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A systematic review of the community wellbeing impact of community business

May 2020

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The What Works Centre for Wellbeing

The What Works Centre for Wellbeing is part of the What Works Centre network. A What Works Centre is a bridge between knowledge and action for decision-makers, bringing together the evidence about the relative impacts on wellbeing of policies and projects, their cost and the quality of the evidence. The evidence programmes have been commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council on behalf the What Works Centre for Wellbeing. The Centre also has a role to support the development of the evidence base.

A What Works Centre is independent of government with a clear and relevant policy and delivery focus.

Our vision is a future where the wellbeing of people and communities improves every year. We believe that improving wellbeing should be the ultimate objective of policy and community action. Our mission is to develop and share robust, accessible and useful evidence that governments, businesses, communities and people can use to improve wellbeing across the UK. Our approach is independent, evidence-based, collaborative, practical, open and iterative.

Power to Change

Power to Change is an independent charitable trust that supports and develops community businesses in England. It works with community businesses to revive local assets, protect the services people rely on, and address local needs.

Our vision is to create better places through community business. We will use our endowment to strengthen community businesses across England. This means providing money, advice and support to help local people come together to take control. At a time when many parts of the country face cuts, neglect and social problems, we want to make sure local areas survive and stay vibrant. We do so by being bold, collaborative, open and informed.

Our endowment came from the Big Lottery Fund in 2015 (now The National Lottery Community Fund).

Abbreviations

QLS	Qualitative study
CS	Case study
MME	Mixed methods evaluation
SV	Survey
LQ	Low quality
MQ	Moderate quality
GQ	Good quality

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Executive summary	6
1. Background	25
2. Methods.....	31
3 Results.....	38
4. Discussion.....	117
5. Conclusions and recommendations.....	127
References	130
Appendix 1 Search Strategy	134
Appendix 2 Websites searched	135
Appendix 3 Validity assessment checklists	139
Appendix 4 List of included studies.....	146
Appendix 5 List of excluded studies	150
Appendix 6 Validity assessment.....	154
Appendix 7 Table of included studies	157

Executive summary

Background

There are four foundational principles for an organisation to demonstrate in order to be considered a community business. These are defined by Power to Change (Richards et al., 2018a) as:

- **Locally rooted:** They are rooted in a particular geographical place and respond to its needs. For example, that could be high levels of urban deprivation or rural isolation.
- **Trading for the benefit of the local community:** They are businesses. Their income comes from things like renting out space in their buildings, trading as cafés, selling produce they grow or generating energy.
- **Accountable to the local community:** They are accountable to local people, for example through a community shares offer that creates members who have a voice in the business's direction.
- **Having broad community impact:** They benefit and impact their local community as a whole. They often morph into the hub of a neighbourhood, where all types of local groups gather, for example to access broadband or get training in vital life skills.

Community businesses often arise from within communities in order to meet a local need and as a result of being embedded within that community the business may benefit from local knowledge and positive relationships which enable the business to develop. Correspondingly the benefits to the community may be brought directly by the provision of a service or more indirectly through opportunities to volunteer and engage with others.

This systematic review aimed to answer the questions:

- What are the community wellbeing benefits and impacts of community business? These impacts may be reported at individual level, community/neighbourhood level, organisational or wider.
- What are the mechanisms for achieving these benefits and impacts?
- Under which conditions are community businesses most likely to lead to community wellbeing benefits?

The review is of community businesses as a whole, rather than all the diverse activities and services that they deliver.

Key definitions

Community wellbeing

Within the What Works Centre for Wellbeing's Communities of Place Evidence Programme, 'community wellbeing' is understood as being something additional and distinct from individual wellbeing, as it concerns relational aspects between groups of people, such as social networks, trust and reciprocity, power and control. We have chosen this broad, working definition to guide our thinking:

Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfil their potential. (Wiseman and Brasher 2008: 358).

As the term 'community wellbeing' may not be widely used, in this review we have included similar concepts such as social capital, social cohesion, social inclusion, community resilience, as well as measures of individual wellbeing and social determinants of health and wellbeing such as local economic outcomes (e.g. employment and volunteering).

Social relations

Social relations are recognised by the scientific literature and government practice as an important determinant of both individual and community wellbeing. The Office for National Statistics, for example, has included 'social relations' among the ten key domains of national wellbeing on the basis that:

Good social relationships and connections with people around us are vitally important to individual well-being. This is important to national well-being because the strength of these relationships helps generate social values such as trust in others and social cooperation between people and institutions within our communities. (Evans 2015, p. 10–11).

Methods

This is a systematic review of published and unpublished literature to identify the best available evidence on impacts, processes and enabling conditions. The methodology is based on standard guidance for carrying out mixed methods systematic reviews, and is reported following PRISMA guidelines.

Identifying evidence

The aim of the search strategy was to identify the best available evidence on links between community business and wellbeing, and was developed with input from the advisory group. In January 2019 we searched the following databases for English language literature with no date restriction: CINAHL, Social Policy and Practice (covers Social Care Online and Idox), SCOPUS, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Premier.

We also searched for 'grey' literature through Opensigle, topic experts (i.e. the advisory group and a call for evidence through the What Works Centre for Wellbeing) and 103 relevant websites.

We scanned reference lists of key systematic reviews and all included studies for relevant citations.

We kept an audit table of the search processes, with date of searches, search terms/strategy, database searched, number of hits, keywords and other comments included, in order that searches were transparent, systematic and replicable. The results of the searches were downloaded into Endnote X7 reference management software.

Selecting studies

Results of the searches of electronic databases were de-duplicated in Endnote and uploaded to EPPI-Reviewer 4 systematic review management software, which was used to store information and manage each stage of the review process. Relevant literature identified through other sources was added to EPPI-reviewer for screening at full paper stage.

Studies were selected for inclusion through two stages, using the inclusion criteria below. First, a random 10 per cent of all titles and abstracts were screened by all reviewers, followed by a 'calibration' exercise to ascertain levels of agreement. Once agreement was reached (80 per cent agreement on whether to include or exclude), the remaining titles and abstracts were double screened. Any queries were resolved by discussion. Full-text copies of potentially relevant studies were then retrieved and screened for inclusion. Disagreements were resolved by discussion, with a third reviewer being consulted where necessary.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Population	Local communities – in high income (OECD classification) countries only.
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Intervention	<p>Community businesses or social enterprises in high income countries that meet the following three criteria:</p> <p>Explicit objectives to address community needs/increase social value/improve community conditions.</p> <p>Locally rooted: they are rooted in a particular geographical place and respond to its needs. For example, high levels of urban deprivation or rural isolation.</p> <p>Trading for the benefit of the local community: they are businesses. Their income comes from activities such as renting out space in their buildings, trading as cafés, selling produce they grow, providing commissioned services or generating energy.</p> <p>We focused on interventions operating at and benefiting the community at neighbourhood level rather than city or national level. Community businesses did not need to be ‘incorporated’ or registered (e.g. by Companies House) to be included.</p> <p>We excluded for-profit businesses (e.g. supermarkets) setting up locally.</p>
Comparators	<p>Non-business community organisations; Or no comparator.</p>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wellbeing, community wellbeing, resilience • health or social determinants of health (including local economy) • process outcomes, i.e. aspects of set up, delivery, barriers and successes, such as training and marketing • contribution to community infrastructure, building collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ individual level outcomes – e.g. health, wellbeing, employment, volunteering, education. ○ community level outcomes – e.g. increased social capital, changes in neighbourhood environment. ○ organisational level outcomes – e.g. increased community representation on local boards, community needs identified. <p>Exclude outcomes relating to health care services, social care services and use of these services.</p>
Study designs	<p>Any research or evaluation study (quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods).</p>

Extracting data

Data from each included study were extracted into pre-designed and piloted forms on EPPI-reviewer. Owing to logistical and time constraints, it was not possible to contact study authors for any unclear, missing or additional data. Data extracted included: study authors and publication date, study aims, study design, setting/country, intervention, comparator, population, outcomes and main

findings in relation to the review questions. Details of the intervention were extracted using an adaptation of the TiDIER framework. This included an assessment of the level of community engagement or community control, using Arnstein's ladder of participation.

Assessing validity

Validity assessment of individual studies was undertaken using appropriate domain based checklists for qualitative and quantitative approaches, as detailed in the What Works Centre for Wellbeing's Methods Guide. Mixed method evaluations were assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT).

To help ensure that evidence from more methodologically robust studies was given prominence in the narrative synthesis, a pragmatic decision was made to assign a quality rating of 'low', 'moderate' or 'good' to each included study, based on the proportion of total criteria met on the appropriate checklist. If fewer than half of the criteria were met, the study was rated as 'low' quality; if 50–75 per cent of the criteria were met the study was rated as 'moderate' quality and if more than 75 per cent of the criteria were met, the study was rated as 'good' quality.

Synthesising data

Narrative synthesis formed the overall reporting framework for the review findings, which were grouped by outcome (individual, community, organisational and other), with findings from studies that were more methodologically robust being reported first in each section. Meta-analysis was considered for quantitative data but the studies were too heterogeneous, so the data were reported narratively in appropriate sections. Qualitative data were synthesised using thematic synthesis, which allowed further themes to emerge than those specified in the inclusion criteria. The strength of the body of evidence for each quantitative outcome was summarised using a modification of the GRADE (Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation) approach. The strength of evidence for each qualitative theme was summarised using the CERQual (Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative Research) approach. Strength of evidence for all outcomes was presented in a table summarising the findings (Table i) which took account of the likely effect of any methodological shortcomings on the risk of bias or reliability of the findings (rather than the pragmatic scoring of number of items used to order the narrative report), and consistency of findings across studies. Key findings and conclusions were drawn from this table, and it was used to inform the revised logic model.

We took a staged approach to analysis of the findings, with the view to developing a logic model of the pathways through which community businesses can influence community wellbeing, and the potential influencing factors along this pathway.

First, from preliminary analysis of the evidence based on initial coding and then development of thematic categories, we developed a preliminary logic model based on a framework of inputs/processes/mechanisms and intermediate outcomes. This then informed the structure of the narrative synthesis. Once the narrative synthesis was drafted, we revisited the logic model to look at linkages between themes and made any necessary adjustments based on the finalised review findings. The final logic model is presented in Figure i.

Results

We screened 17,706 records at title and abstract stage, and 43 studies were included. Key findings and conclusions are based on the strength of evidence ratings across the body of evidence, produced in the table (Table i), and the mechanisms identified in the revised logic model (Figure i).

- This systematic review looked at the impacts of community businesses as a whole on community wellbeing. One of the findings was that community businesses offer a range of activities and services in response to local need.
- There is consistent evidence from qualitative studies relating to positive perceptions of impact on community wellbeing, community involvement, neighbourhood environment, social relations and reduced social isolation.
- There is consistent evidence from qualitative studies on potentially effective mechanisms of change for community businesses to achieve impact:
 - community businesses identifying community needs
 - building collaborations between organisations and people in the community.
- There is consistent evidence from qualitative studies of risks associated with balancing the need to become financially sustainable and seek diverse sources of funding, versus the need to stay true to the original values of the community business.
- There is moderate evidence from qualitative studies on risks associated with funding more generally, with asset ownership, and with recruiting and managing staff and volunteers.
- There is moderate evidence from qualitative and quantitative studies of positive impacts on social cohesion, civic participation and individual wellbeing.

- There is moderate evidence from qualitative studies of positive impacts on quality of life, health, mental health, employment and volunteering.
- The synthesis and logic model indicated three main mechanisms by which community businesses impact on wellbeing outcomes:
 - community engagement leading to increased community involvement, increased individual wellbeing and a better place to live
 - strengthening community infrastructure, leading to more connected community infrastructure and a better place to live
 - skills development, leading to increased skills and confidence, improved individual wellbeing, better employment prospects and a stronger local economy.
- Thirty-two of the 43 included studies were based in the UK, which means the review findings are highly relevant to the UK context.
- The evidence base could be improved by more good quality studies; the review included only six good quality studies, and two of these were process evaluations.

Table i: Summary of findings

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
Community level					
Community wellbeing (CWB)	8 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 4 moderate and 4 low quality studies report positive perceptions of CWB	STRONG	Unsure of methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	5 mixed methods studies	<i>Mixed methods:</i> 4 moderate and 1 low quality studies report positive impact on CWB	MODERATE	Concerns about methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Neighbourhood environment	2 qualitative studies 6 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 4 moderate and 4 low quality studies report positive perceptions of neighbourhood environment	STRONG	Unsure of methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	7 mixed methods studies 1 survey	<i>Mixed methods:</i> 4 moderate, 1 good and 2 low quality studies report positive effects on neighbourhood environment	MODERATE	Concerns about coherence and reporting bias: best quality study reports negative as well as positive findings, but lower quality studies only report positive findings (downgrade) Concerns about methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Social relations	7 case studies 5 qualitative studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 4 low, 7 moderate and 1 good quality studies	STRONG	Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
	9 mixed methods studies 1 survey 1 evaluation of unclear design	report positive perceptions of improvement in social relations <i>Mixed methods studies:</i> 1 good, 4 moderate and 5 low quality studies report positive effects on social relations	MODERATE	Some concerns about methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
Social cohesion	2 case studies 2 qualitative studies 3 mixed methods studies 1 survey	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 2 moderate and 2 low quality studies <i>Mixed methods and survey evidence:</i> 3 moderate and 1 low quality studies	STRONG MODERATE	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Some concerns over coherence across body of evidence: best quality studies report negative as well as positive findings, but lower quality studies only report positive findings (downgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations	MODERATE LOW
Civic participation (CP)	4 qualitative studies 6 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 6 moderate, 3 low and 1 good quality studies report positive perceptions of CP	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
	4 mixed methods studies 1 survey	<i>Mixed methods and survey evidence:</i> 3 moderate, 1 good and 1 low quality studies	MODERATE	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Individual level					
Individual wellbeing	6 case studies 1 qualitative study	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 3 low, 4 moderate and 1 good quality studies reported positive perceptions of individual wellbeing	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	2 surveys 6 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i> 3 low, 3 moderate and 2 good quality studies reported no impact on individual wellbeing	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
Social isolation or loneliness	6 qualitative studies 3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 6 moderate, 1 low and 2 good quality studies	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	3 mixed methods evaluations 2 surveys 1 evaluation of unknown design	<i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i> 2 low and 4 moderate quality studies	MODERATE	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
Quality of life	1 mixed methods evaluation	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 1 good quality study	STRONG	Only one study (downgrade)	MODERATE
Health	2 qualitative studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 2 moderate quality studies	STRONG	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	3 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 1 good and 1 low quality studies	MODERATE	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Mental health	2 case studies 2 qualitative studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 3 moderate and 1 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over inconsistent findings across body of evidence (downgrade) Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	3 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 1 good, 1 moderate and 1 low quality studies	MODERATE	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Civic participation	5 qualitative studies 4 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 8 moderate and 1 low quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	1 survey		MODERATE		LOW

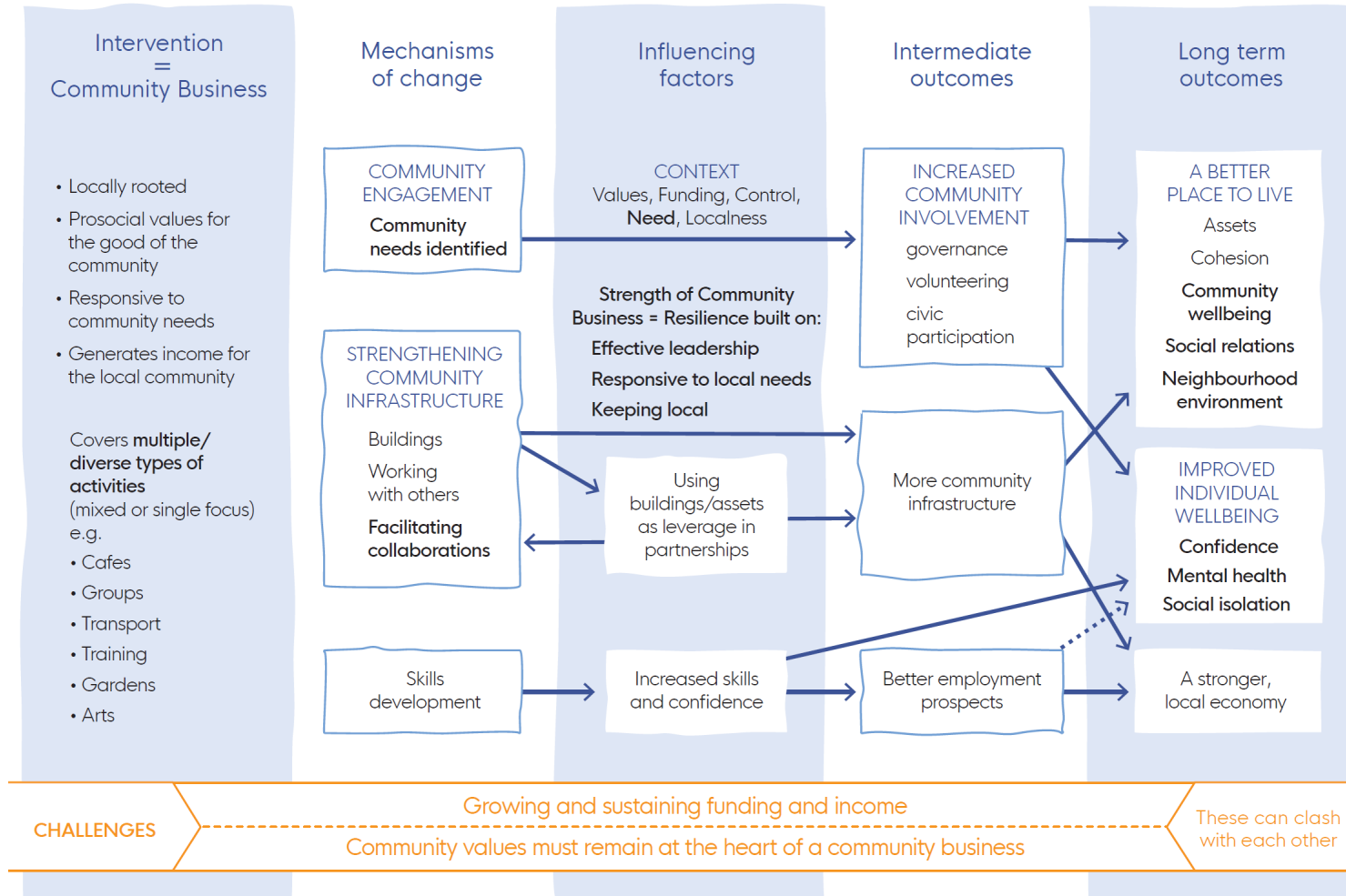
Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
	2 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality studies		Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	
Employment	1 qualitative study 7 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 good, 3 moderate and 4 low quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	4 mixed methods evaluations 1 evaluation of unclear design	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 3 moderate and 2 low quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Volunteering	4 case studies 1 qualitative study	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 3 low and 2 moderate quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	7 mixed methods studies 2 surveys	<i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i> 6 moderate, 1 good and 2 low quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Organisational level					
Economic	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 low, 1 moderate and 1 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	4 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i>	MODERATE	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade)	LOW

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
		2 low and 2 moderate quality studies		Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogeneous outcomes (downgrade?)	
Community needs identified	1 qualitative study 9 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 5 low, 3 moderate and 2 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	9 mixed methods evaluations 1 evaluation of unclear design	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 6 low and 4 moderate quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Increased representation on local boards	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality studies	STRONG	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
	4 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 1 low, 1 good and 2 moderate quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Building collaborations	3 qualitative studies 9 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 6 low, 5 moderate and 2 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	5 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i>	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
	1 evaluation of unclear design	4 moderate and 2 low quality studies		Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	
Risks – economic	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality case studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogenous outcomes (downgrade)	MODERATE
	2 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 1 low quality evaluations	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Risks – values versus funding	9 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 2 good, 12 moderate and 5 low quality case studies	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	1 mixed methods evaluation	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate quality evaluation	MODERATE	Only one study (downgrade) Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Risks – innovation	1 case study	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 low quality case study	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Only one study (downgrade)	MODERATE
	2 mixed methods evaluations			Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
		<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 1 good quality evaluations		Coherence across body of evidence	MODERATE
Risks – asset ownership	3 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality evaluations	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Risks – staff and volunteers	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 good, 1 moderate and 1 low quality case studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogeneous outcomes (downgrade)	MODERATE
	3 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 2 moderate and 1 low quality evaluations	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogeneous outcomes (downgrade)	LOW

Figure i: Logic model (revised)



In Figure i, themes highlighted in bold represent mechanisms, influencing factors or outcomes for which the body of evidence is strong or consistent, when considered as a whole in Table i.

Conclusions

This systematic review identified a substantial body of evidence indicating that community businesses impact positively on community wellbeing in multiple ways, by providing a range of activities and services in response to local needs and values.

The three main mechanisms by which community businesses impact on community wellbeing were:

- community engagement
- skills development
- strengthening community infrastructure.

Risks and potential negative impacts of community businesses on community wellbeing were also identified. These included:

- staffing and volunteers
- management and transfer of assets
- availability of funding
- conflicts between obtaining funding and the values of the community business.

Implications for policy and practice

- There is a substantial body of evidence indicating that community businesses have a positive impact on community wellbeing, but support is required to help them navigate the potential financial and other risks involved.
- Community businesses impact on community wellbeing by offering a range of activities and services in response to local need.
- Community engagement, skills development and strengthening community infrastructure by asset ownership and collaborations with other organisations are the three main mechanisms by which community businesses impact on community wellbeing.
- Community businesses can increase civic participation and volunteering in a community.
- Community businesses can provide education, training and volunteering opportunities to increase skills and confidence for employment.

- Community businesses need to manage the tension between becoming sustainable with ongoing income sources versus staying true to their local community vision and values.
- More support is required for community businesses to obtain funding, particularly enterprise development support, to help groups to trade as part of their business model before they take on an asset or service. For example, providing a start-up grant and paid-for support to help groups to focus on the right aspects of sustainability for the start of their community business journey.
- More facilitation and support is required around asset transfer and ownership to help community businesses consider whether it is feasible for them and, if so, to find the right model.
- Policy makers and practitioners need to be aware of the length of time and resources required for community businesses to become sustainable.
- The process through which volunteers are recruited, retained and supported needs resourcing, particularly in areas of deprivation where finding volunteers can be hard.
- Leadership/succession planning and staff burnout is an issue that needs to be addressed. Policy makers and practitioners need to consider how to secure interest from non-sector volunteers and leaders for example by providing more and practical brokerage to help make connections across different sectors.

Evidence gaps and implications for research

- Better quality evaluations of community businesses are needed. These should include comparison groups where possible (for quantitative study designs), and repeated measurements.
- More research is needed on community wellbeing outcomes of community businesses.
- Better reporting of all studies is needed – in this review, the methods were not clearly reported in most included studies. This affects the confidence we can place in the findings.
- The fact that fewer than half of our included studies came from electronic database searches highlights the need for researchers to search for grey literature when undertaking systematic reviews of community-based approaches.
- No studies were found of community businesses that did not have a physical hub. This suggests the need for primary research into these types of community businesses (e.g. trading solely online).

We identified some evidence within the review on the potential adverse impacts of community businesses involving the transfer of assets and responsibilities from the public sector ownership to a number of individuals within a community. Future research could consider:

1. How the transfer of public assets and responsibilities impacts on the ability of existing public providers (including health and social care, and local authorities) to provide services (including their long-term viability in the context of austerity and the growing privatisation of service provision).
2. Whether small community organisations are sufficiently equipped and resourced to replace large public service providers, including:
 - funding
 - governance
 - professionalism/values underpinning work
 - PPI
 - skills, training, professional development, support and experience
 - cross-organisation, cross-discipline, cross-sector workingand how this may impact on the health and wellbeing of their staff and the communities they serve.
3. The wider democratic and community empowerment implications of transfers (including how representative and accountable they are), and the how this may impact on the health and wellbeing of communities in the long term.

1. Background

1.1 Community businesses

Several terms exist for the categorisation of organisations which exist to provide broad social benefit. This variety has resulted from a number of historical and political factors (Harries, 2018) and common terms include 'community enterprise', 'social enterprise', 'development trusts', 'co-operative and community benefit societies' and 'community interest company'.

