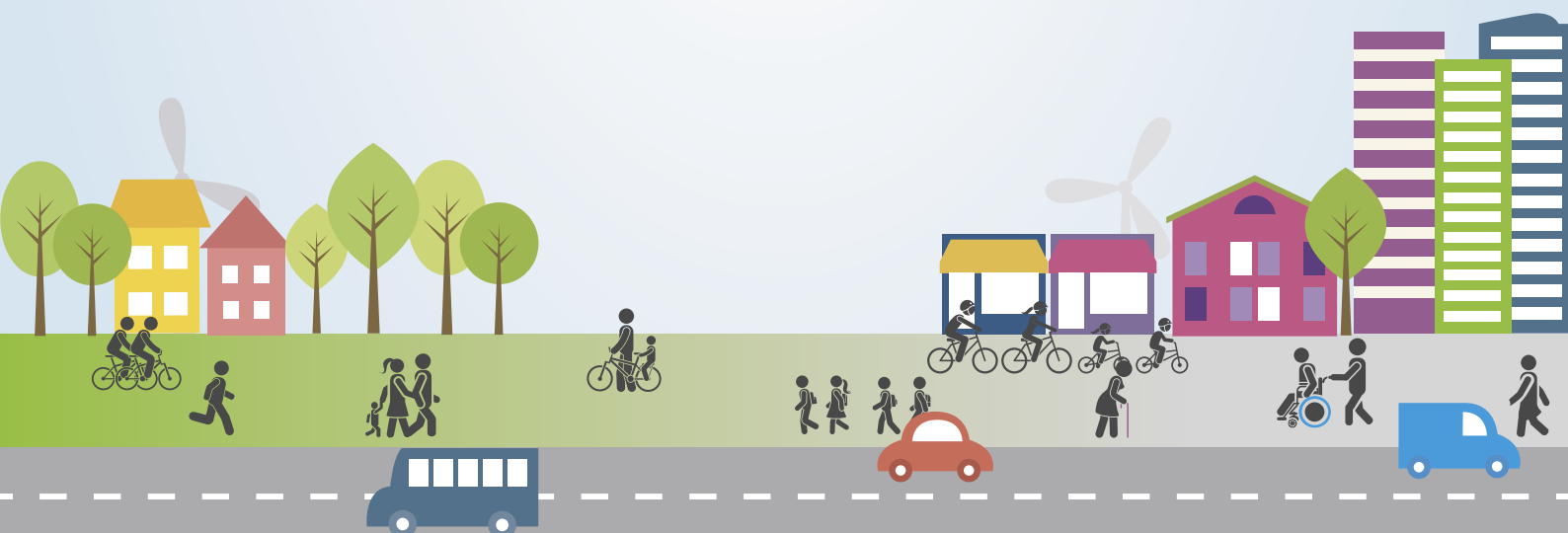


Shaping Places for Wellbeing

Third Sector Involvement at Project Town Level Workstream Summary Report



Context of Workstream

As a Programme we identified 6 areas of the Programme journey where we felt evaluation could help national replication. We identified these areas as workstreams, and a Project Lead picked up and led each of these pieces of work.

Across the Project Towns, there was variation in the extent and level of third sector involvement in the Programme. Issues and observations relating to this and the third sector's potential to contribute repeatedly emerged during team discussions. Differences in third sector involvement between the Project Towns included:

- Whether third sector representation was included on Project Town Steering Groups.
- Levels of third sector involvement in local Project Town activity.
- Third Sector Interface relationship with local partners and Project Town Steering Group members.

Conversations with the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme indicated that 'third sector involvement in Project Town activity' was considered a valuable workstream to pursue.

Whilst the size and scope of the third sector and service provision varies within each local authority area in Scotland, the one consistent is that every local authority area has a Third Sector Interface. The key functions (funded by Scottish Government) of Third Sector Interfaces are to help the third sector in each area in the following ways:

- Building Capacity
- Source of Knowledge
- Connecting Partners
- Voice of the Sector

Third Sector Interfaces were the initial third sector contact for Project Leads and Community Link Leads, including third sector representation on the local Steering Groups.



The purpose of this workstream was to explore the variation in third sector involvement across Project Towns, gain insight on the relationship developed with the third sector and consider the impact of this on Project Town activity, including project governance, data capture, assessments and implementation of recommendations.

Objectives of the Workstream

1. Capture the extent and level of third sector involvement in each of the Project Towns.
2. Develop an understanding of key third sector participants' experience of participating in the project town activity, including enablers and challenges.
3. Develop recommendations to inform the scope of third sector involvement for any future work of the Programme and those looking to take a place-based approach.

Key Activities of Workstream

1. Produce an overview of third sector involvement in Steering Groups and Place and Wellbeing Assessment in local Project Towns.
2. Discussion on third sector involvement with Project Leads and Community Link Leads for all Project Towns.
3. Informal interviews with Third Sector Interface representatives.
4. Explore linkages with the other Project Workstreams.



