming Communities: Glasgow	Citizens Theatre Redevelopment	£2,500,000
5	Argyll and Bute Council	Cairndow Community Childcare and Family Centre	£811,198
5	Argyll and Bute Council	The Rockfield Centre – Main building project	£420,000
5	City of Edinburgh Council	Duncan Place Resource Centre	£1,197,765
5	Clyde Gateway URC	Rutherglen Links Office Pavilions	£2,000,000
5	Clyde Gateway URC	Cuningar Loop - The Bothy - reallocation	£950,000
5	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Stornoway Regeneration Programme - Phase 1	£2,300,000
5	Dumfries & Galloway Council	Saving Moat Brae: A National Centre for Children's Literature and Storytelling	£615,305
5	East Ayrshire Council	Kilmarnock Academy Legacy Project	£2,000,000
5	East Ayrshire Council	Ochiltree Community Hub	£352,478
5	Falkirk Council	Lock 16 Canalside Community Hub	£972,000
5	Fife Council	Dreel Halls Phase 2	£360,000
5	Fife Council	Tayport Community Hub	£500,000
5	Glasgow City Council	Govan Old - A Focus for Community Renewal	£1,900,000
5	Glasgow City Council	Sighthill Enterprise Wharf	£650,000
5	Highland Council	Strathdearn Community Developments New Hub	£500,000
5	Highland Council	South Kessock Outdoor Social Hub	£850,000
5	Highland Council	Morvern Community Business Hub	£788,000
5	Highland Council	Thomas Telford Corpach Marina	£1,465,000
5	Midlothian Council	Regenerating Rosewell	£884,000
5	North Ayrshire Council	Arran Gateway/Brodick Harbour Regeneration phase 2	£100,000
5	North Lanarkshire Council	Glenboig Life Centre	£1,000,000

5	Renfrewshire Council	Paisley Museum Re-Imagined	£4,000,000
5	Scottish Borders Council	Regenerating Galashiels – Great Tapestry Visitor Centre	£1,180,000
5	South Lanarkshire Council	Springhall Community Hub	£300,000
5	West Dunbartonshire Council	Maid of the Loch - Transforming Loch Lomond	£950,000
6	Aberdeen City Council	Torry Community Hub	£2,000,000
6	Angus Council	Montrose Playhouse Project	£2,260,000
6	Argyll and Bute Council	Kilmartin Museum	£200,000
6	Clyde Gateway	Dalmarnock Purifier Studios	£2,000,000
6	Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	Grinneabhat	£368,338
6	Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	Cnoc Soilleir	£1,800,000
6	Dumfries and Galloway Council	Johnston School – Community Activity and Resource Centre	£362,000
6	East Ayrshire Council	West of Scotland Climbing Centre	£1,512,903
6	Glasgow City Council	Possilpark Community and Family Centre	£1,500,000
6	Glasgow City Council	Govanhill Baths Refurbishment	£2,150,000
6	Glasgow City Council	Kinning Park Complex	£1,200,000
6	Highland Council	Armadale Redevelopment	£311,652
6	Inverclyde Council	Craigend Resource Centre	£1,187,129
6	North Ayrshire Council	The Training Station	£150,000
6	North Lanarkshire Council	Motherwell – Industrial Start-Up & Incubator Units	£1,740,000
6	Scottish Borders	Stow Station	£156,000
6	South Lanarkshire Council	Abington Campus for Enterprise (ACE)	£600,000
6	Stirling Council	Cowie Regeneration Project	£983,600

WITHDRAWN	
Round 3	Briggait Creation Centre
Round 3	Castlemilk Activity Centre
Round 4	Elderpark Community Centre
Round 4	Pollokshields Community Hub
Round 4	Newcastleton Hub & Community Fuel Pumps
Round 4	Community Resource Hub

Appendix 4: Draft logic model for regeneration²¹



²¹ Town Centre Regeneration: How does it work and what can be achieved? Scottish Government, 2011



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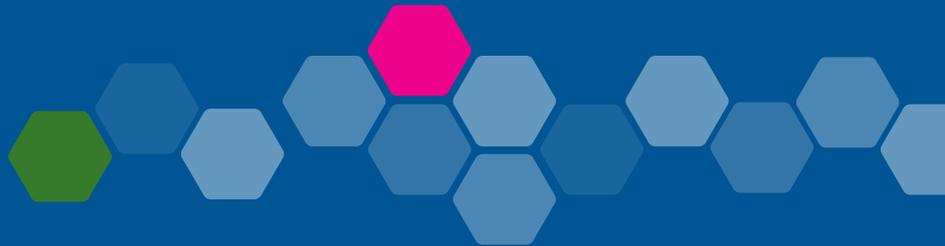
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