Enabled by legislative changes, the community business has developed out of this sector as a distinctive form of not-for-profit organisation. The term 'community business' is not restricted to a single organisational legal structure. Bedford and Harper (2018) observed, when looking at the role of community businesses, that there are four foundational principles for an organisation to demonstrate in order to be considered a community business. These are defined by Power to Change (Richards et al., 2018a) as:

- **Locally rooted:** They are rooted in a particular geographical place and respond to its needs. For example, that could be high levels of urban deprivation or rural isolation.
- **Trading for the benefit of the local community:** They are businesses. Their income comes from things like renting out space in their buildings, trading as cafés, selling produce they grow or generating energy.
- **Accountable to the local community:** They are accountable to local people, for example through a community shares offer that creates members who have a voice in the business's direction.
- **Having broad community impact:** They benefit and impact their local community as a whole. They often morph into the hub of a neighbourhood, where all types of local groups gather, for example to access broadband or get training in vital life skills.

This definition is somewhat similar to the EMES network definition of social enterprises as:

'...organisations with an explicit aim to benefit the community, initiated by a group of citizens and in which the material interest of capital investment is subject to limits. Social enterprises also place high value on the autonomy and on economic risk-taking related to on-going socio-economic activities' (Defourny and Nyssens, 2006: 5). Notable differences between social enterprises and community businesses are that community businesses must be locally rooted (place based), funds raised must be redistributed in some way back into a particular neighbourhood level place, and they must be accountable to the local community.

Community businesses often arise from within communities in order to meet a local need and, as a result of being embedded within that community, the business may benefit from local knowledge and positive relationships which enable the business to develop. Correspondingly, the benefits to the community may be brought directly by the provision of a service or more indirectly through opportunities to volunteer and engage with others or through local economic development.

Community businesses are able to develop in a range of structures, diverse enough to meet the unique needs of a wide range of settings and across a number of economic sectors (Perry, 2018, Stumbitz et al., 2018). Power to Change estimated there were around 7,800 community businesses in operation in England during 2018. These businesses ensured the continued provision of shops, pubs, cafés, housing and energy production as well as delivering public sector services via a mix of volunteers and employees (Diamond et al., 2018).

There may be no such thing as an archetypal community business and Buckley et al. (2017) suggest that devising an exact definition may be unhelpful. The diversity of organisational forms is matched by the diversity of services and forms of trading. Therefore, when aiming to understand the impact of community businesses on community wellbeing this review has not been prescriptive about the legal structure or form of the organisations under consideration.

However, community accountability is an essential feature of a community business and perhaps that which differentiates it from other forms of not-for-profit organisations. Accountability can be understood as the ways in which the business, whatever form this takes, is answerable to and relevant for a geographical area. Accountability may be achieved through formal ways such as meetings with local people or more informal methods such as open and transparent communications (Buckley et al., 2017). Accountability has been an essential feature of the literature included in this review. Accountability could be 'formalised' using membership, where members have a stake in the business operation, decision making or strategic direction; such membership could be ordinary (such as a co-operative member) or at board level. As accountability, involvement and participation can exist on a spectrum, we have not restricted the review to community businesses that are community-led (as in Figure 1), but to those that are accountable to the community.

Figure 1: Community business in comparison to other organisational forms (Percy et al., 2016)



1.2 Community wellbeing

‘Wellbeing’ is an increasingly pertinent measure of how successfully individuals, communities, and nations are performing. Whilst there are many well-known and widely used measures and scales of wellbeing at an individual level, at a community level wellbeing is less well defined, and conceptually its complexity has been sometimes only partially captured (Atkinson et al., 2019). Some definitions of community wellbeing focus only on the functional aspects of the environment; for example, Chanan (2002) defines community wellbeing as how well a locality is functioning, how well it is governed, how well services are operating, and how safe and pleasant it feels to live there. Others are limited to either specific aspects such as the economy (McHardy and O’Sullivan, 2004, Allensworth and Rochin, 1996) or to the individual satisfaction of its members with different needs (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006).

Within the What Works Centre for Wellbeing’s Communities of Place Evidence Programme, ‘community wellbeing’ is understood as being something additional and distinct from individual wellbeing, as it concerns relational aspects between groups of people, such as social networks, trust and reciprocity, power and control (Prilleltensky, 2012). In the collaborative development phase of the Communities Evidence Programme, the preferred definition of community wellbeing chosen by survey respondents was:

about strong networks of relationships and support between people in a community, both in close relationships and friendships, and between neighbours and acquaintances (Communities Evidence Programme, 2015).

Drawing on a conceptual review of the literature (Atkinson et al., 2017, Atkinson et al., 2019), the Communities of Place Evidence Programme has chosen this broad working definition to guide its thinking:

Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfil their potential. [Wiseman and Brasher, 2008: 358].

This is recognised by Lee and Kim (Lee and Kim, 2015) as one of the most holistic conceptualisations of community wellbeing. Moreover, we believe it is a very general and broad working definition, which may cover a variety of measures and concepts defined in different ways across different academic disciplines or governmental departments. In this regard, the What Works Centre for Wellbeing Communities of Place programme produced a schematic description of this concept (Figure 2, also available at: https://www.whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/what-is-community-wellbeing/?mc_cid=53cf82ad99&mc_eid=fa077fdc1f) and a working theory of change (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Concept of community wellbeing (from Atkinson et al., 2017)

As the term 'community wellbeing' may not be widely used, in this study we have included similar concepts such as 'social capital' and 'social cohesion', 'social inclusion', 'community resilience' (Elliot et al., 2013), as we did for the earlier reviews (e.g. Bagnall et al., 2018), as well as measures of

individual wellbeing, and social determinants of health and wellbeing such as local economic outcomes (e.g. employment and volunteering).

In terms of measuring community wellbeing, there may be many proxy indicators used to describe it, ranging from:

- whole area indicators (some based on population data, such as certain aspects of health, and some not, such as access to green space), to
- instruments (usually based on local sample survey data) that seek to measure aspects of social capital (such as trust or levels of crime), to
- aggregate scores of individual wellbeing across a geographic area (such as the ONS ANS survey indicators of self-reported wellbeing).



Figure 3: Theory of change of what works to increase community wellbeing (South et al., 2017)

Social relations

Social relations are recognised by the scientific literature and government practice as an important determinant of both individual and community wellbeing. The Office for National Statistics, for

example, has included 'social relations' among the ten key domains of national wellbeing on the basis that:

Good social relationships and connections with people around us are vitally important to individual well-being. This is important to national well-being because the strength of these relationships helps generate social values such as trust in others and social cooperation between people and institutions within our communities (Evans, 2015, pp. 10–11).

1.2 Aims and objectives

To our knowledge there are no other systematic reviews of the impact of community businesses on wellbeing. A recent review explored a 'knowledge divide' between 'social enterprise' and 'social innovation' (Szijarto et al., 2018) and highlighted a lack of evaluation studies particularly in the area of social enterprise. There is a good evidence base on employment and local economic conditions and health (Bambra et al., 2014, Curtis et al., 2018, Marmot, 2010), but this is not specific to the contribution of community businesses, which may be more locally rooted and support the transition to volunteering and employment for disadvantaged groups.

Therefore, this systematic review aimed to explore the impacts of community business on wellbeing, by investigating the following review questions:

1. What are the community wellbeing benefits and impacts of community business?
These impacts may be reported at individual level, community/neighbourhood level, organisational (e.g. regeneration agency) or wider.
2. What are the mechanisms for achieving these benefits and impacts?
3. Under which conditions are community businesses most likely to lead to community wellbeing benefits?

The review is looking at community businesses as a whole, rather than all the diverse activities and services that they deliver.

2. Methods

This is a systematic review of published and unpublished literature to identify the best available evidence on impacts, processes and enabling conditions of community businesses on community wellbeing. The methodology is based on standard guidance for carrying out systematic reviews (Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, 2009, Higgins and Thomas, 2019), and the What Works Centre for Wellbeing's methods guide (Snape et al., 2019). The review is reported following PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2009).

We set up a review advisory group, which included the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, Power to Change, Locality, and academic advisors. The role of the advisory group was to provide topic and methodological advice to the research team throughout the research process, including supporting development of the search strategy to identify the best available evidence, refining definitions, discussing the most relevant unit(s) of analysis, and reviewing emergent findings. The advisory group met at the beginning, at the mid-point of the review and at the end, and reviewed and commented on drafts of the final report.

Identifying evidence

The aim of the search strategy was to identify the best available evidence on links between community business and wellbeing, and it was developed with input from the advisory group. In January 2019 we searched the following databases for English language literature with no date restriction: CINAHL, Social Policy and Practice (covers Social Care Online and Idox), SCOPUS, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Premier. The full search strategy is reported in Appendix 1.

We also searched for 'grey' literature through Opensigle, topic experts (i.e. the advisory group and a call for evidence through the What Works Centre for Wellbeing) and 103 relevant websites (a full list of websites searched is reported in Appendix 2).

We scanned reference lists of key systematic reviews and all included studies for relevant citations.

We kept an audit table of the search processes, with date of searches, search terms/strategy, database searched, number of hits, keywords and other comments included, in order that searches were transparent, systematic and replicable. The results of the searches were downloaded into Endnote X7 reference management software.

Selecting studies

Results of the searches of electronic databases were de-duplicated in Endnote and uploaded to EPPI-Reviewer 4 systematic review management software, which was used to store information and manage each stage of the review process (Thomas, 2010). Relevant grey literature identified through other sources was added to EPPI-reviewer for screening at full paper stage.

Studies were selected for inclusion through two stages, using the inclusion criteria below. First, a random 10 per cent of all titles and abstracts were screened by all reviewers, followed by a 'calibration' exercise to ascertain levels of agreement. Once agreement was reached (80 per cent agreement on whether to include or exclude), the remaining titles and abstracts were double screened. Any queries were resolved by discussion. Full-text copies of potentially relevant studies were then retrieved and screened for inclusion. Disagreements were resolved by discussion, with a third reviewer being consulted where necessary. The results of the abstract screening and full paper screening were recorded in EPPI-Reviewer, and results of a third screening check at data extraction stage are presented in Appendix 5, with reasons for exclusion. The results of the study selection process are presented in Figure 5 in Chapter 3.

What is an intervention?

Community activity is contextual, developmental and covers both informal and formal structures/roles. Community interventions will often not be neatly defined, developmental, not pre-determined and not always clear about what is the mechanism of change – the intervention or process of participation (South and Phillips, 2014). This is challenging but important for selecting studies in a systematic review. The development features of community businesses may be a particular challenge as they evolve in a community over time and potentially have changing levels of community ownership and participation. Publications needed to demonstrate there was an intention to make a change, and the intervention was evaluated. Research on an existing entity without an explicit intention/goal/objectives was excluded, as this was about determinants of community wellbeing rather than 'what works'. We also excluded papers that were exclusively about processes, e.g. volunteering, but included papers that described interventions, pathways/change mechanisms and how they related to outcomes. We included papers where the *intention* was not about improving wellbeing but wellbeing outcomes were an unintended consequence.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Population	Local communities – in high income (OECD classification) countries only
Intervention	<p>Community businesses or social enterprises in high income countries that meet the following three criteria:</p> <p>Explicit objectives to address community needs/increase social value/improve community conditions.</p> <p>Locally rooted: they are rooted in a particular geographical place and respond to its needs. For example, high levels of urban deprivation or rural isolation.</p> <p>Trading for the benefit of the local community: they are businesses. Their income comes from things like renting out space in their buildings, trading as cafés, selling produce they grow or generating energy.</p> <p>We focused on interventions operating at and benefiting the community at neighbourhood level rather than city or national level. Community businesses did not need to be ‘incorporated’ or registered (e.g. by Companies House) to be included.</p> <p>We excluded for-profit businesses (e.g. supermarkets) setting up locally.</p>
Comparators	Non-business community organisations; Or no comparator.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wellbeing, community wellbeing, resilience, • health or social determinants of health (including local economy) • process outcomes i.e. aspects of set up, delivery, barriers and successes, such as training, marketing etc., • contribution to community infrastructure, building collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ individual level outcomes – e.g. health, wellbeing, employment, volunteering, education. ○ community level outcomes – e.g. increased social capital, changes in neighbourhood environment. ○ organisational level – e.g. increased community representation on local boards, community needs identified. <p>Exclude outcomes relating to healthcare services, social care services and service use</p>
Study designs	Any research or evaluation study (quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods), including theoretical or conceptual papers (e.g. theories of change, conceptual frameworks, logic models).

Extracting data

Data from each included study were extracted into pre-designed and piloted forms on EPPI-reviewer. Owing to logistical and time constraints, it was not possible to contact study authors for any unclear, missing or additional data. Data extracted included: study authors and publication date, study aims, study design, setting/country, intervention, comparator, population, outcomes and main findings in relation to the review questions. Details of the intervention were extracted using an adaptation of the TiDIER framework (Hoffmann T, 2014). This included an assessment of the level of community engagement or community control, using Arnstein's ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969).

Assessing validity

Validity assessment was undertaken using appropriate domain based checklists for qualitative and quantitative approaches as detailed in the What Works Centre for Wellbeing's methods guide (Snape et al., 2019). Mixed method evaluations were assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Pluye, 2014). Details of the criteria used are given in Appendix 3.

To help ensure that evidence from more methodologically robust studies was presented first in the narrative synthesis, a pragmatic decision was made to assign a quality rating of 'low', 'moderate' or 'good' to each included study, based on the proportion of total criteria met on the appropriate checklist. If fewer than half of the criteria were met, the study was rated as 'low' quality; if 50–75 per cent of the criteria were met the study was rated as 'moderate' quality and if more than 75 per cent of the criteria were met, the study was rated as 'good' quality.

Synthesising data

Narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006) formed the overall reporting framework for the review findings, which were grouped by outcome (individual, community, organisational and other), with findings from studies that were more methodologically robust being reported first in each section. A mixed method systematic review design similar to that used by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and co-ordinating (EPPI) Centre (Thomas and Harden, 2008) was used to combine data from different study designs.

We planned to use a range of approaches depending on the design of the included studies, including narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006), meta-analysis for quantitative studies (Higgins and Thomas, 2019, CRD, 2009) if appropriate, and thematic synthesis for qualitative studies (Dixon-Woods et al.,

2007, Thomas and Harden, 2008), with meta-ethnographic approaches for qualitative studies if appropriate (Noblit and Hare, 1988).

Meta-analysis was considered for quantitative data but the studies were too heterogeneous, so the data were reported narratively in appropriate sections. Qualitative data were synthesised using thematic synthesis, which allowed further themes to emerge than those specified in the inclusion criteria. QSR NVivo software was used to manage the data and ensure a transparent process (Thomas and Harden 2008, Oliver et al., 2005, Harden et al., 2004). All studies reporting qualitative data were uploaded into NVivo as PDF files. Two members of the review team (CF, AMB) then jointly developed an initial coding framework that summarised the themes in the data following an inductive, iterative process. This involved the reviewers independently familiarising themselves with, and undertaking, free-coding of a random sample of five papers, highlighting text (including verbatim quotations from respondents in the studies) relevant to the review questions. The reviewers met to discuss their initial coding and to jointly agree a combined coding framework, including hierarchies of descriptive and analytical themes and sub-themes.

Reviewers collectively identified similarities and differences between the codes to start to group them into descriptive themes. Analytical themes were then developed by applying the review objectives to the descriptive theme (Thomas and Harden, 2008).

The agreed coding framework was then 'built' in NVivo (with codes managed as NVivo nodes) and two reviewers (CF, AMB) undertook coding of all the papers reporting qualitative findings, labelling the text to single or multiple nodes where relevant. The coding framework was expanded with new descriptive codes where existing codes did not fully capture the textual data. A thematic narrative synthesis was then written and elements were incorporated into the overall narrative synthesis of the review, where these were relevant to the review questions.

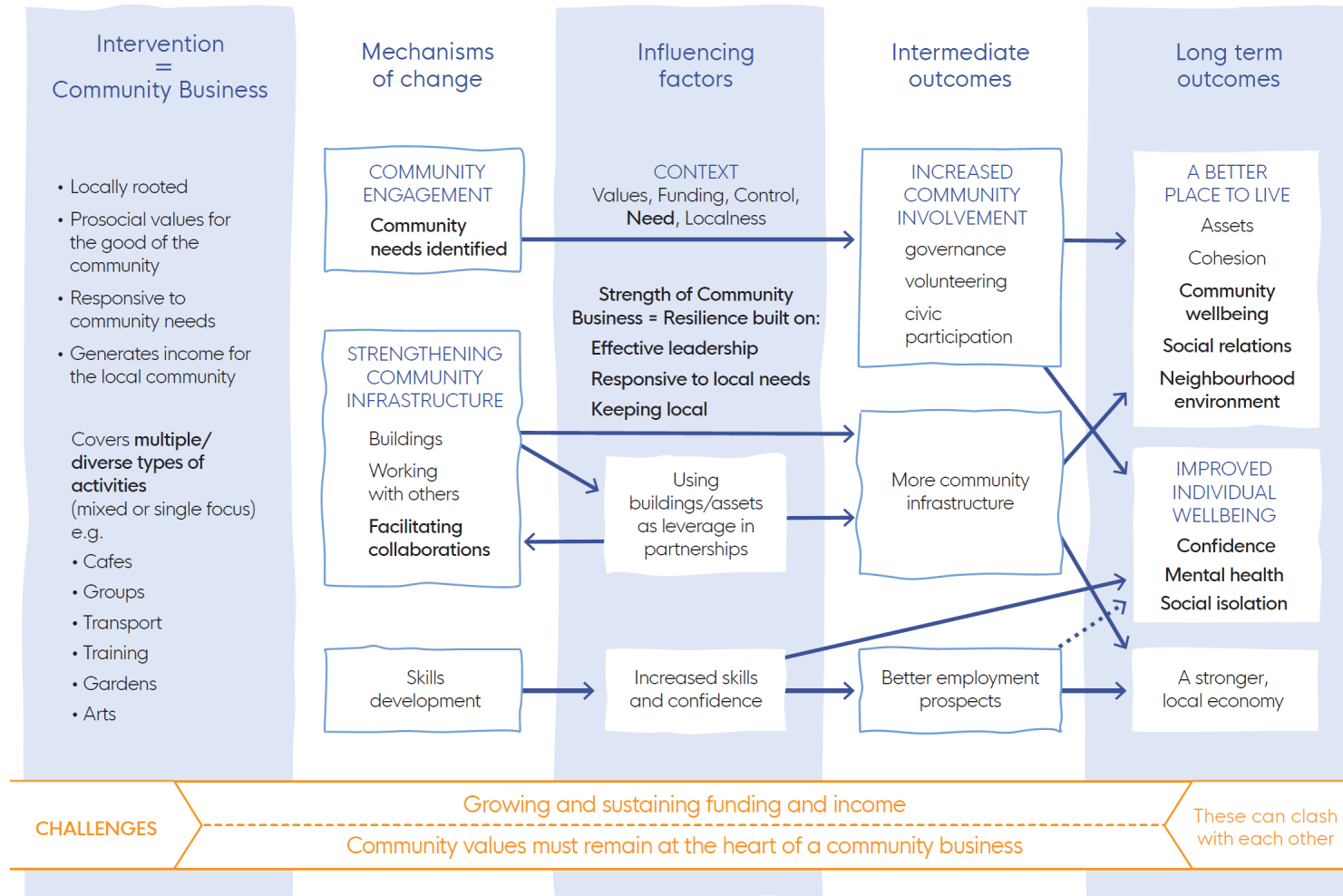
The strength of the body of evidence for each quantitative outcome was summarised using a modification of the GRADE (grading of recommendations, assessment, development and evaluation) approach (Guyatt et al., 2008, Montgomery et al., 2019). The strength of evidence for each qualitative theme was summarised using the CERQual (confidence in the evidence from reviews of qualitative research) approach (Lewin et al., 2015). Strength of evidence for all outcomes was presented in a table summarising the findings, which took account of the likely effect of any methodological shortcomings on the risk of bias or reliability of the findings (rather than the pragmatic scoring of number of items used to order the narrative report), and consistency of findings across studies. Key findings and conclusions were drawn from this table, and it was used to inform the revised logic model.

We used the recent primer on the GRADE approach in global health (Montgomery et al., 2019) to apply a 'complexity perspective' when rating the strength of the body of evidence for each outcome. This suggests modifications to the GRADE approach to take into account that randomised controlled trials are not the most feasible or even appropriate study designs being used to investigate the effects of public health interventions, and includes considerations of important dimensions of context, implementation and other potential mediators and moderators of effect.

We took a staged approach to analysing the findings, with the view to developing a logic model of the pathways through which community businesses can influence community wellbeing, and the potential influencing factors along this pathway.

First, from preliminary analysis of the evidence, based on initial coding and then development of thematic categories, we developed a preliminary logic model, based on a framework of inputs/processes/mechanisms and intermediate outcomes (Figure 4). This then informed the structure of the narrative synthesis. Once the narrative synthesis was drafted, we revisited the logic model to look at linkages between themes and made any necessary adjustments based on the finalised review findings. A revised logic model is presented in Results (Chapter 3).

Figure 4: Preliminary logic model



3 Results

3.1 Study selection

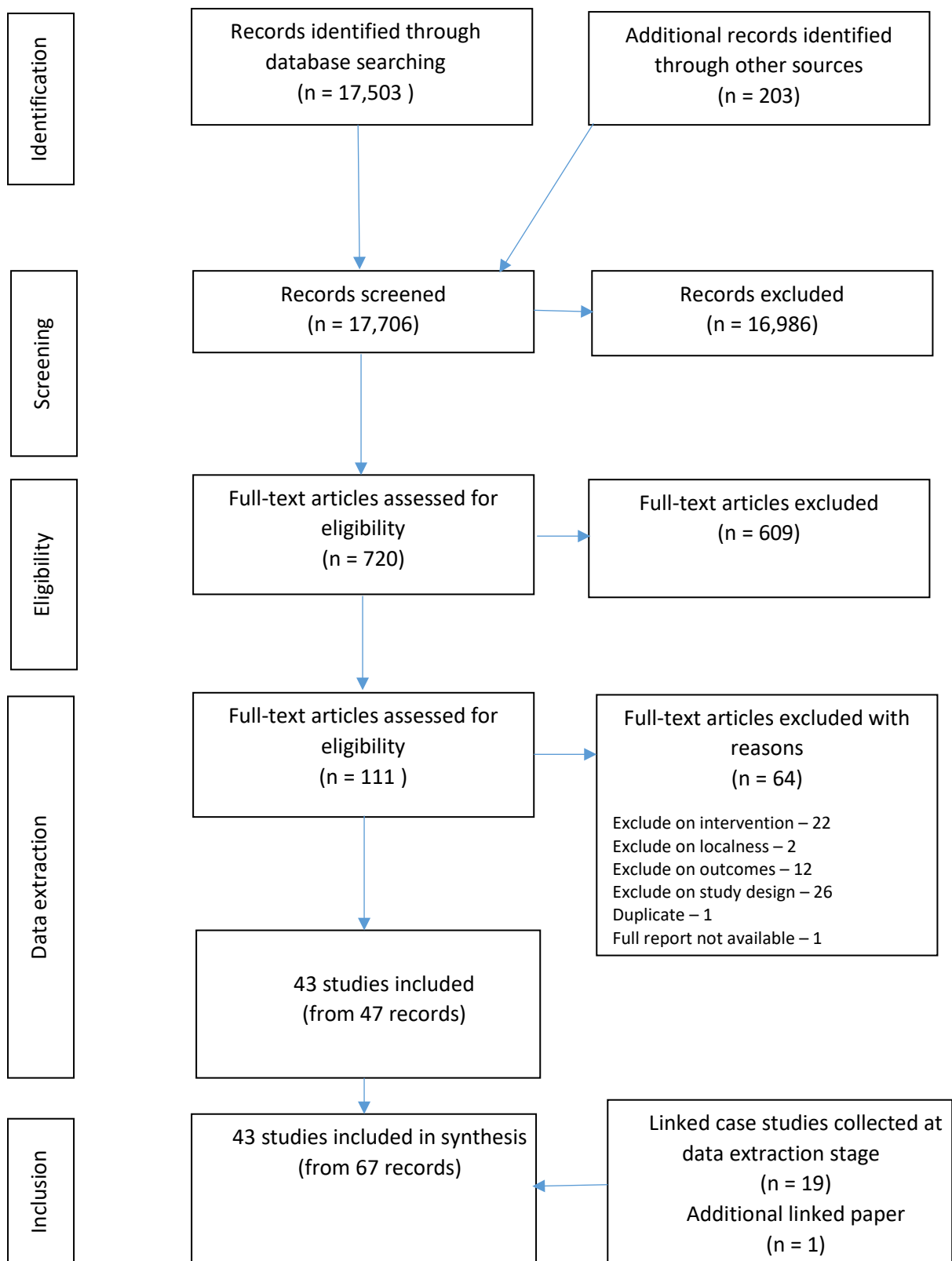
Electronic database searching yielded 17,503 potentially relevant titles and abstracts, with 203 additional articles identified through websites and from other sources, giving a total of 17,706 records screened at title and abstract stage. We excluded 16,986 articles at this stage and 720 were retrieved in full for screening against the inclusion criteria. Of these, 111 went forward for data extraction, 64 of these articles were excluded at data extraction stage, but 19 linked case studies were retrieved, giving a total of 43 studies (from 67 articles) included in the review (Figure 5).