Findings

1. Overview of Third Sector Involvement across Project Towns

1.1 Involvement in local Project Town Steering Groups

- Five of seven Steering Groups included third sector representation, primarily through local Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs).
- Attendance and engagement varied, often diminishing due to capacity constraints.
- Two Steering Groups excluded third sector participation, citing size constraints and governance focus.

1.2 Involvement in local Project Town Place and Wellbeing Assessments

- All towns conducted assessments with varying degrees of third sector involvement.
- Key barriers included relevance, representation, capacity, and alignment of assessments with third sector priorities.

1.3 Involvement in local Project Town Quantitative Data Activity

- Limited third sector involvement in quantitative data activities.
- TSIs generally didn't consider they were involved in developing the quantitative data profile.
- Mixed responses on the utility of data—some appreciated its potential for planning and funding, others saw it as duplicative.

1.4 Involvement in local Project Town qualitative data activity

- Community Link Leads highlighted the importance of the third sector as a key source of qualitative data and community insight.
- Several Community Link Leads expressed concern about the ability of Third Sector Interfaces ability to share 'lived experience', as other local service providers (third and public sector) were in a stronger position to do this.
- Overall, Third Sector Interfaces felt that they had provided an important role in facilitating links and connections to local community groups and organisations for Community Link Leads.

1.5 Involvement in local Project Town Recommendation implementation

None of the conversations with TSIs indicated much, if any, familiarity with the detail of the Assessment recommendations, were not involved in progressing any of the recommendations.

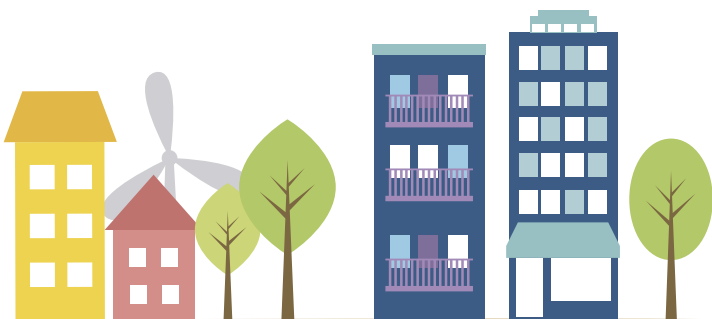
2. Barriers and Enablers to Third Sector Involvement

2.1 Barriers to third sector involvement

- Lack of time and capacity was referenced by TSIs as a factor impacting on their involvement, a lack of clarity about the Programme and overly complicated language discouraged participation.
- Scottish Government funding does not cover involvement in an exhaustive list of activities and that they are required to prioritise and this Programme resulted in different views.
- A TSI not represented on the Project Town Steering Group reported that not being a member of the Steering Group was a barrier to participating at a strategic level.

2.2 Enablers for third sector involvement

- TSIs mentioned various motivations to get involved in the Programme and local Project Town activity, including:
 - A willingness to engage in and explore new approaches and they have a key role to play in achieving 'system change'.
 - Their strategic understanding and involvement in a range of policy areas.
- All TSIs referred to local Project Team staff being very helpful and committed to engaging with the sectors, especially the value of the Community Link Leads.
- Project Town communications were very good and useful to share these to promote local activity.



2.3 Suggested improvements to enable third sector involvement

- Terms of reference for the Project Town Steering Group that specifies Third Sector Interface membership and outlining the role and responsibilities of Steering Group members, particularly in relation to promotion of the Programme.
- Early discussion with TSI on what Programme wants to achieve, the desired outcomes to allow input and sharing of ideas and 'lived experience' and ways to include this.
- Resource third sector partner involvement.
- Locate Project team, especially Community Link Lead role within a third sector partner.
- Once gaps and potential developments identified, provide support and / or resources to progress.

2.4 What could be taken forward?

Most TSIs indicated that they would like to see the Programme continue but were not sure what this may look like, but possibly using the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, Place and Wellbeing Assessments and Place and Wellbeing Outcome briefings.

There was consensus across local Project Teams that third sector involvement provided value to local Project Town activity, specifically on local issues and community experience and is an important and necessary partner in developing solutions to address local issues and inequalities.



Recommendations for future Programme activity

1. Consider Programme communications language and how messaging will be received / perceived from a third sector (and community) perspective.
2. Promote the value and importance of third sector involvement (particularly Third Sector Interfaces) in providing a vehicle to connect and engage with local third sector organisations to participating statutory partners.
3. Recommend third sector membership as part of local Project Town Steering Groups, with consideration being given to whether Third Sector Interface and / or local Development Trust or other would best suit the local situation.
4. Provide clear indication on the time commitment required from Steering Group members to all potential Steering Group members.
5. Provide clear outline of anticipated local Project Town activity at beginning of involvement to set and manage realistic expectations.

For more information about the Shaping Places for Wellbeing place-based approach, please contact Irene Beautyman, Place and Wellbeing Partnership Lead, below. Alternatively, follow us on [LinkedIn - Planning and Place-Based Approaches](#), to keep up to date with the Planning and Place-Based Programmes from within the Improvement Service, and X [@place4wellbeing](#) to recap on the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme's journey.