Only 20 of the 43 included studies (46 per cent) came from electronic database searching. Twenty (49 per cent) came from searches of relevant websites (Aiken et al., 2011, Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey et al., 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Buckley et al., 2017, Gore et al., 2003, Lionais, 2004, Mazzei, 2013, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009, Morley et al., 2017, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Willis et al., 2017), and two (5 per cent) came from the call for evidence (Dewhurst, 2016, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018). See Appendix 4 for the full list of included studies and linked articles.

3.2 Description of included studies

Forty-three studies from 67 articles were included in the review (Aiken et al., 2008, Aiken et al., 2011, Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017, Buckley et al., 2017, Chan, 2016, Lionais, 2004, Dickens et al., 2015, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Gordon, 2002, Gore et al., 2003, Hayton, 1995, Hibbert et al., 2003, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Dewhurst, 2016, Henderson et al., 2018, Juska et al., 2006, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Mazzei, 2013, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009, Kotecha et al., 2017, Moreton et al., 2005, Morland, 2010, Morley et al., 2017, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, Bedford and Harper, 2018, SERIO, 2017, Seyfang, 2007, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012, Willis et al., 2017). These covered a wide range of community business models and activities, as detailed below, and in the table of included studies (Appendix 7).

Figure 5: Study selection flow chart



3.2.1 Country

The vast majority of the included studies (n=32) were from the UK. Of these, three included all four devolved nations, three were from Scotland, two were from England and Wales and 24 were from England alone. There were no studies from Northern Ireland or Wales alone. Other studies were from Canada (n=2), Australia (n=1), Austria and Germany (n=1), Denmark (n=1), Lithuania (n=1), the Netherlands (n=1), Sweden (n=1), and the United States of America (n=1). Two studies were across multiple countries (see Table 1 and Figure 6).

Table 1: Country of publication of included studies

Country	References
United Kingdom (all four nations)	Aiken et al., 2011; Plunkett Foundation, 2018a; Plunkett Foundation, 2018b
England and Wales	Bailey et al., 2012; Dickens et al., 2015
England	Bailey et al., 2012; Baker et al., 2009; Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017; Buckley et al., 2017; Gore et al., 2003; Hayton, 1995; Shared Intelligence, 2014; Dewhurst et al., 2016; Dickens et al., 2015; Mazzei et al., 2013; Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018; Mazzei and Bradford, 2009; Kotecha et al., 2017; Moreton et al., 2005; Morley et al., 2017; Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984; Richards et al., 2018a; Richards et al., 2018b; Richards et al., 2018c; Richards et al., 2018d; Bedford and Harper, 2018; SERIO, 2017; Seyfang, 2007; Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013; Stumbitz et al., 2018; Willis et al., 2017
Scotland	Gordon et al., 2002; Henderson et al., 2018; Hibbert et al., 2003
Canada	Chan et al., 2016; Lionais et al., 2004
Australia	Barraket and Archer, 2010
Austria and Germany	Lang and Roessler, 2011
Denmark	Rasmussen et al., 2018
Lithuania	Juska et al., 2006
Netherlands	Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016
Sweden	Westlund and Gawell, 2012

United States of America	Morland, 2010
Multiple countries	Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey et al., 2018

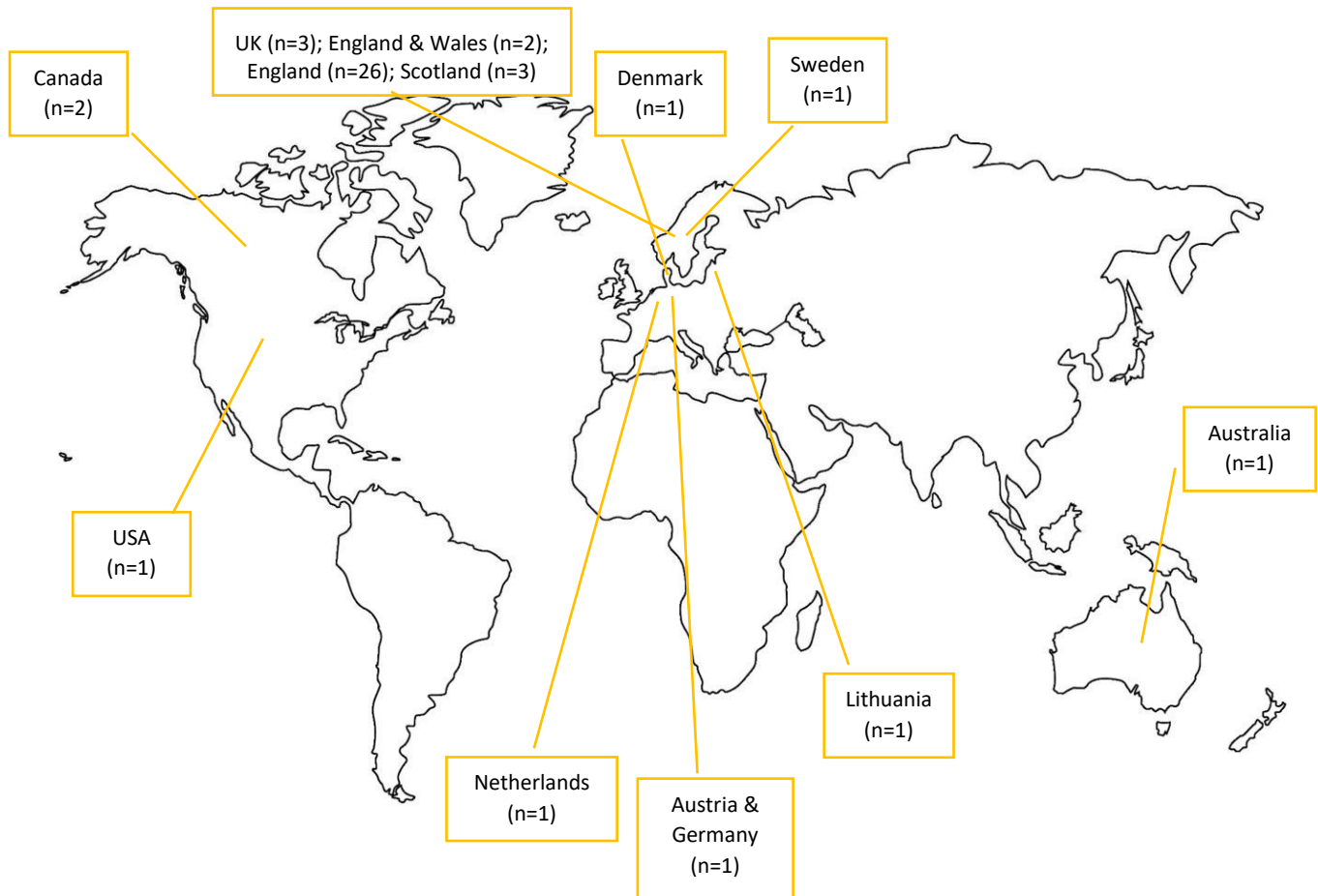


Figure 6: Map of included studies

3.2.2 Study design

Case studies (CS) were the most prevalent study design (n=16), whether single or multiple case study designs. There were thirteen mixed methods evaluations (MME), eight qualitative studies (QLS), four surveys (SV), two economic evaluations (EE), and one ‘evaluation’ that did not give any further clues as to its design. Two studies (Dewhurst, 2016 and Morley et al., 2017) were coded as more than one study design, as they included an economic evaluation (Table 2).

Table 2: Study design of included studies

Study design	References
Case studies	Bailey, 2012; Bailey et al., 2018; Baker et al., 2009; Buckley et al., 2017; Gordon, 2002; Gore et al., 2003; Hayton, 1995; Henderson

	et al., 2018; Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016; Kotecha et al., 2017; Lang and Roessl, 2011; Lionais, 2004; Mazzei, 2013; Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984; Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013; Stumbitz et al., 2018
Mixed methods evaluations	Aiken et al., 2007; Aiken et al., 2011; Dewhurst, 2016; Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018; Mazzei and Bradford, 2009; Moreton et al., 2005; Morley et al., 2017; Plunkett Foundation, 2018a; Richards et al., 2018a; Richards et al., 2018b; Richards et al., 2018c; Richards et al., 2018d; SERIO, 2017; Seyfang, 2007
Qualitative studies (not case studies)	Barraket and Archer, 2010; Bedford and Harper, 2018; Dickens et al., 2015; Hibbert et al., 2003; Juska et al., 2006; Morland, 2010; Rasmussen et al., 2018; Westlund and Gawell, 2012
Surveys	Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017; Chan, 2016; Plunkett Foundation, 2018b; Willis et al., 2017
Economic evaluations	Morley et al., 2017; Dewhurst, 2016
Evaluation	Shared Intelligence, 2014

3.2.3 Results of validity assessment

Validity checklists were completed as appropriate for each study design. For the majority of case studies we used the validity checklist for qualitative studies, as this was the predominant methodology used, but for one (Hayton, 1995) we used the mixed methods assessment tool, as the study design was more unclear, and we were unable to source the original report for further details. Results of the validity assessment for all studies are reported in Appendix 6.

Qualitative checklist

Four of the 24 studies assessed using the qualitative checklist were assessed as being of ‘good’ quality (GQ), i.e. they met eight or nine of the nine checklist criteria (Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Kotecha et al., 2017, Mazzei, 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018). However, two of these four studies (Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Kotecha et al., 2017) were process evaluations and did not report any outcomes relating to wellbeing, so do not contribute as much to the narrative synthesis.

Half (12) of the 24 studies assessed using the qualitative checklist were assessed as being of ‘moderate’ quality (MQ), i.e. they met from five to seven of the nine checklist criteria (Bailey et al.,

2018, Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Dickens et al., 2015, Henderson et al., 2018, Hibbert et al., 2003, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Lionais, 2004, Morland, 2010, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012).

One-third (8) of the 24 studies assessed using the qualitative checklist were assessed as being of 'low' quality (LQ), i.e. they met four or fewer of the nine checklist criteria (Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey, 2012, Baker et al., 2009, Gordon, 2002, Gore et al., 2003, Juska et al., 2006, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013).

Common criteria that were not met were: whether the data analysis was sufficiently rigorous, whether the researchers' relationship with the participants was considered and whether ethical issues were taken into account. For the majority of studies, these items were not reported in sufficient detail for the reviewers to make a judgement, and they have been recorded as 'not clear'. Ten studies did not report on the recruitment strategy, and six studies did not report on data collection methods in sufficient detail to permit the reviewers to make a judgement.

ROBINS-I checklist for non-randomised studies

Four surveys were assessed using the ROBINS-I checklist for non-randomised studies (Sterne et al., 2016). Two of these (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Willis et al., 2017) were assessed as being of 'moderate' quality (MQ), i.e. they met four or five of the seven checklist criteria, and two (Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017, Chan, 2016) as 'low' quality (LQ), i.e. they met three or fewer of the seven checklist criteria. Common criteria that were not met were: risk of bias due to confounding, risk of bias due to missing data and risk of bias due to selective reporting. In most cases, these items were not reported in sufficient detail to allow the reviewers to make a judgement.

Mixed methods assessment tool (MMAT) checklist

Two of the 14 studies assessed using the MMAT checklist were assessed as being of 'good' quality (GQ), i.e. they met 80 per cent or more of the checklist criteria (Dewhurst, 2016, Morley et al., 2017).

Another five of the 14 studies assessed using the MMAT checklist were assessed as being of 'moderate' quality (MQ), i.e. they met 50–80 per cent of the checklist criteria (Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017), and the remaining seven studies were assessed as being of 'low' quality (LQ), i.e. they met 50 per cent or less of the checklist criteria (Aiken et al., 2011, Hayton, 1995, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009, Moreton et al., 2005, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Seyfang, 2007).

3.2.4 Intervention

The included studies covered a wide range of intervention models and activities, from asset transfer and community development trusts, to community farms, community co-operatives, community reporting, community shops, community pubs, community libraries, arts or craft based enterprises, to community businesses that aimed to educate or train people, and/or get them back into employment.

Business models and activities

With the caveat that the terms used do not necessarily represent a homogenous business model:

- seventeen of the included studies used the term 'community business' (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017, Buckley et al., 2017, Gore et al., 2003, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Willis et al., 2017)
- seven studies used the term 'social enterprise' (Bailey et al., 2018, Chan, 2016, Dickens et al., 2015, Mazzei, 2013, Moreton et al., 2005, Morley et al., 2017, Westlund and Gawell, 2012)
- six studies used the term 'co-operative' (Gordon, 2002, Hibbert et al., 2003, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Morland, 2010, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Seyfang, 2007)
- four studies used the term 'company limited by guarantee' (Kotecha et al., 2017, Lionais, 2004, Stumbitz et al., 2018)
- three studies used the term 'community development trust' (Bailey, 2012, Juska et al., 2006, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009)
- three studies used the term 'charity' (Kotecha et al., 2017, SERIO, 2017, Stumbitz et al., 2018)
- two studies used the term 'community anchor' (Baker et al., 2009, Henderson et al., 2018)
- two studies used the term 'community enterprise' (Bailey, 2012, Barraket and Archer, 2010);
- two studies used the term 'community interest company' (SERIO, 2017, Stumbitz et al., 2018)
- one study used the term 'community benefit society' (Stumbitz et al., 2018)
- six studies reported on a range of business models (Aiken et al., 2011, Aiken et al., 2008, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d).

The business activities featured in the included studies, in order of frequency, were:

- Employment, education and training related activities (16 studies) (Aiken et al., 2011, Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Chan, 2016, Dickens et al., 2015, Henderson et al., 2018, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Lionais, 2004, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009, Mazzei, 2013, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Richards et al., 2018c, Willis et al., 2017). Examples included: the enhancement of job opportunities, education and training by community control of assets – jobs associated with running the assets (e.g. a community housing association) and the activities that made it possible, and training and learning opportunities from projects linked with the assets (Aiken et al., 2011); providing employability training in horticulture and grounds maintenance, supporting the majority of participants (including many Roma residents) into work (Henderson et al., 2018); creating jobs for local residents through neighbourhood enterprise (Henderson et al., 2018); volunteering opportunities leading to enhanced employment prospects (Henderson et al., 2018).
- Health and social care related activities (16 studies) (Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Dewhurst, 2016, Gore et al., 2003, Henderson et al., 2018, Juska et al., 2006, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Lionais, 2004, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Mazzei, 2013, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018c, Stumbitz et al., 2018). Examples included: linking individuals with mental health needs to health and social care services (Dewhurst, 2016); delivering services on behalf of social services and health organisations (Gore et al., 2003); provision of domiciliary care (Lionais, 2004).
- Shops, cafés and pubs (22 studies) (Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Gordon, 2002, Gore et al., 2003, Hayton, 1995, Henderson et al., 2018, Hibbert, 2003, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Mazzei, 2013, Moreton et al., 2005, Morland, 2010, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Willis et al., 2017). Examples included: a report on the status of the community pub sector (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a) and the community shops sector (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b), village shops being run by community co-operatives (Lang and Roessl, 2011).

- Sport and leisure related activities (15 studies) (Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Henderson et al., 2018, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Lionais, 2004, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012, Willis et al., 2017). Examples included: a community pool being run by a community co-operative (Lang and Roessl, 2011); a systematic review of sport and leisure community businesses (Richards et al., 2018d); provision of a community health and fitness development worker (Bailey, 2012).
- Community hubs (12 studies) (Aiken et al., 2011, Bailey, 2012, Baker et al., 2009, Buckley et al., 2017, Henderson et al., 2018, Juska et al., 2006, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012, Willis et al., 2017). Examples included: a systematic review of community hubs (Richards et al., 2018b); community organisations controlling assets (Aiken et al., 2011); public buildings being converted into community hubs including workspace and arts provision (Shared Intelligence, 2014).
- Commercial property/space letting (12 studies) (Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey et al., 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Henderson et al., 2018, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Lionais, 2004, Mazzei, 2013, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, Stumbitz et al., 2018). Examples included: a community anchor organisation consisting of several buildings which rents office space to other community organisations or groups (Baker et al., 2009); refurbishment of an old factory site to create industrial, sports, exhibition, and leisure centre, with sales of the units (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).
- Food – catering and production (9 studies) (Bailey et al., 2018, Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017, Buckley et al., 2017, Mazzei, 2013, Morley et al., 2017, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984; Seyfang, 2007, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013, Willis et al., 2017). Examples included: a community owned farm (Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017); community food production (Incredible Edible Todmorden) (Morley et al., 2017); local organic food networks (Seyfang, 2007).

- Housing (7 studies) (Aiken et al., 2011, Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018, Lionais, 2004, Mazzei, 2013). Examples included: housing development (Lionais, 2004); housing associations leading public service reform (Henderson et al., 2018); housing co-operatives in Hulme offering a physical space for ‘Manchester’s radical culture scene’ (Mazzei, 2013).
- Craft, industry and production (8 studies) (Bailey et al., 2018, Dickens et al., 2015, Gordon, 2002, Hayton, 1995, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Stumbitz et al., 2018). Examples included: community reporting/newspapers (Dickens et al., 2015); community co-operatives in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (Gordon, 2002); arts/design, crafts and music for therapeutic purposes (Stumbitz et al., 2018).
- Arts centres (6 studies) (Bailey, 2012, Mazzei, 2013, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012). Examples included: arts/design, crafts and music for therapeutic purposes (Stumbitz et al., 2018); community hubs including workspace and arts provision (Shared Intelligence, 2014).
- Environment and nature (6 studies) (Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey, 2012, Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Morley et al., 2017, Stumbitz et al., 2018). Examples included: community food growing (Incredible Edible Todmorden) (Morley et al., 2017); city farms and community gardens (Stumbitz et al., 2018).
- Transport (5 studies) (Gore et al., 2003, Henderson et al., 2018, Kotecha et al., 2017, Moreton et al., 2005, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984). Examples included: community buses (Kotecha et al., 2017); car clubs and community transport (Gore et al., 2003, Moreton et al., 2005).
- Libraries (3 studies) (Richards et al., 2018c, SERIO, 2017, Shared Intelligence, 2014). Examples included: The Waiting Room – a library that evolved into a community hub including workspace and arts provision (Shared Intelligence, 2014); community managed libraries (SERIO, 2017).

- Childcare provision by community organisations (6 studies) (Bailey, 2012, Bailey, 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Richards et al., 2018b, Stumbitz et al., 2018).
- Energy (4 studies) (Aiken et al., 2011, Buckley et al., 2017, Henderson et al., 2018, Mazzei, 2013). Examples included: a community wind farm (Aiken et al., 2011); community owned renewable energy schemes (Buckley et al., 2017, Mazzei, 2013).
- Finance (3 studies) (Barraket and Archer, 2010, Gordon, 2002, Henderson et al., 2018). Examples included: employment training and microbusiness development advice (Barraket and Archer, 2010); establishment of a community trust providing small grants and help to start a business (Gordon, 2002); welfare advice and support (Henderson et al., 2018).
- Village halls (1 study) (Aiken et al., 2011).

Table 3 shows business models and activities reported in each included study. It shows that most community businesses reported multiple activities. A frequency analysis using the cross-tabs function in EPPI-reviewer did not reveal any clear relationship between business model and types of activity.

Table 4 shows the number of outcomes at individual, community and business levels, reported against different types of business activity in the included studies. The table does not reflect the quality of evidence nor whether the outcomes reported are positive or negative. It is best interpreted as a map of where evidence sits and where there are gaps. The table shows that business level outcomes in general were reported more frequently across the whole body of included studies than individual and community level outcomes. The singular outcomes most commonly reported were 'process outcomes (organisational)' (n=100) which relate to implementation and delivery of interventions or programmes, and 'community needs identified' (n=99). The most commonly reported individual level outcomes were 'wellbeing' (n=47) and 'social isolation' (n=48). Similarly, the most commonly reported community level outcomes were 'wellbeing' (n=71) and 'social relations' (n=65). There is a particular dearth of outcomes reported relating to 'quality of life' (n=15), 'physical health' (n=7), 'mental health' (n=22), 'education' (n=20), and 'process outcomes (community)' (n=10).

With regard to types of business activity, the highest number of outcomes were reported for 'shops and cafés' (n=135), 'Employment; training and education; business support' (n=100), 'health, social

care and wellbeing' (n=100), and 'sport and leisure' (n=104). The fewest outcomes were reported for 'village halls' (n=4), 'environment, nature, conservationism' (n=23), 'libraries' (n=29), 'pubs' (n=23), 'energy' (n=34), and 'finance' (n=33).

The qualitative synthesis found that many and various activities are run by community businesses; a common theme seems to be that they arise in response to community needs. For example, a moderate quality case study (Henderson et al., 2018) describes the variety of activities run by Glenboig Neighbourhood House (GNH) in North Lanarkshire, Scotland,:

GNH run a wide range of 'community learning and development' activities from Glenboig Community Centre. Apart from a community café, which also provides employment and skills training, the centre houses a community shop, which sells 'high quality, fresh fruit and veg each week direct from the fruit market which we then sell on at cost price', and a post office. It also provides a venue for adult learning activities and courses such as computing for beginners, sign language, First Aid, REHIS,16 Healthy Eating, Art classes etc. as well as for Citizen's Advice Bureau, Councillor Surgeries, Carers Group, 'Tea and a Blether' dementia group, Routes to Work surgeries and Work Club (support into employment). The café is open daily and provides home deliveries for pensioners, carers and anyone unable to get to the café for health or any other reason. Services for children and young people and a Senior Care Project for older people operate six days per week.

Table 3: Business models versus business activities

Study ID	Model	CH	ETS	H	H,SC,WB	T	S&L	A	L	P	S&C	F,C,P	E	C,I,P	F	E,N,C	CC	VH	CPL
Aiken 2008	A wide range of business models			X												X			X
Aiken 2011	Community-based organisations in control of assets, business model unclear	X	X	X									E						
Bailey 2012	Community business Community development trust	X	X	X	X		X	X			X					X	X		
Bailey 2018	Community business (various legal structures including company limited by guarantee, community interest company) Charity Co-operative		X	X	X		X				X	X		X			X		X
Baker 2009	Community anchor	X			X												X		X
Barraket 2010	Not reported		X												X				
Bedford 2018	Charity Community business		X		X						X						X		
Bosworth 2017	Community business											X				X			
Buckley 2017	Charity Community business (community benefit company, social enterprise, co-op and community benefit company) Co-operative	X	X		X		X				X	X	X						
Chan 2016	Not reported		X																
Dewhurst 2016	Community business				X														
Dickens 2015	Social enterprise		X											X					
Gordon 2002	Co-operative										X			X	X				
Gore 2003	Various (companies limited by guarantee, charities, private limited company, public limited company)				X	X					X								
Hayton 1995	Community business									X				X					
Henderson 2018	Housing association (industrial and provident society, co-operative and community benefit society) Charity (company limited by guarantee, limited company with charitable status)	X	X	X	X	X	X				X		X		X				

Study ID	Model	CH	ETS	H	H,SC,WB	T	S&L	A	L	P	S&C	F,C,P	E	C,I,P	F	E,N,C	CC	VH	CPL
	Community interest company Community development trust																		
Hibbert 2003	Co-operative										X								
Juska 2006	Community development trust	X			X														
Kleinhans 2017	Community business		X		X		X				X			X		X			
Kotecha 2017	Charity (company limited by guarantee)					X													
Lang 2011	Co-operative						X				X								
Lionais 2004	Company limited by guarantee		X	X	X		X												X
Malfait 2018	Community business				X														
Mazzei 2009	Community development trust Company limited by guarantee		X																
Mazzei 2013	Charity (some company limited by guarantee) Community interest company Co-operative Community development trust Other forms of community business		X	X	X			X			X	X	X						X
Moreton 2005	Charity (company limited by guarantee) Social enterprise (industrial and provident society, community-owned association)					X					X								
Morland 2010	Co-operative										X								
Morley 2017	Social enterprise											X				X			
Murgatroyd 1984	Co-operative Community business (company limited by shares)		X			X	X		X			X		X					X
Plunkett Foundation 2018a pubs	Community business									X									
Plunkett Foundation 2018b shops	Community business (community benefit society, community interest company, company limited by guarantee, co-operative, other)										X								
Rasmussen 2018	Community business						X												
Richards 2018a	Community interest company Partnership Limited liability partnership	X			X		X												

Study ID	Model	CH	ETS	H	H,SC,WB	T	S&L	A	L	P	S&C	F,C,P	E	C,I,P	F	E,N,C	CC	VH	CPL
	Charitable company limited by guarantee Company limited by guarantee Charitable incorporated organisation Charitable trust Community benefit society Unincorporated association Development trust Local residents association Parish council Registered charity Voluntary run and funded group Company limited by shares Social enterprise Community sports club and association																		
Richards 2018b	Charity (charitable incorporated organisation, charity and company limited by guarantee) Community business (private limited company)	X									X						X		X
Richards 2018c	Charity (charitable company limited by guarantee) Community interest company Community business (company limited by guarantee, community benefit society)		X		X		X		X		X								X
Richards 2018d	Charity (company limited by guarantee) Community business (private limited company, industrial and provident society, company limited by guarantee, unincorporated association)						X				X								X
SERIO 2017	Charity Company limited by guarantee, Community interest company								X										
Seyfang 2007	Co-operative											X							
Shared Intelligence 2014	Community business	X						X	X		X			X					
Sonnino 2013	Not reported											X							
Stumbitz 2018	Charity (most with a company limited by guarantee trading arm)	X			X		X	X			X			X		X	X		X

Study ID	Model	CH	ETS	H	H,SC,WB	T	S&L	A	L	P	S&C	F,C,P	E	C,I,P	F	E,N,C	CC	VH	CPL
	Community business Community interest company, Community benefit society																		
Westlund 2012	Social enterprise	X					X	X											
Willis 2017	Community business	X	X				X			X		X							

Table 4: Matrix of type of business activity versus outcomes reported

TYPE OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY	INDIVIDUAL level outcomes									COMMUNITY level outcomes							BUSINESS level outcomes					
	Wellbeing	Social isolation	Quality of life	Physical health	Mental health	Civic participation	Employment	Volunteering	Education	Wellbeing	Neighbourhood environment	Social relations	Social cohesion	Civic participation	Collaborations	Process outcomes	Economic	Economic	Process outcomes	Community needs identified	Increased representation	Collaborations
Community hubs	5	7	1		2	4	4	5	1	6	4	7	6	6	3	1	4	8	7	8	1	6
Employment, training, support	5	4	2	1	1	5	6	3	3	6	6	7	4	7	6	1	1	4	8	10	3	7
Housing	1	1	1		1	1	3	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	2		1	4	4	7	1	4
Health, social care and wellbeing	6	3	3	2	4	3	6	4	1	6	2	4	1	5	4	1	3	8	13	10	3	8
Transport	2	2	1		1	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	2		1	1	4	2	1	2
Sports and leisure	4	5	1	1	3	4	5	6	2	6	6	7	6	4	4	2	3	8	10	8	2	7
Arts centre/facility	1	3			1	1	3		1	5	1	3	2	1	2	1	1	4	5	5		4
Libraries	1	2				1	1	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	1			2	2	3	1	3
Pubs	2	2		1		0	1	2		1	1	2	1	3	1		1	1	1	0	2	1
Shops and cafés	6	6	2	1	2	5	8	7	1	9	8	8	4	7	6	1	6	9	14	11	4	10
Food, catering and production	2	1				3	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	4	2	1	1	1	3	4		5
Energy	1	1	1		1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	2		1	1	2	3	1	3
Craft, industry and production	2	2			1	1	4		2	4	2	3	1	3	1	1	1	4	6	5	2	5
Finance	1	2	1		1	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	1		1	2	2	2	2	1
Environment, nature, conservation	2	1			1	1		2		2	1			1			1	3	3	3		2
Childcare	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1		4	1	2	1	2	2		1	5	6	6	1	4
Village halls											1	1	1							1		
Commercial property letting	3	3	1		2	1	6	4	2	8	5	5	3	3	6	1	2	8	10	11	2	9

3.2.5 Outcomes

This section is structured so that it reports wellbeing outcomes first. As explained in the Background section (Chapter 1), we have taken a broad view of what wellbeing means, so outcomes relevant to individual wellbeing (such as sense of pride, health, skills and confidence), community wellbeing (such as social relations, local economy, community assets, civic participation), and organisational wellbeing (such as sustainability, volunteering, economic) are reported under the headings: community wellbeing; individual wellbeing; organisational wellbeing. Within each of these sections, short to medium term outcomes are reported first, followed by longer term outcomes. These are not necessarily reported in terms of duration of follow-up in the individual studies, but we have assigned outcomes as ‘short to medium term’ or ‘long term’ based on the theory of change presented in the preliminary logic model (Figure 4).

3.2.5.1 Community wellbeing

Short to medium term outcomes

Increased community involvement

- **Governance**

Five studies reported on the outcome ‘increased representation on local boards’. The evidence came from three MQ, CS (Bailey, 2012, Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011) and two LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002, Hayton, 1995) and one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), two MQ, MME (Bailey et al., 2018, Richards et al., 2018c) and one LQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a).

In a GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), local influence and links were felt to be important:

“It would be very, very difficult to do what they’ve done in Todmorden, without a friendly relationship within the council. They would have come across much more conflict in lots of little practical things that they do” (participant, Morley et al., 2017).

In a MQ, MME, Richards et al. (2018a) reported that community businesses may strengthen their community through the inclusion of local people in key business processes. In one case study from this report, the majority of the centre’s trustees were also local volunteers, and it was felt that this enhanced the credibility of the centre due to links with the local community:

Around three of the original trustees from the health and wellbeing working group remain on the board, which demonstrates their commitment and confidence in WHLC. When the centre first opened, commitment from local people was essential. If they had not engaged with WHLC, links with community would have been lost. The centre believes that this enthusiasm stems from the trustees' sense that they are equal partners with responsibility for a large number of staff, and that they are recognised and respected and are involved in all aspects of decision-making (Richards et al., 2018c).

In a MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018), the board member selection process was based on knowledge and skills, engaging members that had experience of local business and political life in the community.

- **Volunteering**

Fourteen studies reported on the volunteering capacity, growth and outcomes arising from volunteering. The evidence came from one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), one MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017), two MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011), one MQ, QLS (Hibbert et al., 2003), five MQ, MMEs (Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d; SERIO, 2017), one LQ, SV (Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017), two LQ, SV (Gore et al., 2003, Moreton et al., 2005) and one LQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a).

One GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017) reported a volunteer profile similar to that of the local area in terms of gender, age and socioeconomic status, with a mean annual number of volunteering hours of 59, increasing over time. Volunteers' length of involvement averaged 4.5 years.

A MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a) reported that of the 119 community businesses who had volunteers, over half (N=70, 59 per cent) stated that the number of registered volunteers had increased in the previous year. In addition to seeing an increase in the number of paid staff, the sport and leisure sector also reported the biggest increase in volunteers (N=16, 73 per cent) compared to the other sectors.

A MQ, MME of sports and leisure community businesses (Richards et al., 2018d) reported that

the centre believes that volunteers benefit from a sense of social inclusion within their local community, creating new friends, making valuable contributions and feeling proud they have supported the safeguarding of a valuable community asset which has contributed to creating local employment (authors, Richards et al., 2018d).

Respondents across all sectors reported a good retention of both volunteers; the proportion remaining within businesses for over three years – Volunteers: >3 years N=48, 40 per cent.

A MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017) reported no observed difference in either formal or informal volunteering rates between individuals living in the area surrounding the community businesses and a retrospectively matched comparison sample. Lower levels of formal volunteering in the last 12 months were observed in one community business area compared with the matched comparison sample (25 per cent v. 35 per cent respectively), and lower levels of informal volunteering in the last 12 months were observed in another community business area compared with the matched comparison sample (47 per cent v. 54 per cent respectively). This could be explained by reverse causation, as community businesses respond to local need, which may be seen to be greater in areas with lower levels of volunteering.

A LQ, MME of community pubs (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a) reported that 28 per cent of all community pubs benefit from volunteers in the day to day running of the business, i.e. beyond the role of committee member. Volunteers can be a great asset to the business, helping to spread the workload, reducing staffing costs and adding to the social environment of the pub. Typical tasks carried out by volunteers included: cleaning, gardening, ordering stock, organising social events, bookkeeping, marketing and social media; through to running additional services such as shops, cafés, libraries and allotments.

Volunteering was seen as a positive feature of projects in many studies, in some cases as a way back into work (for example, in a LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011)). However, there were also risks and issues associated with volunteering:

finding enough volunteers with adequate time and the right skills ... is a difficult task for any group, especially for those with a small catchment area, or in a disadvantaged community.

Involvement tends to go in waves and initial enthusiasms ebb and flow (Aiken et al., 2011).

Another LQ, CS found that relying heavily on a few volunteers could undermine businesses in the long term if no replacements could be found (Gore et al., 2003).

Volunteering was also seen as a route to empowerment and to social connections. In a MQ, CS, in relation to a housing association in Castlemilk, Glasgow, an interviewee said:

“We have found the focus on volunteering to be really useful in building personal capacity. People respond positively to not simply being a group ‘member’, almost having things done around you. As a volunteer, you are choosing to be there and participate, you’re involved in

the direction and development of something for the benefit of everyone” (Henderson et al., 2018).

Similarly, an interviewee in a MQ, QLS (Hibbert et al., 2003) described the benefits of volunteering in a food retail co-operative:

“ ... I got my confidence back, self-esteem, just all these kind of things, you’re not in it for the money, you are getting also the company of other people as well, you’re mixing with people, getting to know different people, you’re learning every day. It’s given me the confidence to get a part-time job. Believe it or not I’m quiet, I don’t like speaking up for other people and being chairperson has given me the courage to speak up for people. You just continue with it and all these things gave me the confidence speaking over the phone. I know what I want and how I feel, but I found it hard to put across” (Hibbert et al., 2003).

- **Civic participation**

Eighteen studies reported on the outcomes of civic participation at community level. The evidence came from one GQ, CS (Mazzei, 2013) and one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), three MQ, QLS (Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Dickens et al., 2015), five MQ, CS (Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessler, 2011), two MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018b, SERIO, 2017), one MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017), one LQ, QLS (Juska et al., 2006), three LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002, Hayton, 1995, Sonnino and Griggs-Tevarten, 2013) and one LQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation 2018a).

A MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017) reported few differences between the community business areas and the retrospective comparison matched sample on measures of civic engagement. Individuals living in areas surrounding the community businesses were no more likely than the matched comparison sample to be involved in social action in the last 12 months, and were less likely to be involved in two areas. This could be explained by reverse causation, as community businesses respond to local need, which may be seen to be greater in areas with lower levels of civic participation.

One moderate and two low quality case studies mentioned the role of community businesses in building democracy and social capital at a local level (Aiken et al., 2011, Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey et al., 2018), with one LQ, CS suggesting that asset ownership and management offered communities the right to exercise their democratic right, to voice ideas and strengthen local power sharing and decision making (Aiken et al., 2011). In one MQ, CS, related activities included setting up a neighbourhood information point and publishing a local newspaper (Bailey et al., 2018).

A related theme was the motivation for setting up the community business in the first place. Studies mentioned 'deficiencies' in a local area that need to be addressed, together with the perception that other agencies are unlikely to provide solutions, as galvanising the local community to set up an organisation which can begin to provide solutions (Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018). A MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018) describes the establishment of a community business in England in response to a local issue:

the group started in 1995 as a protest over the proposed development of a piece of open space. Members of the local community "... persuaded the council to give them an empty shop. The organisation became what came through the door. The organisation just responded to need. They started a job club, computer programme. They persuaded the Council to employ someone to do a business plan and that was me. I was given a three-month contract".

It was felt that community businesses could be used to empower local people, build capacity and/or skills in one MQ, QLS (Dickens et al., 2015), one MQ, CS (Buckley et al., 2017) and three LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002, Hayton, 1995, Sonnino and Griggs-Tevarden, 2013):

Community reporting as a news production practice helped citizens to engage with concerns about the localised impact of national cuts on housing, health and wellbeing from within their communities (Dickens et al., 2015).

"We suffer in society from feeling things are out of our control. Organisations like ours invite people to participate and take a stake in the local area and help empower them to be the change they want to see by doing something positive and practical to make the place they live better" (research participant, Buckley et al., 2017).

One LQ, CS reported that perceptions and practices of food entrepreneurs empower local communities by reconnecting them with their resource-base, fostering resilience through a collective mobilisation of local resources (Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarden, 2013).

Long term outcomes

Community level outcomes: a better place to live

- **Cohesion**

Ten studies reported on the outcome of social cohesion. The evidence came from one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), two MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018b, SERIO, 2017), one LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011), two MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011) and two LQ, CS (Moreton et al., 2005, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984), two MQ, QLS (Rasmussen et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012) and one MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017).

The GQ, MME of Incredible Edible Todmorden identified social cohesion associated with creativity and innovation:

“People coming together and thinking, ‘OK, we need to raise money for something or we need to change something or we need to create something’, people are coming together and thinking outside the box, in a way that they haven’t done before, and with a lot of really nice ... things popping up all the time that are very alternative. So I think it’s inspired people to be themselves and come together in whatever form they want to (P2)” (Morley et al., 2017).

However, perceptions of social cohesion in this project were not universal. The authors reported that there remained a noticeable division between ‘incomers’ and longer-term residents. The latter were perceived to have shown some resistance to change and to have tried to prevent new ideas being implemented. Some argued that, overall, the members of the community who had actually bought in to the initiative were still in the minority. Some expressed concern about the increased desirability of Todmorden for the middle classes working in Manchester or Leeds, leading to fears of gentrification, and felt that the initiative was contributing to the problem:

“There’s more and more people wanting to move to the area. It then becomes a problem, like in lots of different areas across the country, it becomes impossible for the person to afford, the affordable housing aspect ... I think that’s where you can then start again, resentment ... ‘well we can’t afford to live here now, I’m going to have to move somewhere else that’s cheaper, while you take my house in my town that I was born and brought up in’” (participant, Morley et al., 2017).

“If you look at all the Todmorden chat forums and Facebook things, it’s only a few people who actually get it, the rest of them think, ‘what are all these weirdos doing planting peas in the police station?’ But yes, so it was a great social idea and it is, it has spread very quickly all around the country I’ve seen, but most people [in Todmorden] don’t get it” (participant, Morley et al., 2017).

Sport was mentioned by several studies as a potential cohesive force. A GQ, CS (Stumbitz et al., 2018) engaged with asylum seekers through football:

“We are doing some work with asylum seekers. [One] thing that we did was integrating through football. Language doesn’t matter, football is a language and initially, once you know that you can’t step in the D and you can’t kick the ball high, that very quickly formed a nice little team, even though they couldn’t communicate through language. Every time we start the session, everyone shakes hands, everyone high fives each other when a goal has been scored, but nobody speaks English and that’s not, sorry, there are English speaking people there, but the non-English speaking people can look at communication through non language.” Community and Partnership Development Officer, Case 4 (Stumbitz et al., 2018).

A MQ, QLS of a community-based fitness centre (Rasmussen et al., 2018) found that it was more inclusive to social diversity than other commercial fitness centres, in that it offered better opportunities for relating to other members and instructors. A MQ, CS of a park found that while many of its users came from a local deprived neighbourhood, the park also encouraged users from more affluent areas, which enabled skateboarders from a range of different backgrounds to share their experiences, demonstrating what the park believed to be true social cohesion (Richards et al., 2018d).

A MQ, MME of community managed libraries reported perceptions that a community managed library strengthens community cohesion and encourages people to become more active in their community (SERIO, 2017).

A MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017) reported that few differences were observed in terms of perception of community cohesion and feelings of belonging strongly to their immediate neighbourhood, between community business sample areas and the retrospectively matched comparison sample.

A LQ, CS reported positive intergenerational relationships, with younger people viewing the involvement of older people in a very positive way, which led to a mixture of participating generations which was beneficial to the enterprise (Moreton et al., 2005).

A LQ, CS of a community anchor organisation (Baker et al., 2009) proposed to do more outreach work to reach particular groups, including newly arrived communities. It was felt that a very local service could coexist with existing projects that had a wider geographical reach.

- **Social relations and social capital**

Twenty-three studies reported on the outcomes of social relations, social networks or social capital. The evidence came from one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), four MQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017) and four LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Seyfang, 2007), one GQ, CS (Kotecha et al., 2017), two MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018) and four LQ, CS (Baker et al., 2009, Gordon, 2002, Moreton et al., 2005, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984), five MQ, QLS (Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Dickens et al., 2015, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012), one MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017), and a LQ evaluation of unclear design (Shared Intelligence, 2014).

A GQ, MME of Incredible Edible Todmorden (Morley et al., 2017) reported that the initiative worked with families, via high schools, the children's centre and other community settings:

“This focus has been strengthened and developed through integrative intergenerational work, encouraging parents to learn alongside their children: Bringing families together for cooking classes at high school ... that's great ... across the generations and getting children to think about food” (Morley et al., 2017).

This growing initiative also developed connections in the community, which some participants felt enabled it to be more resilient. For example when the town was flooded:

“These recent challenges have seen the community uniting to help one another: That's what it's about, resilience. The floods were ... a gift to us, because we're a natural group that can respond. We've got communication systems, we've got devoted people, passionate community ... so it's great” (Morley et al., 2017).

A MQ, QLS (Barraket and Archer, 2010) found that community enterprises facilitate social inclusion in a number of ways. A MQ, SV of community shops (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b) reported that ‘community shops are aiming to tackle rural isolation by offering volunteering opportunities and by becoming a social hub offering a safe place for rural residents to meet up whatever their age’. A MQ, MME (SERIO, 2017) reported, from a survey of library users, primary reasons for using the library included ‘to meet people’, reported by nearly a third of users (28 per cent, 45 out of 161), and that one-fifth of respondents reported that they used the library to ‘attend community events’ and ‘attend groups or clubs’ (19 per cent, 30 out of 161 and 18 per cent, 28 out of 160 respectively).

A MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017) found some differences between community business areas and the retrospectively matched comparison sample in people's views on their neighbourhood. In four out of

six community business areas, individuals were less likely to report that many of the people in their local area could be trusted. This was also true for generalised trust, with individuals living in areas surrounding the community businesses being more likely to report that you ‘can’t be too careful in dealing with people’, with the exception of one area. Few differences were observed between the areas surrounding community businesses and the matched comparison sample in terms of levels of agreement with statements about their social networks, particularly focused on neighbours, including frequency of chatting to neighbours, borrowing things and exchanging favours with neighbours, asking neighbours to collect shopping essentials, and asking neighbours to keep a set of key for emergencies. There were also few key differences observed between the community business areas and the matched comparison sample in terms of diversity of social groups. Some of these findings could be explained by reverse causation, as community businesses respond to local need, which may be seen to be greater in areas with lower levels of trust and social capital.

Community transport was mentioned as being an important facilitator for social relations in one GQ, CS (Kotecha et al., 2017). In one LQ, CS, residents wanted a building to become a ‘safe haven’ to meet (Baker et al., 2009). In another LQ, CS in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, saving shops and pubs was seen as being critical (Gordon, 2002) and one MQ, CS mentioned that a café became a central meeting point (Lang and Roessl, 2011). In another LQ, CS, a shop was seen as being particularly beneficial for older people (Moreton et al., 2005). In a LQ, MME of community-based mental health support services offered by a community business, group support was seen as important in facilitating social relations (Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018).

- **Neighbourhood environment**

Sixteen studies reported on the outcome of changes in neighbourhood environment. The evidence came from one MQ, QLS (Barraket and Archer, 2010) and one LQ, QLS (Juska et al., 2006), three MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011) and three LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002, Moreton et al., 2005, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984), one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), four MQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d) and two LQ, MMEs (Aiken et al., 2008, Aiken et al., 2011), and one MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017).

One GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017) which conducted a community survey reported that: awareness of Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET) had increased to be almost universal; consuming food from IET growing areas was widespread among Todmorden residents and had increased markedly over time,

and over half of Todmorden respondents stated that they purchased local food at least once a week. The same study (Morley et al., 2017) reported a mixed response from the community to changes made to the neighbourhood environment. Although some participants reported that people's perceptions and relationship with their locality had changed for the better, and that wider perceptions about the area had improved, concerns were also expressed about gentrification of the area by some participants in this study (see 'Risks and barriers'):

"They've put a big board up, 'Welcome To Our Town', great. It was, I don't know if you saw it before, the old Health Centre? ... Derelict building, looked a total mess. Tidied it all up" (participant, Morley et al., 2017).

Comments from the community survey included "I don't support making our town look scruffy and becoming a laughing stock" and "patches often look abandoned unless there's a competition or a Royal visit on the cards" (authors, Morley et al., 2017).

Participants in qualitative studies mentioned various improvements to the neighbourhood environment, such as refurbishment of the town square, restoring a building, bringing wasteland into use, funding a 'woodland classroom', reducing energy consumption in a village, starting a community orchard (Aiken et al., 2008), organising rubbish collection, starting a neighbourhood garden (Henderson et al., 2018), a city farming project (Bailey 2018), improving safety of shared spaces in tower blocks (Dewhurst 2016), new services such as shops and cafés (Gordon, 2002) and improving residents' front gardens (Richards et al., 2018a). Such visible improvements were felt to make the area a more attractive place to live, while community-owned housing also improved the housing stock (Aiken et al., 2008).

One LQ, CS (Juska et al., 2006) reported an unexpectedly positive response from the community in terms of participation in the activities:

Beautification of the village was chosen as the first communal project due to the survey results indicating communal interest in the activity. Organizers were deeply apprehensive about people joining them in their first endeavour, but many more came than were anticipated. Not only was the main village street cleaned and flowers planted, but the shore of the scenic lake was also made suitable for communal gatherings. The lakeside hill has been equipped with wooden staircases, benches, barbeque pits and a decorative windmill (Juska et al., 2006).

- **Other community wellbeing outcomes**

Seventeen studies reported on other community wellbeing outcomes. The evidence came from two GQ, CS (Mazzei, 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018), three MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Lionais, 2004) and three LQ, CS (Baker et al., 2009, Hayton, 1995, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984), four MQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, SERIO, 2017), and two LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2008, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009), two MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012), and one LQ 'evaluation' of unknown design (Shared Intelligence, 2014).

A MQ, SV of community shops (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b) reported the percentage of shops mentioning how they improve and contribute to community life as follows:

- affordable food schemes: 42
- arts and cultural activities: 62
- community safety: 41
- disability services: 56
- environment: 56
- health care and wellbeing: 71
- tourism: 82
- training: 74
- youth: 76.

A MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017) reported that overall levels of satisfaction with the local area and whether people felt that the area had got better in the past two years varied across six community business sample areas. Individuals living in three of the six community business sample areas reported higher levels of satisfaction with local services and amenities compared with the retrospectively matched comparison sample (83 per cent v. 75 per cent; 88 per cent v. 77 per cent, and 85 per cent v. 78 per cent respectively).

Twelve studies reported perceptions of improved community wellbeing and related concepts. One of these was of good quality (Morley et al., 2017), five of moderate quality (Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Richards et al., 2018c, SERIO, 2017) and seven of low quality (Aiken et al., 2011, Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey, 2012, Baker et al., 2009, Gordon, 2002, Hayton, 1995, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013). Several of these mentioned community assets (usually buildings) as being important to this process:

Many community assets had symbolic value – as something the community had achieved, with a narrative and history attached to them. Participants described how the

process of acquiring the asset in itself generated a sense of optimism and community pride. When assets had been given or transferred to a community, this was also seen as an external endorsement – a sign that their neighbourhood was seen as important (Aiken et al., 2011).

A perceived reduction in vandalism, as well as increased pride in the area, was reported in a GQ, MME (Morley, 2017):

“Whether you can attribute it all to IE I don’t know, but ... what you can attribute it to, is that there was, like, an ownership. So this is our town and this is our police station and we’re not going to smash it up, we’re going to take ownership of it” (participant, Morley et al., 2017).

Those interviewed made reference to the pride of place that IET had generated at a time when the town was in decline: I think it rekindled a sense of pride in a number of people who felt disgruntled that Tod was only going to keep going down (authors, Morley et al., 2017).

In a MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018), the authors suggested that:

Building resilient communities of place requires both the strengthening of the individual social capital crucial for individual wellbeing and the bringing together of disparate groups – to create shared understanding and respect.

A MQ, MME and a LQ, CS reported that community owned buildings acting as hubs were perceived to contribute to positive community wellbeing, taking a whole person and whole community approach to providing services, facilities and activities (Baker et al., 2009, SERIO, 2017). A MQ, MME of community managed libraries reported that:

The library feels that ‘it makes the village more attractive as a community’, providing a place to go, events to attend, and somewhere to access information. Moreover, the library highlights the part it plays in the health and wellbeing agenda, which is a key element of the community’s localism agenda. For example, it provides a venue for Somersham Time Bank and Somersham Local Nature Reserve to meet and host coffee mornings. The library also runs joint events with these organisations such as community orchard apple day, health walks, and cooking demonstrations (SERIO, 2017).

A LQ, MME (Aiken 2008) mentioned that assets were used to deliver a variety of activities, such as small business support, leisure, housing, retail and other locally appropriate services, and reported associated rises in community confidence, self-belief and civic pride. Another LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011) reported that ownership of assets gave community businesses financial independence and control, and could make an organisation and the community it served more resilient and sustainable, and give access to additional sources of funds, including bank loans.

“If you are renting you could just be moved on ... If the college was running it and just allowed us to be here, then if the principal changed, the community could lose out ... Ownership is a statement that you are here to stay. Not having to rent means the surplus can go into other activities” (Aiken et al., 2011).

Improving the ‘image’ of an area was felt to be important, by improving the community identity and changing stereotypes about the communities. In a LQ, MME, Aiken et al. (2011) reported that in two case studies there was increased demand to live in the area, with one describing the change from “a dead end community where nobody wanted to stay, to a community of choice”.

A LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012) detailed activities such as arts and community festivals and events not only raised the profile of the enterprise but also built social capital, so that residents felt more positive about their locality and therefore wished to contribute to ‘civil society’ in the wider sense. A MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018) presented case studies including raising the aspirations of children in primary schools, food celebrations, café, events promoting sustainable and low cost living, and mass participation in a major art installation:

“I Wish To Communicate With You is about raising aspirations, self-confidence and improving the quality of life for a community blighted by bad press and negative assumptions. This will be the enduring legacy from the project and local residents will have a more positive understanding of and interest in arts and culture as a result of participation” (stakeholder participant, Bailey et al., 2018).

A LQ, CS reported greater self-confidence, both on an individual level and in the wider community (Hayton, 1995). Another LQ, CS of community co-operatives in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland reported that:

“The enterprises changed people’s lives, in that people did all manner of things they hadn’t expected to do – or be able to do – and gained a measure of empowerment and control” (Gordon, 2002).

Community resilience was mentioned by a LQ, CS, in the context of community gardens or growing projects (Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013):

“It is, by definition, about people coming together and doing things for themselves with no external resources. It’s just about people sharing what they know, so it’s very resilient from external influences” (Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013).

Local economic outcomes

Eleven studies reported community level economic outcomes. The evidence came from two GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016, Morley et al., 2017), three MQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Richards et al., 2018bs, Richards et al., 2018d) and two LQ, MME (Aiken, 2011, Plunkett, 2018a), one MQ, CS (Lang and Roessl, 2011) and one LQ, CS (Gore, 2003), and one MQ, QLS (Westlund et al., 2012) and one LQ, QLS (Juska, 2006).

- **Managing assets**

Several studies detailed income streams arising from managing assets of buildings and land, private sector investment, trading, reversing population decline by making the area more attractive to live in, generating more investment in an area, making local organisations more financially viable and creation of enterprises and associated jobs. (Aiken et al., 2011, Aiken et al., 2008, Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Morley et al., 2017, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Richards et al., 2018a, Seyfang, 2007). This income was often reinvested back into the community:

Ownership of assets also gave CBOs financial independence and control – a benefit that featured prominently in all aspects of our fieldwork. Participants argued that owning assets provided financial security, leverage, more flexibility, and freedom from restrictions imposed by external owners (especially the local authority). Assets could make an organisation and the community it served more ‘resilient’ and sustainable. Where assets *generated income, they could be a catalyst for further investment in community services* (Aiken et al., 2011).

One case study in a LQ, MME was about a community-based housing association with a trading subsidiary, through which it owned a medical centre, pharmacy and several private rented

proprieties (Aiken et al., 2011). Another case study mentioned real or potential financial gain from community shares, with a participant commenting:

“One of the most satisfying events in my life took place when Westmill Wind Farm was hooked up to the national grid ... It would be hard to find a more valuable gift for my two grandchildren than shares in the project” (Aiken et al., 2011).

Two low quality collections of case studies (Gore et al., 2003, Hayton, 1995) highlighted that both the gross and the net impact of rural community businesses on employment is likely to be relatively small. However, rural community businesses may provide the basis for the wider renewal of rural economies, for example through improving access to transport and childcare provision, and providing services to specific disadvantaged groups. One of these studies also considered that local displacement of customers from another local businesses was potentially quite high, but that ‘arguably the impact on the city-wide economy is a price worth paying for the social and economic benefits that accrue to the local area’ (Hayton, 1995). A LQ, MME (Aiken, 2008) reported economic growth of a fund which aimed to provide support for community-based organisations to engage in social enterprise and asset development, from £2 million to £12.5 million.

A LQ, MME of community pubs (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a) reported that community pubs create regular paid employment opportunities and that, in a rural setting, this can often be the largest single employer in that community.

- **Tourism**

In a GQ, MME, a community growing initiative was generally felt to have put the area on the map:

“Key IET personnel are regularly called upon to give guest talks elsewhere in the UK and internationally and there has also been a noticeable increase in ‘vegetable tourism’ due to the lure of IET, with the visitor centre reporting that IET is the most frequent attraction for international visitors and second only to hiking for British visitors: Most of the foreign visitors who came into the information centre, they spoke very little English, the only two words that they seemed to know are ‘IE’, how famous! ... They’re coming here, specifically in some cases, because they’ve heard about IE and they want to see the sign. And a lot of them have then come back on repeat visits to see what else is happening in the town, and they seem to go away pretty pleased” (Morley 2017).

3.2.5.2 Individual wellbeing

Short to medium term outcomes

- **Wellbeing**

Seventeen studies reported on the outcome of individual wellbeing. The evidence came from one GQ, CS (Stumbitz et al., 2018), two MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011), three LQ, CS (Baker et al., 2009, Hayton, 1995, Moreton et al., 2005), one MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018), one MQ, SV (Willis, 2017), one LQ, SV (Chan, 2016), two GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016, Morley et al., 2017), two MQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, SERIO, 2017) and two LQ, MME (Malfait et al., 2018, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009).

One GQ, MME Dewhurst (2016) reported that, of 17 clients who fully completed the seven item SWEMWBS at both baseline and review assessment, 11/17 (65 per cent) of clients reported a positive change in their wellbeing, and the mean SWEMWBS score improved from 22 to 24.3, although this change was not considered to be statistically or clinically significant.

One MQ, SV (Willis et al., 2017) did not report any statistically significant difference in life satisfaction scores between community business areas and matched control sample areas, though this was designed to be a feasibility study to test the utility of using the measures in small geographical areas, rather than an evaluation of impact of community businesses.

One LQ, SV (Chan, 2016) reported changes in self-esteem, optimism and self-efficacy, however the baseline scores may be subject to recall bias.

Many qualitative studies reported positive perceptions of effects on aspects of individual wellbeing, including raised aspirations (Aiken, 2011), improvements to wellbeing by participating in physical activity, being outdoors in green space, building confidence and skills, being informed about healthy eating, and working alongside and supporting others (Bailey, 2018), confidence growing from learning new skills (Mazzei, 2009, Dickens, 2015, Mazzei, 2013), from volunteering (Richards, 2018a) and from suggestions being valued (Hibbert, 2003). One good quality study of a community hub reported that “they provide ‘spaces of wellbeing’ and the concepts of ‘community’ and ‘cooperation’ are often intrinsic to how they design their services” (Stumbitz, 2018).

- **Quality of life**

One GQ, MME (Dewhurst, 2016) reported on quality of life; EQ-5D-5L5 results were dichotomised into 'no problems' (i.e. level 1) and 'problems' (i.e. levels 2 to 5). At follow-up review assessment the study found: no change in self-reported problems with mobility (walking about) at 67 per cent; an 11 per cent reduction in reported problems with self-care (washing and dressing self) from 33 to 22 per cent; a 6 per cent reduction in reported problems with performing usual activities from 56 to 50 per cent; a 6 per cent increase in self-reported levels of pain and discomfort has increased from 50 to 56 per cent, and no change in self-reported levels of anxiety and depression.

This study also reported that 53 per cent of clients reported an increase in their housing satisfaction, 32 per cent of clients reported no change in the level of their housing satisfaction, while 16 per cent of clients reported a decrease in their housing satisfaction. The rent arrears for this cohort decreased between the time they started working with the Rise High Coordinator and the end of October 2016 by a total of £250.84, an average of £6.27 per tenant.

- **Confidence and skills**

Eight studies reported on confidence and skills: one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), one MQ, MME (SERIO, 2017), two MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018), one MQ, QLS (Dickens et al., 2015), one MQ, SV (Willis, 2017), and two LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009).

A moderate quality survey (Willis, 2017) reported that at one site individuals mostly agreed with statements that they can personally influence decisions affecting their local area, how important it was for them to feel that they can influence decisions in their local area, and that when people 'get involved in their local community, they really can change the way that their area is run', and in a second area people mostly disagreed with these statements.

A MQ, MME (SERIO, 2017) reported that a small number of users attended their library 'to learn new things and/or develop skills through classes' (13 per cent, 21 out of 161).

In qualitative studies, skills were associated with confidence and self-esteem, and studies reported many ways of building skills, including getting residents involved in building design or planning projects (Aiken et al., 2011), providing specific training for people to get back into employment (Bailey et al., 2018, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009), establishing a textile design studio (Bailey et al., 2018), working with local schools (Bailey et al., 2018), providing project specific training workshops and volunteering opportunities (Bailey et al., 2018, Dickens et al., 2015), cooking skills (Henderson et al., 2018, Morley et al., 2017), energy saving (Henderson et al., 2018), growing (Morley et al., 2017).

A moderate quality qualitative study of training provided to community reporters (Dickens et al., 2015) found that training built a sense of solidarity with other community reporters and legitimacy:

“When I’m training – you’re part of something larger than just that project, it’s a movement, and I think that gives it more credibility and I think it makes you feel like you’re more a part of something” (Dickens et al., 2015).

Peer education was a route to skills-building in marginalised communities in a MQ, CS:

“We have two workers who support Slovakian and Romanian individuals in families. ... in a year we’ll work for 250 families or individuals; our wider reach is probably about 1,000 people. We support people in terms of education, employment, housing, health, language, literacy, social connections, rights and responsibilities – and in partnership with the NHS. We’re doing peer education where we train up people in the Roma community on health provision; issues in the community; rights and entitlements. They then deliver what they’ve learned in their mother tongue to groups of Roma who otherwise couldn’t participate.”

Govanhill Housing Association and Community Development Trust (Henderson et al., 2018).

Interviewees in one LQ, CS remarked that ‘off the job training’ e.g. in business skills were not provided, which they felt would be essential in getting people back into employment (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).

- **Health**

Five studies reported on the outcome of health. The evidence came from two MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Rasmussen et al., 2018), one GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016), one MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018d) and one LQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a).

One GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016) reported a mean difference increase of 8.8 per cent in the EQ-5D-5L5 profile from 0.63 to 0.71, and EQ VAS5 mean difference of 11.1 from 50.3 to 60.4, but neither of these changes were statistically significant.

In a LQ, MME (Malfait et al., 2018) 62 per cent of survey respondents thought that coming to the project has helped or is helping them to improve their physical health or how they feel about their health issues.

Several qualitative studies reported positive perceptions of success in terms of increasing physical activity levels in the local community, particularly in reducing barriers to participation for Muslim

women (Richards et al., 2018d) and people who saw themselves as physically unfit (Rasmussen et al., 2018). The authors of a LQ, MME of community pubs reported that:

Community Pubs improve the health and wellbeing of local residents in their communities. This may be by offering a meeting space or rooms for those offering health services such as NHS consultations, chiropody or counselling services, or it may act as a base for clubs and activities such as walking and cycling groups. It may also offer volunteering and employment opportunities for those that could benefit from the company of friends and colleagues or learning some life skills to enable them to gain paid employment. Other examples include: Installing or funding a defibrillator; Becoming a fully accessible venue; Running exercise and fitness classes; Holding regular group activities; Dementia and Alzheimer cafés; Creating and maintaining a garden with voluntary support (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a).

- **Mental health**

Seven studies reported on the outcome of mental health. The evidence came from one GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016), one MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018c), one LQ, MME (Malfait et al., 2018), one GQ, CS (Stumbitz et al., 2018), one MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018), and two MQ, QLS (Hibbert et al., 2003, Rasmussen et al., 2018).

A GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016) reported a statistically significant result for the change in the ratings for 'Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?' $P < 0.05$ ($n=17$), although they also suggested that varying levels of completion of the ONS wellbeing questions meant that these results should be viewed with caution.

Several qualitative studies reported positive perceptions of impact on mental health, though most of these were through services provided specifically for mental health service users. A GQ, CS (Stumbitz et al., 2018) reported 'varied ways of supporting mental health in the community, including the provision of supportive spaces, building self-esteem and vocational skills, and tackling social isolation and loneliness. Other specific services relate to substance misuse, sexual health, obesity and general fitness'.

A MQ, QLS (Rasmussen et al., 2018) reported that an aspect of personal development attached to the role of instructor also seemed to have a positive effect on the mental health of two instructors. These instructors spoke about personal development related to becoming instructors, as this had helped them to become more outgoing and comfortable about leaving their comfort zones.

In a LQ, MME (Malfait et al., 2018) 86 per cent of survey respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that coming to the project '...helped me to take better care of my mental or emotional health', while 76 per cent 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that coming to the project '... helped me manage difficult emotions and feelings like anger, depression or anxiety'. Seventy per cent 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that coming to the project '... reduced or helped me cope with any feelings about hurting myself'.

- **Social connections, social isolation and loneliness**

Fifteen studies reported on the outcomes of social isolation or loneliness. The evidence came from five MQ, QLS (Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Hibbert et al., 2003, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Westlund et al., 2012), one LQ, QLS (Moreton et al., 2015), two GQ, CS (Kotecha et al., 2017, Stumbitz et al., 2018), one MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018), three MQ, MME (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, SERIO, 2017), one MQ, SV (Willis, 2017) and one LQ, SV (Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017) and a LQ evaluation of unknown design (Shared Intelligence, 2014).

In a GQ, CS of community businesses providing health and wellbeing services, the CEO of the business stated:

“Many of our clients are the socially excluded people, who probably feel most isolated and not a part of their community.” (CEO, Case 5, Stumbitz et al., 2018).

In another GQ, CS of community transport organisations (Kotecha et al., 2017), the authors stated that:

According to board members volunteers that successfully provide a passenger-oriented service do more than just drive the mini-bus, they are also providing a vital social connection. They're not just driving, they are talking to passengers, they are lightening them up, they're asking them how they're getting on, they, they get to know them and you. (Community transport organisation, rural).

In a MQ, QLS of a community fitness centre (Rasmussen et al., 2018), the authors stated that:

A focus on the social aspect and the creation of meaningful communities are central to the overall health intervention, aimed at giving residents the opportunity for social

participation in connection with health activities. It can be considered as both a mechanism and an outcome, because a perception exists among front-line workers that engaging with other people is connected to healthier lifestyle choices: “... meeting other people, having a life that is somehow meaningful, and it may be that you meet other people at some activity, and then the other things tend to get included along the way, like the [lifestyle factors], I mean the things about your food, that we make sure we eat a bit and things like that” (Front-line worker 3, Rasmussen et al., 2018).

In a MQ, QLS (Hibbert et al., 2003), volunteering was the route through which social isolation was reduced:

volunteers reported becoming involved because it facilitates meeting and spending time with other people (Hibbert et al., 2003).

[volunteers] talked about occasions when their involvement had been a topic of conversation among their family and friends, or had given them the opportunity to talk to people in the street because they knew them as customers at the retail co-operative (Hibbert et al., 2003).

A MQ, QLS (Barraket and Archer, 2010) reported that ‘within their varying contexts, community enterprises facilitate social inclusion in a number of ways’.

A MQ, SV (Willis, 2017) reported a difference in only one of five areas surrounding community businesses, where individuals were more likely (94 per cent) than the retrospectively matched comparison sample (87 per cent) to definitely agree that ‘if I wanted to socialise there are people I could call on’.

A LQ, MME (Moreton et al., 2005) reported that the majority of survey respondents used a community shop more than once a week, travelling less than a mile to do so. A high percentage valued the role it plays as a centre of community life and a source of information, and 74–90 per cent stated that they could not obtain the same service elsewhere.

Several qualitative studies reported benefits of community businesses in terms of reduced social isolation or loneliness, or increased social connections for participants. Some deliberately connected lonely and socially isolated people who were referred to them (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Henderson et al., 2018) and some facilitated social connections by acting as a hub for people to

meet, either informally or through activities that they run. Community transport was another way of facilitating social connections (Kotecha et al., 2017, Moreton et al., 2005).

The operators and users of the service recognise that it fulfils much more than merely a transport need, enabling users to meet other people, visit places they would not otherwise see, and know more about what is going on in and around their communities. Some users commented that they hadn't been out socially for years before they started using the bus. (Moreton et al., 2005)

In several studies, membership of groups was felt to be important, in the sense that people would check in on others if they had not been seen.

Civic participation

Twelve studies reported on the outcome of individual civic participation. The evidence came from all five MQ, QLS (Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Dickens et al., 2015, Hibbert et al., 2003, Westlund and Gawell, 2012), three MQ, CS (Buckley et al., 2017, Henderson et al., 2018, Lang and Roessl, 2011), one MQ, MME (SERIO, 2017), one LQ, SV (Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017), one LQ, CS (Moreton et al., 2005) and one LQ, MME (Seyfang, 2007).

In a LQ, SV (Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017), 401 participants completed questions on 'satisfaction', 'involvement' and 'connectedness'. Analysis showed weak, positive correlations between 'involvement' and 'satisfaction' $r(399) = .15, p < .01$, and 'involvement' and 'connectedness' $r(399) = .15, p < .01$. 35 per cent ($n = 147$) of participants indicated that their association with the farm had encouraged them to become more involved in their own community. A section of the questionnaire asked respondents to explain in their own words why they felt the farm was important: 389 participants completed this section. Four main themes emerged, including helping a community initiative and 'fighting for the underdog'. The first appeared to focus on notions of the initiative providing cooperation, community involvement, and an ethos of togetherness. For the second, anti-establishment sentiments including regaining power and not letting major corporations take over the countryside seemed to resonate with a number of people.

A LQ, CS (Moreton et al., 2005) reported that 64–68 per cent of survey respondents indicated that they had been involved in the establishment of a community shop, by investing either money or their own time, and that 62 per cent still contributed as volunteers or board members.

In a LQ, MME of an organic co-operative (Seyfang, 2007), 76 per cent of survey respondents reported that they were motivated to purchase from the business because they liked to know where their food has come from and 25 per cent specifically liked the face-to-face contact with growers. Eighty-four per cent said they chose the business because of a commitment to supporting local farmers, 65 per cent said keeping money circulating in the local economy was a motivation and 36 per cent wanted to preserve local traditions and heritage through supporting the business. Ninety-four per cent bought from the business because they believed local and organic food was better for the environment, i.e. they felt better about their impact on the planet.

A MQ, QLS of community reporting gave an example of a news item informing people about their rights to a discount on their energy bills if they were receiving welfare benefits (Dickens et al., 2015).

Long term outcomes

A LQ, CS reported greater self-confidence, both on an individual level and in the wider community (Hayton, 1995).

Employment

A MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018) reported a backcourts improvement programme, funded by the Scottish government and local authority, which provided employability training in horticulture and grounds maintenance and supported the majority of participants, including many local Roma residents, into work; this also helped secure the right to benefits. The same project also supported the formation of new social enterprises with funding from the local economy, and case studies within the same study provided benefits and debt advice. The authors mentioned that jobs created may not always be accessible to, or of sufficient quality to benefit, more marginal groups (Henderson et al., 2018).

A LQ, CS (Hayton 1995) reported that the four community businesses in the study employ 25 people; three-quarters were female and half of the jobs were full-time. Two-thirds of the jobs were taken by people who were previously unemployed: almost half had been unemployed for more than two years, and one for as long as nine and a half years. The nature of the jobs meant that pay levels were relatively low but, despite this, the attitude of over two-thirds of employees was that working in a community company was 'better' than working in any other type of business. This was explained by such factors as contact with the community, the ability to influence the business and the relationships with the rest of the staff and management.

A LQ, CS reported opening an information and development centre to provide a focal point for the unemployed, with a welfare counselling service, and assistance for people interested in self-employment or setting up co-operatives (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).

3.2.5.3 Organisational wellbeing

Short to medium term outcomes

Fifteen studies reported on business level economic outcomes and factors. The evidence came from one MQ, QLS (Westlund et al., 2012), one GQ, CS (Stumbitz et al., 2018), two MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018), three LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012, Baker et al., 2009, Gordon et al., 2002), four MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d), three LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2008, Malfait et al., 2018, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a), and a LQ evaluation of unclear design (Shared Intelligence, 2014).

Twenty-three studies reported on other implementation and delivery outcomes at the business level. The evidence came from four GQ, CS (Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Kotecha et al., 2017, Mazzei et al., 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018), two MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018, Henderson et al., 2018), six LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012; Baker, 2009, Gordon, 2002, Gore, 2003, Hayton, 1995, Murgatroyd, 1984), four MQ, QLS (Bedford, 2018, Hibbert 2003, Rasmussen 2018, Westlund, 2012), two LQ, QLS (Juska, 2006, Morland, 2010), one GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016), three MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d) and one LQ MME (Malfait et al., 2018).

- **Economic outcomes for community businesses**

One GQ, MME (Dewhurst et al., 2016) reported that rent arrears had decreased between the time they started working with the Rise High Coordinator and the end of October 2016 by a total of £250.84, an average of £6.27 per tenant. The same study reported that using HACT social value/social return on investment methodology provided a budget to social impact ratio of 1:2 and a net benefit of £56,967.

One GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017) reported a social return on investment ratio of 1 to 5.1, identifying the impact of IET on local food purchasing as particularly important.

A case study from a GQ, CS of community transport organisations (Kotecha et al., 2017) reported that the majority of its income was derived from fares and hire charges, with a small amount (<10 per cent of annual income) of grant funding or subsidy.

A MQ, CS (Bailey et al, 2018) reported that key benefits of being financially self-sustaining compared to receiving grants were increased flexibility and independence. One case study business, an organic food co-operative, produced in one year organic produce with a value of just over £45,000, distributing it with nearly £70,000 worth of produce from small-scale organic growers and wholesalers. The box scheme also grew by 30 per cent that year. One of the cases had a maximum threshold for annual profit, beyond which they would have to pay taxes. In most businesses, income from renting out rooms flowed back into the business.

A LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2008) included a study (Hart, 1997) which estimated that businesses from urban areas held assets worth more than £29 million compared to £92,000 in rural settings, and that most of the assets were held by a small number of trusts that had been active for more than 15 years. The authors argued that asset ownership had been promoted in England in terms of buildings and in Scotland in terms of land. A LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011) also found that businesses who owned assets had more financial leverage than those who did not, but also carried more risk. A significant factor in the acquisition of assets in Scotland was reported to be the Scottish government's economic and community development agency (the Highlands and Islands Enterprise) which provided a brokerage service to support local economic development. Some renewable energy trusts were reported to have set up trading companies alongside their other activities. Income tended to be limited by the high cost of asset maintenance, funding streams and not wanting to compete with partners for funds, and limited markets for trading due to location. However, it was reported that many organisations had been successful in sourcing support from the community, e.g. materials and maintenance.

A LQ, CS observed that advantages arise if assets can be acquired at below market value, which can allow them to use the enhanced value to cross-subsidise non-commercial activities (Bailey, 2012). The same study reported that only the large organisations with a secure asset base can generate a steady and secure income stream and provide security for commercially funded loans.

Long term outcomes

- **Employment**

Thirteen studies reported on the outcome of employment. The evidence came from one MQ, QLS (Bedford, 2018), one GQ, CS (Mazzei, 2013), two MQ, CS (Henderson, 2018, Lionais, 2004) and four LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002, Gore, 2003, Hayton, 1995, Murgatroyd, 1984), three MQ, MME (Richards, 2018a factors, Richards, 2018b hubs, Richards, 2018d sport and leisure) and one LQ, MME (Mazzei and Bradford, 2009), and a LQ evaluation of unclear design (Shared Intelligence, 2014).

A MQ, MME (Richards, 2018a) reported that just over half of all the community businesses which had paid staff (N=53, 54 per cent) stated that their number of employees had increased in the last year, while almost a third (N=31, 31 per cent) had stayed the same. Interestingly, most of the sport and leisure sector community businesses reported an increase in the number of paid staff in the last year (N=13, 76 per cent), although there was no clear indication for the reason for this increase. Respondents across all sectors reported a good retention of staff with a high proportion remaining within businesses for over three years (Paid staff: >3 years N=65, 66 per cent).

Another MQ, MME (Richards, 2018d) reported positive employment outcomes for sport and leisure community businesses:

Moreover, the continued growth of the business has other beneficial impacts for the community. For example, local residents have benefited from employment opportunities, and local businesses have profited from an increased influx of visitors to the area (Richards et al., 2018d).

The business is particularly proud of three skilled young coaches who graduated from the 16–24 year-old group. These coaches are now managing satellite groups and making a living as martial art trainers at local and international levels (Richards et al., 2018d).

Another LQ, CS reported that a community business which had failed to increase employment in the village was leading to stress amongst its supporters:

Despite the significant achievements of the Balninkai Centre, in the most recent communications with the community activists we noticed signs of exhaustion, apprehension and pessimism. Such a change in attitudes was closely related to fact that Balninkai had made very little progress in making a meaningful impact on the fundamental and most crucial problem that the rural population was facing – the lack of employment. Although sociocultural activities were important in improving the quality of rural life, everyone interviewed in Balninkai was aware that the failure to generate employment in the long run would seal the fate of the village (Juska et al., 2006).

- **Sustainability**

The results of a MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a) indicated that a high proportion of community business survey respondents were generating increasing levels of income from trading or contracting sources, as opposed to grant income. The authors concluded that these results indicated that the community businesses sampled were gathering income from a diverse range of sources, rather than

being solely dependent on one source, which could assist in the longer-term sustainability of their business.

A LQ, MME of community pubs (Plunkett Foundation, 2018a) reported that in 2017, three pubs transferred out of community ownership and into the private sector and continue to be run as pubs.

A LQ CS of a co-operative reported establishing a community trust to provide small grants to local clubs and societies, and help people getting started in business (Gordon, 2002).

3.2.6 Factors that may influence the impact of community businesses on wellbeing

Community control or level of participation

We used Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' (Arnstein, 1969) to categorise community businesses in terms of the extent of community involvement or control (see Figure 7). This was due to the significance of community accountability highlighted in our initial definition (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Richards et al., 2018a). It was often difficult to assign a study to a level on Arnstein's ladder, sometimes because required information was sparse, such as the nature of how the business began. The nature of the business and the level of community control often changed over time as the business developed, making it difficult to assign studies to just one rung on the ladder. The level of participation was recorded as unclear in 15 studies (Aiken et al., 2008, Baker et al., 2009, Barraket and Archer, 2010, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Chan, 2016, Gore et al., 2003, Hibbert et al., 2003, Mazzei, 2013, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017, Stumbitz et al., 2018). Nevertheless, levels were assigned where this was judged to be possible, as follows:

- Citizen control – the highest level – was assigned to eight studies (Dickens et al., 2015, Juska et al., 2006, Kotecha et al., 2017, Moreton et al., 2005, Morley et al., 2017, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013, Willis et al., 2017).
- Delegated power was assigned to three studies (Lang and Roessl, 2011, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013).
- Partnership was assigned to 12 studies (Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017, Henderson et al., 2018, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Morland, 2010, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013, Westlund and Gawell, 2012).

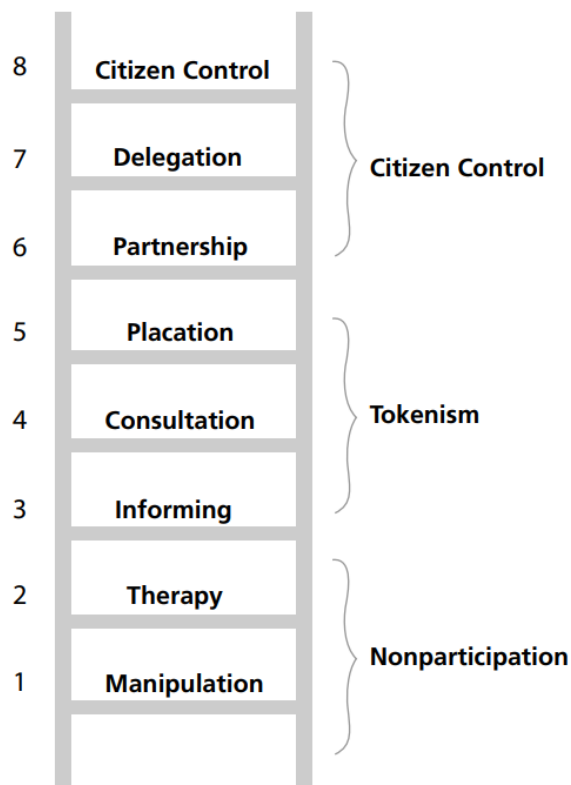
- Placation was assigned to five studies (Bailey et al., 2018, Gordon, 2002, Hayton, 1995, Lionais, 2004, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).
- Consultation was assigned to two studies (Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Mazzei, 2013).
- Informing was assigned to two studies (Aiken et al., 2011, Seyfang, 2007).
- Manipulation/therapy was assigned to one study (Dewhurst, 2016).

We discussed with the advisory group whether interventions must be led by the community to be included, and the decision was that we would not limit inclusion to businesses that were community led, as doing this would not allow us to gain an insight into the potential influence of the extent of community control on the wellbeing outcomes. Also, the level assigned is based on the information reported in the study, which may not tell the full story of how a business began and developed.

Arnstein's ladder of participation is a guide to who has power to make decisions. It was initially developed to describe the distribution of power in political and economic processes, but has since been adapted to a number of fields.

Moving from the bottom to the top rungs, actors are more involved in decision making processes and gain more power to, firstly, influence and then make decisions. Rungs 1–2 are seen as non-participation, 3–5 as limited or token participation, and 6–8 as citizens gaining control.

1. Manipulation – the proposed plan has been decided and the job of participation is to achieve support.
2. Therapy – as with manipulation, decisions have been decided and participation is about public relations.
3. Informing – the 'first step' towards participation through the sharing of information. But the flow of information is mainly one-way.
4. Consultation – further sharing of information and mechanisms allowing citizens to contribute through indirect means, such as surveys or public enquiries.
5. Placation – a limited number of citizens have more input (i.e. on committees) but those with power have the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.
6. Partnership – power is redistributed between citizens and 'power holders'. Planning and decision making are shared.
7. Delegation – citizens hold the majority of decision making power.
8. Citizen Control – citizens have complete decision making power and responsibility.



Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

Figure 7: Arnstein's ladder

Funding

Many of the included studies reported more than one source of funding, whether concurrently, as start-up or over time, and in other studies the source of funding was unclear. Where reported, funding sources were distributed as follows:

- **trading goods** (30 studies) (Bailey et al., 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Chan, 2016, Gore et al., 2003, Hayton, 1995, Henderson et al., 2018, Hibbert et al., 2003, Kotecha et al., 2017, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Lionais, 2004, Mazzei, 2013, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009, Moreton et al., 2005, Morland, 2010, Morley et al., 2017, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Plunkett Foundation, 2018a, Plunkett Foundation, 2018b, Rasmussen et al., 2018, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017, Seyfang, 2007, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Willis et al., 2017)
- **grants** (21 studies) (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Chan, 2016, Juska et al., 2006, Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016, Lang and Roessl, 2011, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Mazzei, 2013, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009, Moreton et al., 2005, Morland, 2010, Morley et al., 2017, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017, Shared Intelligence, 2014, Stumbitz et al., 2018, Westlund and Gawell, 2012)
- **providing commissioned services** (9 studies) (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Dewhurst, 2016, Henderson et al., 2018, Mazzei, 2013, Moreton et al., 2005, Richards et al., 2018a, Richards et al., 2018c, Stumbitz et al., 2018)
- **crowdfunding/fundraising/shares** (4 studies) (Bosworth and Hegarty, 2017, Buckley et al., 2017, Mazzei, 2013, SERIO, 2017)
- **statutory funding** (3 studies) (Baker et al., 2009, Chan, 2016, SERIO, 2017)
- **partnership funding** (2 studies) (Lang and Roessl, 2011, Mazzei, 2013)
- **charitable donations** (2 studies) (Lang and Roessl, 2011, SERIO, 2017)
- **transfer of assets** (Bailey, 2012)
- **fees and sponsorship** (Westlund and Gawell, 2012).

In a MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018) it was reported that the income from the business was not enough to cover its costs, to the café and shop were subsidised by income from personal budgets, supplemented by grant funding.

Financial self-sustainability included securing long term contracts (e.g. NHS and local authority), staff and volunteer skill sets and roles managing resources, and diversifying income streams. The following quote is from a case study attached to a moderate quality mixed methods evaluation:

"Nevertheless, there are physical limitations to the building. It is currently running at capacity and there is no further space available to expand services or numbers of personnel. As such, the centre would welcome further support in the future to develop the building or access other premises" (Richards et al., 2018c).

Five studies noted potential or observed risks associated with funding: one MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a), one MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018), two LQ, CS (Baker 2009, Gordon, 2002), and one LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2008).

In a MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a), survey respondents were asked what they considered to be the main barriers to the successful running of their business; all indicated access to funding as a key barrier. Other studies reported risks associated with failure to get enough funding, or changes in funding streams (Baker, 2009) or market conditions, e.g. a local employer leaving the area (Aiken et al., 2008) or with asset transfer strategies which were dictated by financial rather than social concerns (Aiken et al., 2008) or came with inadequate training and support.

A MQ, CS reported that all the studied community businesses faced major challenges associated with rapid changes in policy at central and local levels, high levels of risk in accessing funding, borrowing money or taking on new assets, and difficulties sustaining the organisation (Bailey et al., 2018). Case studies attached to a MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a) reported issues arising from the success of community businesses, in that the area was no longer considered deprived, which closed off many potential sources of grant funding. In the same study, the authors pointed out that if the area demographics or national policies changed, this could have a large impact of the community businesses' income.

In a LQ, CS, joint-working was also reported to bring challenges in the management and governance of the organisation as a whole, particularly in terms of handling multiple funding streams with multiple reporting requirements and services that are required to comply with different professional standards and values (Baker et al., 2009).

A LQ, CS of rural co-operatives (Gordon, 2002) reported pressure from some members for distribution of profits, rather than the preferred model (by managers and committee members) of reinvestment. Some funding streams have become more difficult to access due to the potential for distribution of any funds awarded.

Values

Core values, vision or 'mission', as described in the included studies, were mentioned by several community businesses as being very important, and these were usually related to social justice, community cohesion and social capital (SERIO, 2017, Bailey et al., 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Buckley et al., 2017, Dickens et al., 2015), or to nature conservation and environmental issues (Buckley et al., 2017, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013), or both (Morley et al., 2017).

In a MQ, CS, the vision of the community business was linked to the desire for businesses to be accountable:

So, there was accountability to a local geographic community (and to communities of interest and identity within that), but some also talked about an accountability to future generations and to global issues, for example those working in the fields of environment or energy (Buckley et al., 2017).

A LQ, CS reported that although most organisations had diversified their services over time, they had also retained the original vision and social aim which motivated their start up (Sonnino and Griggs Trevarthen, 2013).

Tension between maintaining locally rooted values and expanding the range and types of activities to become financially sustainable was mentioned in several studies: two GQ, CS (Mazzei, 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018), two MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018, Lang and Roessler, 2011), one MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018b), and five LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002, Hayton, 1995, Juska et al., 2006, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013).

In a GQ, CS some organisations, particularly those receiving statutory funding, chose to limit their operations to work within the limits of their core (public) funding and others aligned their delivery to policy priorities (Mazzei, 2013). The authors stated that organisations tended to opt for transparency and sharing information with stakeholders, building trusting relationships, and addressing the tension between ethical products, profitability and corporate change, by 'trial and error'. The authors remarked that:

Organisations dealing with people's needs, providing services to the most disadvantaged are faced by critical strains when it comes to make decisions (financially rooted) that impact either their clients or their organisations (Mazzei, 2013).

Other studies reported that the values underpinning the community businesses did not always represent the views of the whole community and sometimes this could cause tension. For example, one GQ, MME of a community growing enterprise (Morley et al., 2017) reported local resistance to change and a noticeable division between longer-term residents and ‘incomers’. The free text responses to the survey highlighted some of these negative perceptions, including:

“is typical middle class do-goodery which fails to understand working class people and real food need” (Morley et al., 2017).

“If you look at all the [place] chat forums and Facebook thing, it’s only a few people who actually get it, the rest of them think, ‘what are all these weirdos doing planting peas in the police station?’” (Morley et al., 2017).

Similarly, a MQ, CS reported scepticism of residents towards a co-operative village shop (Lang and Roessl, 2011). An interviewee in one LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002) suggested that the original issue that had drawn the community together – to rescue privately owned village shops threatened with closure – had long passed and many of the younger generation took the local shop for granted. Combined with greater expectations of younger people and increased mobility this meant they were more likely to shop in larger towns. The community co-op shop had to experiment with the range of goods they supplied to attract customers.

A MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018) reported that community-based social enterprises (CBSEs) may be cautious about expanding too rapidly and diluting the original set of core values which launched the organisation in the first place. One of the case studies they cite was ‘grappling with a fundamental tension. On the one hand it fears a loss of its social objectives if the organisation “professionalises” its activities and shifts the balance towards trading and commercial activities. On the other hand, the treasurer emphasises the need for a more “entrepreneurial, business-like approach” that brings in money to secure its future’ (Bailey et al., 2018).

The authors of a LQ, CS echoed this tension:

It would be disappointing if this locally-inspired project lost its basic rationale of linking the community and became a more ‘anonymous’ scheme depending on the undoubted personal charisma of its manager and supported by public authorities for its ‘prestige value’ rather than as an ongoing development of a ‘bottom-up’ approach to local regeneration (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).

In a LQ, CS of the community food sector in the UK, the authors argued that ‘if [...] the sustainability of the social economy is closely dependent on its level of local embeddedness, then there are clear

limits to the extent to which this development model can expand. Simply stated, these clusters of social enterprises cannot grow to be bigger than the community of volunteers and of “committed customers” on which they depend for their daily operations as well as for their financial survival’ (Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013).

Another LQ, QLS (Juska et al., 2006) reported tensions between the requirements of statutory agencies and grassroots providers:

Attempts to transform Balninkai into social service provider also revealed inherent tensions among bottom-up approaches in community organizing, conscientization and service delivery within not-for-profit organizations. More specifically, service delivery encourages professionalization and bureaucratization of the Balninkai organization, because the state requires service providers to obtain numerous licences, certifications and permits. This entails the decline in importance of bottom-up and increase in top-bottom interactions within the organization. Such transformation can be antithetical to the ethos of voluntary organizations directed at strengthening social solidarity and citizenship in the village (Juska et al., 2006).

A LQ, CS (Hayton, 1995) reported that many community businesses found it difficult to recruit managers locally and had to rely on ‘outsiders’ who may not be sympathetic to or understand community aspirations. This can result in community involvement and support disappearing.

Another LQ, CS reported that most community members did not know what the community business did and asked ‘Can a business claim to be community-based when the community is largely unaware of its existence?’ (Lionais, 2004).

Leadership

Participants in one MQ, CS talked about times when leadership is required and “the need, sometimes, to make decisions on behalf of the community”, giving the example of working in deprived areas with communities that had been over-consulted. Being accountable to their community helped the businesses feel they had a mandate to act on their behalf:

“We listened to people’s views but needed to be able to take the decision even if it is against the voices that are loudest. There are aspects of benign dictatorship – we sometimes make decisions that people don’t like [...] We are responding to community needs and that’s what we do because we are part of the community, we don’t have to wait for someone to tell us to do something, we know what’s going on!” (Buckley et al., 2017).

The origins of community businesses were often closely linked to their core values and many mentioned starting with small groups of active residents (for example Bailey et al., 2018, a MQ, CS). Key individuals were seen as important in one LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011) – such as founder, board member or staff member. The study authors stated that ‘their responses underlined the need for a lead with passionate vision, an entrepreneurial approach, perseverance and long term commitment’ (Aiken et al., 2011).

Size/localness

A MQ, QLS of community reporting (Dickens et al., 2015) noted a strong link between community reporters’ (CRs) distinctive sense of what is news, whether as consumers or producers, and their sense of being positioned within a local community. The embedding of CRs in their own communities broadens the types and depth of story that they can tell. One interviewee said:

“Because I’m from the borough I kind of know my audience, I know what the locals want, what they’re about. It’s quite a wide range I’d say from elderly people down to children. When you’re surrounded by the people I think you know what they want” (Hannah).
(Dickens et al., 2015).

A MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018) reported that ‘being “small, beautiful and quite free” can enable agility, creativity and responsiveness to people’s needs’.

A LQ, MME (Moreton et al., 2005) reported that size seemed to be an important factor, as smaller, focused, community transport schemes felt closer to the community than more ambitious, staffed initiatives. The focused nature of the enterprise appeared to help in forming a strong bond between customers and the business. In a LQ, CS of a community anchor organisations, interviewees wanted to see a stronger geographical focus on the immediate local area (Baker et al., 2009). One interviewee was reported as saying:

“...when I think of the mission and vision, I think of the people who live near Cambridge House. There is a geographical closeness that is important.” (Baker et al., 2009).

A LQ, CS of Highlands and Islands co-operatives found that having a bilingual assistant in the shop who could speak to customers in their preferred language was quite important in building better relationships (Gordon, 2002).

Another LQ, CS reported that over half of the businesses studied had 60 per cent or more of their customers living within five miles, and 76 per cent of the beneficiaries of the services also lived within five miles (Gore et al., 2003).

Needs orientation

Twenty studies reported on the outcome of 'community needs identified'. The evidence came from two GQ, CS (Mazzei, 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018), on MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018), four MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017), two MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018, Lionais, 2004), five LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2008, Aiken et al., 2011, Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018, Mazzei and Bradford, 2009, Seyfang, 2007), five LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012, Bailey et al., 2018, Baker et al., 2009, Gordon, 2002, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984) and one LQ evaluation of unclear design (Shared Intelligence, 2014).

There were many examples of community businesses identifying and responding to the needs of their local community. A GQ, MME of Incredible Edible Todmorden (Morley et al., 2017) reported that the initiative worked in disadvantaged local areas to facilitate healthier eating in school holidays. A participant in the evaluation was reported as saying:

“Over the summer holiday, they’ve been doing this kids eat free ... Where [IET has] been working in one of the ... more impoverished areas in Todmorden. And they were just basically, putting a stall out and cooking at lunchtime and the kids could just come along and eat. It’s that whole issue of children in the summer holidays, if they’re not getting a free school meal.” (Morley et al., 2017).

A MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018d) of sport and leisure community businesses reported that all the case study businesses interviewed as part of the research were formed as a result of a gap in the provision of local community services – including taking over the running of a local asset after closure by the local authority, or filling a gap in provision of services to the local community more generally. In this study, the ability to identify a local need and develop accessible services to meet the need was identified as a key enabler of success. The study also found that when services were matched to local needs appropriately, the community was more willing to support the business. In another MQ, MME, local needs included safety and green space, a need to bring the community together and a need to get people back into employment (Richards et al., 2018a).

Some community businesses arose in response to a specific need, e.g. the closure of a local cottage hospital led to concerns about the lack of social care in one community, reported in a MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018). Commissioners who were interviewed in this study thought that “the agility that comes from being small can enable community businesses and other community-led providers to be dynamic, creative and responsive to people’s needs”. In another MQ, CS, it was the

closure of a local bookshop that led to the creation of a community bookshop and hub (Buckley et al., 2017). The businesses involved in this study were all:

... born from local need – either to preserve or introduce something new. They were not businesses that decided to involve the community but rather community members who decided to embark on business. A recurrent challenge or tension was balancing what the community wanted or needed with sound business decisions in order not to risk the venture failing [...] “How do we manage the tension of business versus community needs? There is a healthy tension – it keeps you on your toes!” (Buckley et al., 2017).

A LQ, MME (Moreton et al., 2005) of community-owned shops reported a strong link between community need, community involvement, and their subsequent interest in supporting the success of the enterprise. With regard to the ability of community-owned shops to mobilise the community and provide life-changing benefits to older rural residents, the authors write:

The focus around a simple, understandable and accessible community need seems to be the key to their effectiveness. In the focus groups, they were frequently described as ‘lifelines’ by their participants, enabling older residents to stay in the village and to play a more active role in community life at the same time (Moreton et al., 2005).

Case studies in a LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011) included a church that wanted to broaden its activities to reflect the needs of the wider community, although the authors recognised that reconciling different community interests and needs as a significant challenge. Bailey et al. (2012) and Bailey et al. (2018) reported that neighbourhood based community enterprises with a clear understanding of the needs of their local communities were able to identify and respond to gaps in service provision to deliver a range of services which might otherwise not be provided, e.g. low cost housing, provision of training, access to employment and workspaces of all sizes.

A LQ, CS of a community hub (Baker et al., 2009) described providing different services for different people in different ways, taking a ‘whole person’ and ‘whole community’ approach, and interviewees mentioned that staff became aware of the need for a service based on their experience of delivering services on the ground. The provision of a range of services and activities calibrated to the needs of the community was seen as valuable.

Other studies reported on community businesses arising in response to the closure of village shops (Gordon, 2002), swimming pools and caravan park sites (Richards et al., 2018c), fishing wholesalers (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984), steelworks (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984) or other local services (Sonnino and Griggs Trevarthen, 2013) such as childcare (Gore et al., 2003), libraries (SERIO, 2017) or

mental health services (Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018). One LQ, CS cautioned that whilst providing services may benefit local residents, such businesses are often of marginal viability in terms of net economic impact – although they can help to recycle and retain residents’ income within the estate. New start businesses, although of more limited relevance to residents in terms of service provision, may attract new wealth into the area (Hayton, 1995). Stakeholders interviewed in a MQ, MME of community managed libraries (CMLs) commented that CMLs were much better placed (than previous local authority run models) to engage with local communities and tailor their services to the needs of their individual communities:

“Absolutely community value. A sense of community ownership. The fact that they’re able to adapt what they offer for the environment that they’re in. They radically differ, depending on what community they’re in. Also they have the ability to react more quickly than a council run library. They buy their stock quicker than we buy our stock. If somebody wants to do something different and want different opening hours they’re able to do it just like that. I think that’s actually a real benefit” (stakeholder, SERIO, 2017).

Innovation

Three studies noted risks associated with innovation: one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), one LQ, MME (Seyfang, 2007) and one LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012).

A GQ, MME of a community growing enterprise (Morley et al., 2017) reported that some participants were reluctant to pick and eat the food grown due to fear of contamination from nearby roads. Some participants also expressed concern about lack of engagement with young people, a perceived lack of community cohesion and fears of gentrification due to the project increasing the desirability of the area:

“There’s more and more people wanting to move to the area. It then becomes a problem, like in lots of different areas across the country, it becomes impossible for the person to afford, the affordable housing aspect [...] ‘well, we can’t afford to live here now, I’m going to have to move somewhere else that’s cheaper, while you take my house in the town that I was born and brought up in’” (Morley et al., 2017).

A LQ, MME of an organic food co-operative suggested that pioneering initiatives face steeper learning curves than those who follow, and funding to support these innovations is essential (Seyfang, 2007).

A LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012) reported that community enterprises struggle to secure adequate funding for revenue and running costs and for capital investment. They stated that ‘perhaps the greatest organisational challenge facing community enterprises is to balance the need for continuity with the ability to innovate and change to address new circumstances’.

Risks associated with asset ownership

Although asset ownership was generally perceived to be an advantage, three mixed methods evaluations also noted potential risks. One (Richards et al., 2018b) was assessed as being of moderate quality and two (Aiken et al., 2008, Aiken et al., 2011) were assessed as being of low quality.

A MQ, MME noted lack of support from local councils, along with lack of finance and technical skills, and failure to plan adequately around longer-term financial implications and upkeep, as barriers to asset transfer, particularly for community hubs (Richards et al., 2018b).

A LQ, MME noted that asset ownership was not risk free and that ownership of buildings is not necessarily a guarantee of sustainability (Aiken et al., 2011). This study noted the risks in relations to a community group who took control of a local community centre:

The community focused solely on getting ownership of the asset and did not plan enough for the use of it ... No due diligence was undertaken before taking on the asset and lots of skeletons tumbled out of the closet ... From the start, it had been a struggle to raise sufficient capital to bring the building into a habitable state. It had also been difficult to find a suitable, financially sustainable community use for it. During the long and sometimes acrimonious negotiations for the building, it lay empty and community needs changed or were catered for by other organisations. Although, due to its position in the village, the land is still seen as a great asset for the community, at the time of our case study the building was described as “a liability”.

In this study (Aiken et al., 2011) it was argued that where an organisation is carrying out a significant amount of service delivery, renting might provide greater flexibility and mobility – as happens in the private retail sector. The same study (Aiken et al., 2011) reported that the case for and against acquiring buildings with a symbolic value for the local or wider community was a particular issue for debate. The problem with such buildings was that although they had a powerful community narrative – with the corollary that their destruction might deal a significant blow to community identity and pride – they were often unsuitable for community use or in a poor state of repair, as

well as being expensive to maintain in the longer term. Some (particularly buildings with a symbolic heritage value) came with planning restrictions attached. While the argument for or against acquisition would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, one view was that the responsibility for preserving heritage should not lie with the local community alone. Case study participants reported that although they received support during the acquisition of the asset, there was little support available once the asset had been transferred. The study authors mentioned that location was important, with more affluent areas having potentially greater access to professional skills and commercial markets, but less likely to be seen as a priority by grant-makers.

In the same study it was noted that sometimes alternative ways of raising income had to be introduced, which could lead to community members feeling pushed out. In one example, where space was let to service providers, some local residents felt they took second place (Aiken 2011).

“the building is well run but it is not there for people during the day ... older people don’t want to come out in the evening” (local resident, Aiken et al., 2011).

Communities may not have the capacity to manage assets, the assets may become monopolised by unrepresentative groups, or community fragmentation could occur as a result of dividing up assets across different groups.

A LQ, CS from the USA in Aiken et al. (2008) reports that social housing can be viewed as a disadvantage for existing home owners who fear falling property prices. This study (Aiken et al., 2008) reported that it can take decades rather than years for community businesses to become well established and financially sustainable.

Staff and volunteers

Six studies reported on potential risks and harms relating to staff and volunteers in community businesses: one GQ, QLS (Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016), one GQ, CS (Kotecha et al., 2017), two MQ MMEs (Richards et al., 2018b, SERIO, 2017), one LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011) and one LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012).

There were three areas of risk predominantly reported in the included studies that relate to staff or volunteers. These were:

- (i) difficulty in recruiting people with the right skill mix and local knowledge
- (ii) the availability of volunteers
- (iii) stress and burnout.

A GQ, QLS reported a perceived lack of expertise of board members and other key stakeholders in relation to the business plan that they were required to develop (Kleinhans and van Ham, 2016).

In relation to community transport, a GQ, CS indicated that finding volunteers and staff with the right skills was among the top barriers to success and growth for community transport businesses. Some of these challenges were to do with regulatory barriers governing community transport organisations, while some were to do with the availability of volunteer drivers, who tended to be aged 50 or over, and had insufficient time or numbers to meet the growing demand for these services (Kotecha et al., 2017). Volunteer availability was also a problem in a MQ, MME of community libraries (SERIO, 2017). Concerns had been raised about the gap in volunteer availability becoming greater as the number of older volunteers reduced, and some community libraries had tried to develop services to engage a younger age of volunteers to participate, that don't require additional training (SERIO, 2017):

“The nature of the volunteers they have are quite often very part time. They come in for very few hours and may have limited skills. In order to be able to grow that community library, again we're back to people. And unless you've got the people within that set up who have the expertise and skills to be able to take it further then it's not going to go any further” (SERIO, 2017).

Case studies attached to a MQ, MME of community hubs reported difficulty finding staff with the relevant community and professional expertise, but also finding physical space to accommodate them. The authors reported that requiring such a skilled workforce meant fewer opportunities for volunteers to get involved and emphasised the value of having dedicated management of volunteers in place (Richards et al., 2018b).

Difficulties in recruiting paid staff and volunteers were also reported in a LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2008) and MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018), particularly those with local connection and also relevant skills and motivation:

“This is exactly the problem, many people have ideas, but people do not act, who is going to do this ... they always take the view that we or I or whoever must do that for them” (secretary of the board, Bailey et al., 2018).

It was also noted that paid staff and volunteers often put in considerable unpaid overtime, and that stress and burnout could therefore be a problem (Aiken et al., 2011). A LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012) reported perceived potential risks to individuals and organisations of community engagement:

Because of the time required and the dependency on certain individuals with key skills, there are dangers of both 'burn-out' and difficulties of succession. Individuals can over-identify with the organisation and feel that their way of doing things is the only way. On the other hand, experience and professional skills are valuable and need to be retained where ever possible (Bailey, 2012).

Other contextual factors

The particular circumstances from which a community enterprise emerges are often unique and therefore the local context is crucial in forging the new organisation. One example emerged out of the community politics surrounding bad housing conditions and a new urban flyover, and a number of trusts were formed out of government policy towards neighbourhood regeneration (Bailey, 2012).

A MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018) reported that English businesses in the study emerged from the philosophies and practices of community development and a tradition of mutual, co-operative organisations established since the nineteenth century. Community-based social enterprises have increased since the 1990s when austerity and state retrenchment have affected communities severely. Each had to combine commercial and non-commercial activities where trading for commercial gain could be justified if it supported non-trading social oriented objectives.

A MQ, MME of factors that support community businesses (Richards et al., 2018a) reported growth in the sector was primarily due to a reduction in local authority funding, impacting their ability to run core community facilities, and looking to reduce costs through asset transfer to community groups. The study also reported that the growing trend in the NHS towards social prescribing created new opportunities for community businesses.

3.2.7 Potential mechanisms of change

The review identified three main potential mechanisms of change by which community businesses impact on community wellbeing. These were:

- community engagement
- strengthening community infrastructure via assets and collaborations
- skills development.

Community engagement

Community engagement seemed to be a potential mechanism leading to impact of community businesses on community wellbeing in six included studies: one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017), one MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a), one LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011) and three LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012, Baker et al., 2009, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).

Community engagement was also mentioned by several studies as a mechanism for identifying community needs (Bailey et al., 2018, Bedford and Harper, 2018, Henderson et al., 2018, Juska et al., 2006, Kotecha et al., 2017).

In a GQ, CS, staff of successful community transport organisations reported that community demand was an important factor for the business to be successful, with services tailored to specific passenger needs, flexibility, reliability, being supportive, often in routes underserved by local transport links (Kotecha et al., 2017).

Other studies identified wider needs that were important to local communities, such as social and cultural needs (Lionais, 2004) and climate change (Bedford and Harper, 2018, Henderson et al., 2018, Morley et al., 2017).

A GQ, MME of Incredible Edible Todmorden (Morley et al., 2017) found that the initiative was reported to be popular with young children, women and older people, with intergenerational activities taking place, but less popular with teenagers and young adults. Participants suggested this may be partly explained by a lack of suitable settings to engage this demographic.

In a MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018a), community businesses were asked to select from a list of factors that they considered to contribute to the success of their business. Overall, the highest proportion of all businesses considered 'engagement from the community' to be the strongest factor (N=102, 84 per cent). When comparing the three different sectors, this remained the strongest factor for community hubs (87 per cent, N=62), with a higher proportion of health and wellbeing and sport and leisure businesses selecting 'well trained volunteers and staff' to be the most important contributing factor to their success (87 per cent, N=26 and 76 per cent, N=16 respectively).

Community engagement was seen as essential for building capacity and promoting social capital in a LQ, CS (Bailey, 2012). One suggestion was to use 'indirect' means such as volunteering and involving local schools and sports clubs. In another LQ, CS, good community engagement was seen as being a long term strategy, leading to services being embedded in geographic communities and communities of interest (Baker et al., 2009), although a third LQ, CS reported a drop-off in community engagement over time:

While the fabric of the building is being transformed, almost beyond recognition from the decaying factory it was two years ago, the meetings of local residents that originally attracted upwards of a hundred people have dwindled to a hard core of only a few, supporting the energetic commitment of the site controller, himself a member of the original group and a former local councillor (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).

Community-owned assets or buildings were perceived to be important vehicles for community engagement, for both young and old, with some participants claiming that their building had helped them engage community members that they had not been able to reach before. The following extracts from a LQ, MME by Aiken et al. (2011) shows the importance of the physical space to engage different groups of people:

Assets had provided an opportunity to run more services for young people, which meant they – the young people – had access to activities on the doorstep, rather than having to depend on poor and infrequent public transport to get into town. They also felt that young people were more likely to use community-owned buildings. As one participant said: “Security in council buildings can create a tension. They don’t feel they belong there.” (Aiken et al., 2011).

In the same LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011), community engagement was perceived to be a potential difficulty for smaller organisations. The authors wrote:

Where the same small group has been running the asset for years it is perhaps easy to become complacent or to assume no-one else wants to take over. Community members in some case study areas complained that the asset was “run by a clique”. However, these criticisms have to be set against the difficulties that some organisations experienced in trying to get new people on board, despite their best efforts, especially in places with little or no history of community development. Research on community engagement more widely has found that many community members are happy to let leaders get on with it (Aiken et al., 2011).

Strengthening community infrastructure

Buildings as assets

Eight studies reported the importance of buildings as assets to improve community wellbeing, mostly through acting as hubs for activities or as places to meet. These were: two MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017), one MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018), two LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2008, Aiken et al., 2011) and three LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002, Moreton et al., 2005, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013).

In a MQ, CS, a MQ, MME and two LQ, MMEs, ownership of assets was perceived to enhance local interaction and networks (Aiken et al., 2008), by providing a focal point for residents to allow new connections to be made and trust to be built (Aiken et al., 2011, Bailey et al., 2018). In some cases these were pre-existing groups that needed a focal point to meet (Aiken et al., 2011) and in some cases these were groups set up to enhance social inclusion:

It regularly holds events which give support to people who need a space to meet, such as the Stories and Supper Clubs which occur regularly to give refugees and migrants a chance to meet, learn and tell their stories (Bailey et al., 2018).

“It’s the only place in South Chingford which is non-commercial and nondenominational where people can meet. We don’t try and sell them anything, they don’t have to buy a cup of coffee, they don’t have to be of any specific religion. In that sense we provide a unique place. It’s a place that any library would offer but we’re the only library now in our area. I think that’s an important thing that we offer.” (South Chingford Community Library representative, SERIO, 2017).

A MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018) described the importance of newly renovated community building as a locus of community groups and activities:

The centrepiece of this community enterprise is the renovated building. The conference room, a lunchroom with garden terrace and a studio space are rented out to a range of user groups and activities. All related services are provided by volunteers The studio accommodates sewing groups, reading mornings, hobby workshops and playful biology lessons for children, and games of billiards or darts for adults. It also holds a small library where residents can borrow books for free. Moreover, local residents can use the studio to make or repair all kinds of goods for sale. The lunchroom is also an Internet café, with a stand-alone computer that can be used for a small amount of money (Bailey et al., 2018).

A LQ, MME (Aiken et al., 2011) reported that the possession of an asset can make partnership working more productive, as the community business can bring something tangible to negotiations.

Community control of assets not only allowed the organisations running them to expand their services. In addition, buildings and land provided the space and facilities for other local community groups to develop their activities, allowing them to reach more people and sometimes bringing them extra income. It also provided local facilities for other service providers to use, giving residents better access to externally provided services and information, and providing opportunities for more co-ordination between external agencies. Participants found that they were taken more seriously by external agencies, which increased their bargaining power and provided opportunities for new partnerships embedded in the local community (Aiken et al., 2011).

The authors of a LQ, CS (Gordon, 2002) suggested that ‘the creation and control of property contributes greatly to the consolidation and extension of the social change which has been brought about as a result of the original innovative HIBD initiative’.

In a LQ, MME, community-owned buildings were felt to provide a neutral space that could bring different parts of the community into contact with one another, breaking down barriers and providing opportunities to build bridges with communities further afield and with public authorities (Aiken et al., 2011):

“The building itself was important, but it has created an amazing ripple effect of spin-out activity and unanticipated benefits.” (Aiken et al., 2011).

The value of assets other than land and buildings was also emphasised, particularly with indigenous groups in the USA (Aiken et al., 2011).

Community assets were not always seen as a cohesive force (Aiken et al., 2011), for example it was reported that community fragmentation could occur as a consequence of dividing up assets across different groups (Aiken et al., 2008).

- **Collaborations with other organisations and services**

Seven studies reported on the outcome of building collaborations at a community level. The evidence came from one GQ, CS (Mazzei, 2013), one MQ, QLS (Bedford and Harper, 2018), one MQ, CS (Henderson et al., 2018), two MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c), one LQ, CS (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984) and one LQ, MME (Mazzei and Bradford, 2009).

Eighteen studies reported on the outcome of building collaborations at organisational level. The evidence came from two GQ, CS (Mazzei, 2013, Stumbitz et al., 2018), one MQ, QLS (Bedford and

Harper, 2018), three MQ, CS (Bailey et al., 2018, Buckley et al., 2017, Henderson et al., 2018), four MQ, MME (Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018d, SERIO, 2017), two LQ, QLS (Aiken et al., 2008, Juska et al., 2006), four LQ, CS (Baker et al., 2009, Hayton, 1995, Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984, Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013), one LQ, MME (Seyfang, 2007) and one LQ evaluation of unclear design (Shared Intelligence, 2014).

A GQ, MME of Incredible Edible Todmorden, for example, found that as well as building strong links with statutory organisations and other organisations which facilitate engagement of disadvantaged communities, the initiative supported local producers and increased the amount of locally-sourced food appearing on menus of local cafés and restaurants (Morley et al., 2017). A participant in the evaluation said:

“In the indoor market, there’s the local produce signs, which ... was an Incredible Edible initiative ... about saying exactly where things are sourced and that. I know, I’ve eaten a few times at [a local restaurant] ... it’s fabulous, it’s really, really good. And I know they try and source as much as possible locally. And last time I ate there the starter was called, Incredible Garden ... and all of the salad stuff was all, came from the AquaGarden.” (Morley et al., 2017).

Some community businesses were also able to exert a much wider influence, while remaining locally rooted, by sharing ideas and service models with other organisations (Stumbitz et al., 2018). The authors of this GQ, CS stated that:

Successful community businesses often have a range of formal and informal partnerships that allow them to understand needs and opportunities, deliver services and strengthen their organisations. Relationships with the public sector are particularly important but often under pressure in a time of austerity (Stumbitz et al., 2018).

Several studies reported community businesses as supportive partners or service providers for other community organisations:

The enterprise stresses the importance of local partnership and supports other local businesses in the area by taking their visitors on guided tours and also by buying local produce where possible. The premises the organisation uses are provided by the municipality at what is referred to as “a decent rent” (Bailey et al., 2018).

A GQ, CS observed that community businesses’ ability to sustain their activities was closely connected to their relationship with statutory agencies and therefore vulnerable to changes in funding provision (Mazzei, 2013). The authors of this study also concluded that the type of support

available at the time that a business actively begins to deliver interventions is crucial in shaping their development. Most rely on local networks which can be either informal networks of relations among community members and stakeholders or 'thematic networks'. Local support also comes from the level of endorsement given by public authorities during business start-up phase.

Another GQ, CS of community transport organisations (CTOs) (Kotecha et al., 2017) reported that partnerships provided access to the following important benefits: funding streams, new business opportunities, and information and advice. For example, one CTO has a strong working relationship with a local NHS trust, which led to the commissioning of local patient transport work, while another was provided with direct financial support from the local authority to help it deliver on underserved routes. In another CTO case study, the community transport organisations formed a local consortium with the benefit that they were then able to access larger contracts and grant funding opportunities, as well as having access to the knowledge, skills and experiences of other CTOs.

Participants in a GQ, MME of a community business working with a client with mental health and other complex needs reported building strong relationships with the local authority's housing and benefit advice service, local GP surgeries, the Department for Work and Pensions, and another service for people with multiple and complex needs (Dewhurst, 2016). The latter service and the community business formed a partnership to provide increased support to the most vulnerable people at risk of homelessness.

A MQ, MME reported that partnerships and networking are important to allow community businesses to access and recruit individuals with the right skills, create successful relationships between the people that the business engages, better navigation of rules in the asset transfer process, better management of risks associated with asset transfer and increased awareness of resources and funding. (Richards et al., 2018c, Richards et al., 2018b, Richards et al., 2018d). A case study connected with one of these studies considered working in partnership with diverse organisations a core value of the business that had been fundamental to its success.

The authors of a MQ, QLS of community reporting referred to the role of the organisation in establishing interconnections and productive exchange between locally oriented community reporting groups (Dickens et al., 2015). Although building an effective online network was reported as challenging, the community reporter participants felt connected, through shared training approaches, reporting practices and a wider ethos. The web space was felt to preserve a sense of community voice while also bringing it into contact with distant others. Participants in another MQ, CS of community anchor organisations said that:

“We have learned that partnership working and pulling on the strengths of each organisation is more beneficial in the long run. Our relationship is based on a mutual trust: we communicate and meet regularly, are open and provide information or reports which are mutually beneficial to one another” (Henderson et al., 2018).

However, the authors of this study cautioned that ‘developing and maintaining this diversity of relationships takes considerable time and resources and can be hugely challenging for small community organisations that lack core funding’ (Henderson et al., 2018).

Another MQ, CS mentioned the importance of building a relationship of trust and mutual understanding between key decision makers (Bailey et al., 2018), particularly when relationships develop over a long time. One of the case studies within this study had a different approach to partnerships, rarely seeking contact with important local stakeholders, favouring contractual ‘business-like’ relationships and limiting co-operation to immediate beneficiaries. This organisation had a ‘dominant philosophy of independence’ which meant it could achieve its objectives without support from the local government.

In a MQ, MME of community managed libraries (CMLs), it was reported that local authorities provided advice on library management, but that CMLs would like a closer relationship with the statutory library network. In one CML there was a close working relationship with the local authority, particularly through a member of staff who visited the library at least once a week, and was on the steering committee. The library felt this was particularly beneficial for the volunteers who came in less frequently (SERIO, 2017).

In a LQ, CS of a community hub, the hub was perceived to have potential to support an organisation to get established until it can stand alone, offering support from advice to office accommodation (Baker et al., 2009). However, ‘juggling’ relationships between multiple stakeholders and even different parts of the organisation was reported to be challenging, for example managing services that are ‘issue specific’, driven by their own funding targets and policies, and required to comply with different professional standards set by external bodies. The authors of this study suggest that a strength of community businesses is ‘their ability to build networks, work in partnership and, in doing so, create wider social, economic and environmental value’.

A LQ, MME (Mazzei and Bradford, 2009) reported on community businesses using a consortium approach to enable the process of networking between different initiatives which generate funding and support delivery of other activities leading to a greater understanding of the partnership and the organisations involved. In this project, there was significant ‘buy in’ of local business, which was

reflected in their representation on the board. The presence of significant employers on the board encouraged other businesses to engage in the programme as they were confident that it was helping to prepare a valuable workforce. The community business in this study also worked with local schools providing alternative vocational opportunities for education.

Interview participants in a LQ, MME referred to: the value of a good relationship with the local authority, a partnership and shared building space between a college and a housing association with a particular commitment to the local community, and the importance of external sources of non-financial support. An important facilitator of these partnership was brokerage – organisations or key people who provide links between knowledge, networks and funding (Aiken et al., 2011). In a MQ, QLS and a LQ, QLS, the authors reported that community enterprises are increasingly entering into formal and informal partnership arrangements and contributing to the preparation of statutory and non-statutory plans for their areas and, in some cases, delivering services on behalf of local and central government (Bailey, 2012, Buckley et al., 2017). Interviewees in the latter study saw the relationship with local people as a key element of accountability (Buckley et al., 2017) and valued being connected to the ‘jigsaw’ of local support and services. Participants in this study stressed the importance of communicating transparently about the ways in which different stakeholders are involved and listened to.

Partnerships were valued as sources of advice for community business in several studies. In a LQ, CS (Gore et al., 2003) key sources of advice were reported to come from:

- local authorities
- specialist support organisations
- voluntary and community sector organisations
- regeneration agencies and support projects
- similar businesses and projects
- government departments
- grant giving charities
- small businesses in the same village or town.

However, the same study highlighted a lack of ongoing support once businesses were established.

Another LQ, CS found that advice and support provided by the private sector was a facilitating factor, and reported that the involvement of various groups resulted in greater benefits than if they had worked in isolation (Hayton, 1995). A LQ, CS reported on the set up of an enterprise centre,

which included workshops and training/advisory services for business starters in a small village (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984).

A LQ, MME of a food co-operative reported that making inroads into public sector catering was ‘an uphill struggle’ (Seyfang, 2007). In another LQ, MME of a mental health project run by a community business, partners worked together on recruitment and referral into the project (Malfait and Scott-Flynn, 2018).

- **Facilitating other collaborations in the community**

Provision of buildings and spaces was reported to be a mechanism by which community businesses were able to facilitate other collaborations in the community. A MQ, CS found that community-owned buildings were often made available, either for free or rented out, for other community groups to meet (Bailey et al., 2018). In a MQ, MME, Richards et al (2018) report that community businesses may strengthen the community by providing meeting spaces and developing links between staff, volunteer and customers (Richards et al., 2018a).

A LQ, MME of an organic food co-operative (Seyfang, 2007) reported that the co-operative enabled local economic and community links between farmers and consumers, and consumers gained a sense of connection to the land through personal relationships which developed, through face to face contact, newsletters and educational farm visits. The authors reported that the resilience of these initiatives depends on their capacity to involve the local community:

“The first thing you do is find a local farmer who is crazy enough to do it. You need an individual who is a bit nuts probably or a local group that is committed to growing their own cereals. They would have to find a local grower who is willing to do it. They need to find local bakers to bake for them, if they don’t bake themselves. A local miller is one of the hardest things, but there are still mills up and down the country. You need to put those people together” (Bread Co-op manager, Seyfang, 2007).

Community businesses that acted as hubs could also offer grassroots community development support to community groups. Cambridge House community anchor, for example, was reported to offer a spectrum of support from advice through to office accommodation (Baker et al., 2009). One interviewee described the organisation as “as a very good host, a seedbed organisation, giving space to organisations to grow” (Baker et al., 2009).

None of these studies reported any costs (financial or otherwise) to community businesses associated with facilitating these collaborations in the community. We would expect that such

activity does carry a cost for the community business (i.e. loss of revenue from room hire, time spent doing collaboration). In terms of sustainability, understanding the hidden costs associated with collaborations in the community would be useful.

Skills development

Four studies reported on the outcome of education or training. The evidence came from one MQ, QLS (Dickens et al., 2015), one LQ, CS (Murgatroyd and Smith, 1984), one GQ, MME (Morley et al., 2017) and one MQ, MME (SERIO, 2017).

A GQ, MME of Incredible Edible Todmorden (Morley et al., 2017) reported that the initiative organised cooking classes in community settings and linked with schools. Two interview participants were reported as saying:

“When IE started to grow, then there was a clear realisation that a lot of people didn’t know what to do with raw materials and didn’t recognise some vegetables. So alongside the growing went some classes in preparation” (participant, Morley et al., 2017).

“There’s a lot more ‘hands on’ with the schools than there’s ever been before. It was fantastic seeing the veg’ patches coming up in the junior school and high school, really good ... they had loads of planters in their playgrounds, which was great, made out of old tyres and stuff ... really super” (participant, Morley et al., 2017).

3.3 Summary of findings

The strength of the evidence for each outcome across all included studies in each intervention category was assessed using GRADE and CERQual principles, and the results are displayed in Table 4 below.

In the table ‘serious’ means that there are a number of limitations which may affect the final level of certainty or confidence we can place in the findings.

Table 4: Summary of findings

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
Community level					
Community wellbeing (CWB)	8 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 4 moderate and 4 low quality studies report positive perceptions of CWB	STRONG	Unsure of methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	5 mixed methods studies	<i>Mixed methods:</i> 4 moderate and 1 low quality studies report positive impact on CWB	MODERATE	Concerns about methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Neighbourhood environment	2 qualitative studies 6 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 4 moderate and 4 low quality studies report positive perceptions of neighbourhood environment	STRONG	Unsure of methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	7 mixed methods studies 1 survey	<i>Mixed methods:</i> 4 moderate, 1 good and 2 low quality	MODERATE	Concerns about coherence and reporting bias: best quality study reports negative as well as	LOW

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
		studies report positive effects on neighbourhood environment		positive findings, but lower quality studies only report positive findings (downgrade) Concerns about methodological limitations (downgrade)	
Social relations	7 case studies 5 qualitative studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 4 low, 7 moderate and 1 good quality studies report positive perceptions of improvement in social relations	STRONG	Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade) Some concerns about methodological limitations (downgrade)	STRONG
	9 mixed methods studies 1 survey 1 evaluation of unclear design	<i>Mixed methods studies:</i> 1 good, 4 moderate and 5 low quality studies report positive effects on social relations	MODERATE	Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
Social cohesion	2 case studies 2 qualitative studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 2 moderate and 2 low quality studies	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Some concerns over coherence across body of evidence: best quality studies report negative as well as positive findings, but lower quality studies only report positive findings (downgrade)	MODERATE
	3 mixed methods studies 1 survey	<i>Mixed methods and survey evidence:</i>	MODERATE	Some concerns over methodological limitations	LOW

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
		3 moderate and 1 low quality studies			
Civic participation (CP)	4 qualitative studies 6 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 6 moderate, 3 low and 1 good quality studies report positive perceptions of CP	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	4 mixed methods studies 1 survey	<i>Mixed methods and survey evidence:</i> 3 moderate, 1 good and 1 low quality studies	MODERATE	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Individual level					
Individual wellbeing	6 case studies 1 qualitative study	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 3 low, 4 moderate and 1 good quality studies reported positive perceptions of individual wellbeing	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	2 surveys 6 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i> 3 low, 3 moderate and 2 good quality studies reported no impact on individual wellbeing	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
Social isolation or loneliness	6 qualitative studies 3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i>	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	STRONG

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
	3 mixed methods evaluations 2 surveys 1 evaluation of unknown design	6 moderate, 1 low and 2 good quality studies <i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i> 2 low and 4 moderate quality studies	MODERATE	Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade) Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Quality of life	1 mixed methods evaluation	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 1 good quality study	STRONG	Only one study (downgrade)	MODERATE
Health	2 qualitative studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 2 moderate quality studies	STRONG	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	3 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 1 good and 1 low quality studies	MODERATE	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Mental health	2 case studies 2 qualitative studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 3 moderate and 1 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over inconsistent findings across body of evidence (downgrade) Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	3 mixed methods evaluations		MODERATE	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade)	LOW

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
		<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 1 good, 1 moderate and 1 low quality studies		Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	
Civic participation	5 qualitative studies 4 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 8 moderate and 1 low quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	1 survey 2 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Employment	1 qualitative study 7 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 good, 3 moderate and 4 low quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	4 mixed methods evaluations 1 evaluation of unclear design	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 3 moderate and 2 low quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Volunteering	4 case studies 1 qualitative study	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 3 low and 2 moderate quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE
	7 mixed methods studies 2 surveys	<i>Mixed methods evaluations and surveys:</i>	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW

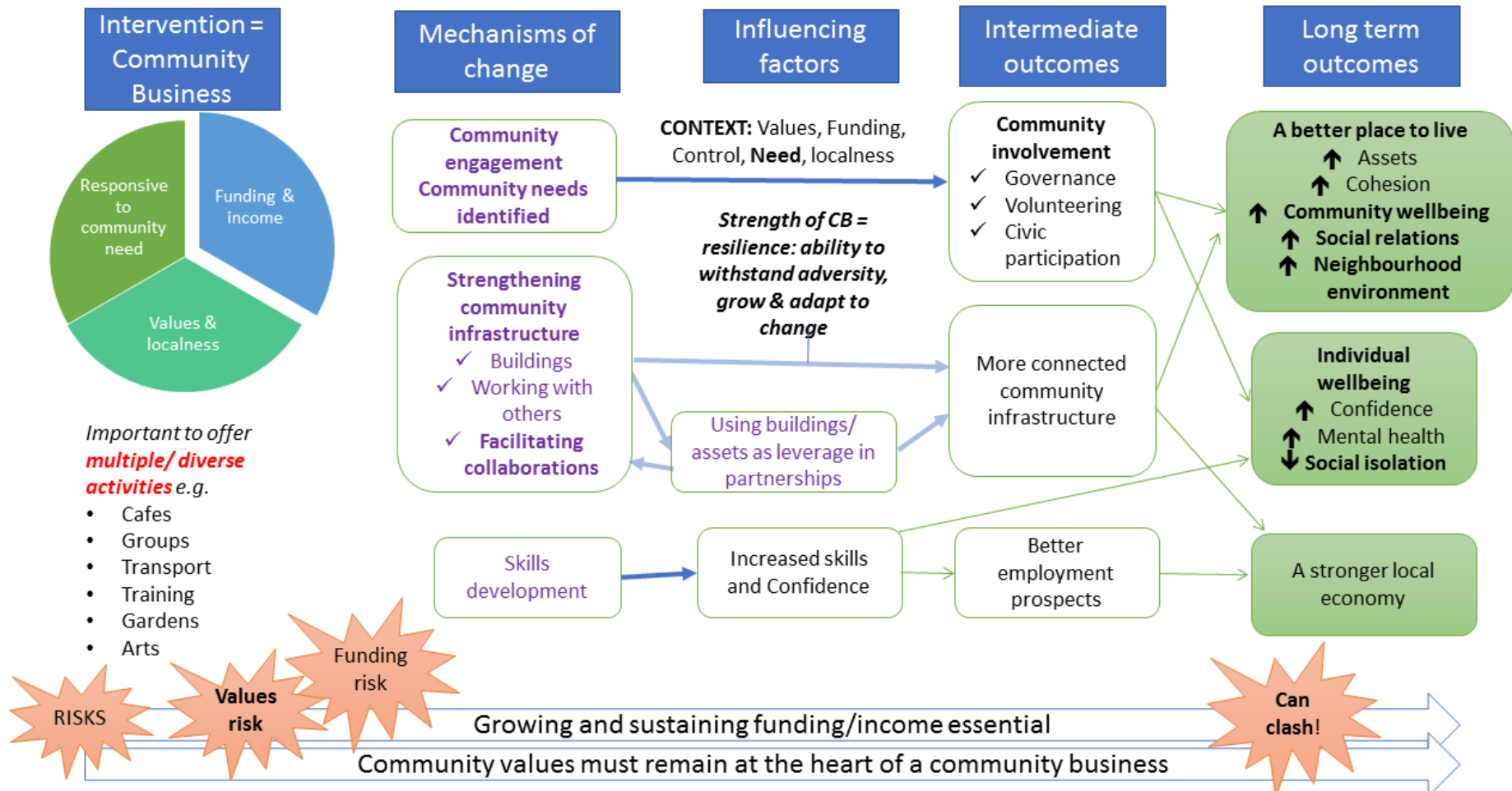
Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
		6 moderate, 1 good and 2 low quality studies			
Organisational level					
Economic	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 low, 1 moderate and 1 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade)	MODERATE
	4 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 2 low and 2 moderate quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogeneous outcomes (downgrade?)	LOW
Community needs identified	1 qualitative study 9 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 5 low, 3 moderate and 2 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	9 mixed methods evaluations 1 evaluation of unclear design	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 6 low and 4 moderate quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
Increased representation on local boards	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality studies	STRONG	Evidence is 'thin' (downgrade) Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW
	4 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i>	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	MODERATE

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
		1 low, 1 good and 2 moderate quality studies		Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	
Building collaborations	3 qualitative studies 9 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 6 low, 5 moderate and 2 good quality studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	5 mixed methods evaluations 1 evaluation of unclear design	<i>Mixed methods evaluations:</i> 4 moderate and 2 low quality studies	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Risks – economic	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality case studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogenous outcomes (downgrade)	MODERATE
	2 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 1 low quality evaluations	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Risks – values versus funding	9 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 2 good, 12 moderate and 5 low quality case studies	STRONG	Some concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	STRONG
	1 mixed methods evaluation	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate quality evaluation	MODERATE	Only one study (downgrade) Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade)	LOW

Outcome	Type of evidence	Effect	Initial level of certainty	Concerns about certainty domains	Final level of certainty
Risks – innovation	1 case study	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 low quality case study	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Only one study (downgrade)	MODERATE
	2 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 1 good quality evaluations		Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence	MODERATE
Risks – asset ownership	3 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 1 moderate and 2 low quality evaluations	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Coherence across body of evidence (upgrade)	MODERATE
Risks – staff and volunteers	3 case studies	<i>Qualitative evidence:</i> 1 good, 1 moderate and 1 low quality case studies	STRONG	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogeneous outcomes (downgrade)	MODERATE
	3 mixed methods evaluations	<i>Quantitative evidence:</i> 2 moderate and 1 low quality evaluations	MODERATE	Concerns over methodological limitations (downgrade) Heterogeneous outcomes (downgrade)	LOW

3.4 Logic model (revised)

Figure 7: A logic model for Community Businesses and Wellbeing



In Figure 7, themes highlighted in bold represent mechanisms, influencing factors or outcomes for which the body of evidence, when considered as a whole in the summary of findings table (Table 4), is strong or consistent.

The logic model was revised to reflect further development of the thematic analysis during the production of a narrative account. This moved the logic model from a map of component themes to a more explanatory account that fit better with the data. The key area of development was around mechanisms and intermediate outcomes and the linkages revealed by the synthesis process that arose during the narrative synthesis process, and those mechanisms or outcomes for which there was strong confidence in the evidence were highlighted in bold. These were:

- Mechanisms of change
 - community engagement (community needs identified)
 - strengthening community infrastructure (facilitating collaborations)

- Influencing factors/intermediate outcomes
 - community involvement

- Long term outcomes
 - community wellbeing
 - social relations
 - neighbourhood environment
 - reduced social isolation

4. Discussion

4.1 Summary of key findings

This systematic review looked at the impacts of community businesses as a whole on community wellbeing. One of the findings was that community businesses offer a range of activities and services in response to local need. There is consistent evidence from qualitative studies relating to positive perceptions of impact on:

- community wellbeing
- community involvement
- neighbourhood environment
- social relations
- reduced social isolation.

There is consistent evidence from qualitative studies on potentially effective mechanisms of change for community businesses to achieve impact:

- community businesses identifying community needs
- building collaborations between organisations and people in the community.

There is consistent evidence from qualitative studies of risks associated with balancing the need to become financially sustainable and seek diverse sources of funding, versus the need to stay true to the original values of the community business.

There is moderate evidence from qualitative studies on risks associated with funding more generally, with asset ownership, and with recruiting and managing staff and volunteers.

There is moderate evidence from qualitative and quantitative studies of positive impacts on social cohesion, civic participation and individual wellbeing.

There is moderate evidence from qualitative studies of positive impacts on:

- quality of life
- health
- mental health
- employment
- volunteering.

The synthesis and logic model indicated three main mechanisms by which community businesses impact on wellbeing outcomes:

1. community engagement leading to increased community involvement, increased individual wellbeing and a better place to live
2. strengthening community infrastructure, leading to more connected community infrastructure and a better place to live
3. skills development, leading to increased skills and confidence, improved individual wellbeing, better employment prospects and a stronger local economy.

Thirty two of the 43 included studies were based in the UK, which means the review findings are highly relevant to the UK context.

The evidence base could be improved by more good quality studies; the review included only six good quality studies, and two of these were process evaluations.

4.2 Wider context

4.2.1 Policy context

Community owned assets and asset transfer

In UK policy, the Big Society (Cabinet Office, 2010) and the Localism Act (2012) both set out the intention of the UK Government to reduce central state provision, devolve power and responsibility to voluntary groups, and encourage local citizens to take responsibility for provision of local services, via voluntary and community groups. This coincided with reductions in local government funding, also known as ‘austerity’ or ‘efficiency’ measures. In this context, asset transfer of buildings and services has been viewed through the lens of ‘austerity localism’ – a negative outcome, where volunteers are obliged to fill the gaps left by reduced state funding (Featherstone et al., 2012) – or ‘progressive localism’ – a more positive phenomenon presenting new opportunities to engage in new expressions of social justice and participation through developing locally responsive and co-operative visions (Findlay-King et al., 2018, Crisp, 2015, Williams et al., 2014). In a paper examining the mechanisms of asset transfer in 12 facilities in the leisure sector, Findlay-Knight et al. (2018) concluded that the process was best conceptualised as austerity localism, with the potential for progressive localism due to volunteer groups with high levels of social capital, skills and knowledge. They also observed that the main impetus for asset transfer was cuts in local authority budgets, motivating local groups of volunteers, that transfers required interaction between local government

and volunteer groups, but the level of support given and nature of the relationship was limited by austerity measures, and that without support the viability of the asset transfer relies on financial and social capital among volunteer groups, which is unevenly distributed. All of these themes were also seen in our review, suggesting that they are not limited to the leisure sector.

Even before the Localism Act and Big Society papers of 2012 and 2010, the UK Government set out a 'modernising agenda' aimed at engaging the voluntary and community sector in generating their own income. This led to increased interest in social enterprise within the voluntary and community sector (VCS), and a three-part model was suggested to describe the transition of VCS organisations to social enterprise (Boschee, 2005):

- Dependency: a constant reliance on philanthropy, government subsidy and to some extent the Lottery Fund.
- Sustainability: achieved through a combination of philanthropy, government subsidy and earned revenue.
- Self-sufficiency: achieved only by relying completely on earned revenue.

Citing this, the authors of a study of the transformation of voluntary and community sector organisations (VCSOs) to social enterprises in the black and minority ethnic (BME) sector write of an 'uneasy transition', with BME VCSOs unable to access the right support, not being made aware of the opportunities available to them, and remaining undervalued by local service providers (Madichie and Read, 2008). Being unable to access the right support and not being aware of opportunities were also themes seen in our review, so again these themes are relevant to community businesses more broadly.

Do different business models and levels of community involvement produce different outcomes?

As noted in the introduction, community businesses are hard to define as a distinct model and there are many similarities and overlaps with other not-for-profit business models, including 'community enterprise', 'social enterprise', 'development trusts', 'co-operative and community benefit societies' and 'community interest company'. Two of the defining features of a community business are that it is locally rooted and accountable to the community (Richards et al., 2018a). This accountability, as we have noted, does not mean that an organisation has to be entirely led by the community, but can take many forms on a spectrum. As has become clear, there are many barriers for communities to overcome and many potential risks to full ownership of a community business; this is particularly evident for asset transfers but also seen in recruitment, training and management of volunteers, and responsibilities and legislation associated with service provision. In this review, we used Arnstein's

ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969) to characterise the level of community involvement, but found that many studies did not report enough detail for us to assign a level, and also that some of the levels were not relevant, with most of our included studies clustering around the 'citizen control' upper section of the ladder. This may simply reflect an increased likelihood of community-led businesses to be explicit about this aspect of their strategy, and it may be that the majority of studies that did not report their level of participation had lower levels of community control, but there may also be other explanations.

When we looked at whether the level of participation was related to the outcomes reported in this review, using the cross-tabulation function on EPPI-Reviewer, we found no clear relationship.

Critiques of Arnstein's ladder include the notion that 'control' is not always the ultimate aim, particularly when collaborations and partnerships are important (Cornwall, 2008, PHE and NHSE, 2015, Tritter and McCallum, 2006). In our review and logic model, facilitating collaborations was found to be an important function of a community business, but in the detailed synthesis we also saw testimonies from community members that collaborations and relationships with other organisations were important to the set-up and sustainability of the community business itself. Another ladder that is used in UK practice is Wilcox's ladder of participation, which sets out five alternative stances with differing levels of power (Wilcox, 1994):

- Supporting local initiatives: "We can help you achieve what you want".
- Acting together: "We want to carry out joint decisions together".
- Deciding together: "We want to develop options and decide together".
- Consultation: "These are the options, what do you think?"
- Information: "Here's what we are going to do..."

Wilcox's ladder may be a more appropriate tool to use when assessing levels of participation in community businesses but, for the studies included in this review, those that provided some information are still likely to cluster around the top three levels of control.

It has also been suggested that the model of community business itself would have an impact on levels of community involvement. For example, co-operatives would be expected to have high levels of community involvement, as they are set up and run by local traders for their own benefit (and for that of the community if they were eligible for inclusion in our review), with each member contributing capital and shares being distributed on a 'one member, one vote' basis. Community enterprises have been said to be similar to community co-operatives (Pearce, 2003). In contrast, social enterprises do not have to have strong local links, or democratic structures that allow the

involvement of organisation members in the governance of the enterprise (Pearce, 2003, Tracey et al., 2005).

4.2.2 Community engagement

Our review found that community engagement was one of the three main mechanisms by which community businesses impact on community wellbeing. Community engagement is a familiar concept in community-centred public health, encompassing participation and involvement in organisations and in developing, designing and evaluating projects and initiatives, as well as a delivery mechanism for health interventions. South and Phillips (2014) state that:

Community engagement can be framed in various ways as:

- a delivery mechanism whereby community members deliver a standardised intervention or components for example, communication of healthy eating messages
- a direct intervention where lay knowledge, skills and social networks are used to improve individual health for example, provision of peer support
- collective action on social or environmental determinants of health, often a feature of empowerment approaches
- a means to achieve greater community influence in the health system, as part of equitable and democratic governance.

Most community engagement programmes within public health apply a combination of these different forms and philosophies of engagement.

In our review, community engagement in relation to community businesses included involvement and participation in the governance of community businesses (e.g. as board members) but also included participation in the services provided by the community business and outreach to the wider community or targeted outreach to vulnerable, disadvantaged or other groups felt to be in need of the services provided.

4.2.3 Skills development

Power to Change has suggested that ‘Community businesses increase net employment by hiring people who would otherwise struggle to access the labour market, in jobs that allow them to develop the skills they need to progress.’¹ Our review found that skills development was one of the three prominent mechanisms by which community businesses impact on community wellbeing; not just by employing and training people ‘on the job’ but by:

- providing volunteering opportunities to enable people to gain skills, confidence and connections, which could assist them to get back into employment
- providing education and training opportunities specifically aimed at improving people’s employability prospects
- responding to local needs by providing education and training around issues that were of concern to the community, such as climate change and food production
- providing training to new community businesses in essential skills such as fundraising, budgeting and statutory requirements.

4.2.4 Strengthening community infrastructure

Our review found that strengthening community infrastructure was the third main mechanism by which community businesses’ impact on community wellbeing.

Power to Change has suggested that ‘Community businesses that collaborate with others in the local area are more successful because they can drive down costs through collective bargaining, mutual support and the ability to negotiate up and down their supply chains’.

Community infrastructure was strengthened in a variety of ways in the studies included in our review. One of these was through building and strengthening collaborations.

Community businesses were also reported to have multiple impacts that were not always a result of a direct intervention. One of these was improved social connections between community members. A study that compared work integration social enterprises with community-based social enterprises found that strengthening horizontal social ties between participants was a mechanism of inclusion for community-based social enterprises (Rymsza, 2015).

¹ [file:///C:/Users/Home/Downloads/Hypotheses-final-%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Home/Downloads/Hypotheses-final-%20(1).pdf)

4.2.5 What makes a strong community business?

The concept that most closely aligns to ‘strength’ in the context of a community business, arguably, is ‘resilience’. A recent World Health Organisation report on community resilience (Ziglio, 2017) tells us that resilience can be seen as more than coping; it is:

- Adaptive – having the ability to withstand and adjust to unfavourable conditions and shocks.
- Absorptive – having the ability to withstand but also to recover and manage using available assets and skills.
- Anticipatory – having the ability to predict and minimise vulnerability.
- Transformative – applying to systems, transformative change so that systems better cope with new conditions.

Based on the qualitative analysis, an emerging explanatory account was that the following factors had the most potential to influence resilience of a community business:

- leadership
- size/localness
- needs orientation.

In relation to resilience, Power to Change has suggested that ‘Community businesses that share a common vision with others in the local area are less reliant on local and central government support because assets and surpluses can be used to cross-subsidise otherwise non-viable activities’. Our review did not come across evidence to support or refute this as a facilitating factor, although we did identify that the vision and values of community businesses were very important and that losing sight of these (often due to pressure to find funding) was a significant risk to sustainability.

A recent action research project on economic resilience (Locality, 2017) noted that local systems are fragmented within local authorities, there is a disconnect between commissioning and procurement functions and a lack of clear ‘place leadership’ across the wider local commissioning landscape, making it difficult for community organisations to navigate. Pressures of austerity policies have created a climate of caution and risk aversion in local authorities, with a focus on legal and technical barriers to local procurement and issues over sharing power with the local community. Among the solutions that they propose, alongside top-level leadership and joining up the system, are for community organisations (including community businesses) to make a compelling case for the local

economic impact they can have, evidencing it more effectively and focusing on concepts of social value and economic resilience. Our review provides further evidence of the value provided by community businesses, by their impacts on individual, community and organisational wellbeing.

4.3 Limitations and strengths

There were a number of methodological limitations within the evidence. Most of the included studies were of moderate or poor quality, limiting the strength of the conclusions that can be drawn. For the studies with a quantitative design, most did not have a comparator group. The lack of comparator group limits the conclusions about whether any observed change can be attributed to the intervention being evaluated, as other changes may also be occurring in the neighbourhood at the same time. Also, most studies were of a cross-sectional design and did not make repeated measures. Many of the validity assessment criteria were answered 'unclear' or 'not stated' as insufficient details of the methodology were reported by the study authors.

Studies with a qualitative design were also poorly reported on the whole, but some were graded as 'good' quality. There were several areas where methodological rigour could be improved. Although studies often presented a wealth of data, analysis tended to be descriptive. This level of analysis is useful but lacks the interpretive power of a more conceptual level of analysis for producing explanation. Problems with the quality of data analysis within qualitative research uncovered by systematic reviews is a common finding of reviews which include qualitative research in a range of areas (Harden and Gough, 2012).

The review took a systematic approach to reviewing evidence, which included comprehensive searches, applying explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, assessing validity and using more than one reviewer to provide quality assurance. All of these methods minimise bias and error in the review and strengthen confidence in the review findings.

The inclusion of a range of evidence from non-randomised control trial study designs, which are so often excluded from systematic reviews of effectiveness, is a real strength of the review. It has been argued that measuring 'outcomes' alone does not measure the impact on people's lives or the context in which changes (if any) take place (Lowe, 2013), and that qualitative research is better placed to explore these aspects of effectiveness. It is also often noted that 'hard to reach' groups are excluded from traditional research studies such as randomised control trials, whether deliberately or by default. The inclusion of other types of information helps to ensure that a wider range of population groups and approaches are represented.

It is important to note that absence of evidence does not equal evidence of absence of effect. The finding that there is limited evidence for some outcomes suggests that more robust research needs to be done.

As stated in the protocol, and in keeping with the remit to find ‘what works’, inclusion was limited to interventions or changes. This meant that observational research on long-established community businesses was not included. This literature could add to the evidence base, particularly with regard to longer term outcomes.

In keeping with the What Works Centre for Wellbeing’s methods guide (Snape et al., 2019), we applied the well-established GRADE criteria for assessing the strength of the body of quantitative evidence for each outcome, and the related CERQual criteria for assessing the strength of the body of qualitative evidence. However, it was difficult to apply the criteria fully due to heterogeneity between interventions, populations, outcomes and study designs. Not surprisingly, the level of heterogeneity also ruled out meta-analysis of quantitative outcomes.

We used the recent primer on the GRADE approach in global health to apply a ‘complexity perspective’ when rating the strength of the body of evidence for each outcome (Montgomery et al., 2019). This suggests modifications to the GRADE approach to take into account that randomised controlled trials are not the most feasible or even appropriate study designs being used to investigate the effects of public health interventions, and includes considerations of important dimensions of context, implementation and other potential mediators and moderators of effect. Following this guidance, we did not immediately downgrade all evidence for not being from randomised controlled trials. This primer was intended for application to quantitative evidence, but we have also applied the principles of upgrading for consistency or coherence of findings across the body of evidence (i.e. all impacts are positive or negative, rather than a mix) to the qualitative evidence as well.

A delay in publication (time lag bias) may have led to more recent studies being left out of the review, but we sought to avoid this by extensive website searches. The majority of studies reported positive findings, which potentially indicates that there may be some reporting bias and studies with negative results may have been missed by our searches, or not reported. However, we did extensive searches for unpublished studies, and we did find a fairly substantial body of evidence on potential risks and harms, so we are fairly confident that we have not missed many relevant studies.

As a complex intervention, the success of community businesses is likely to be influenced by their implementation in a given context. We have begun to explore contextual issues through our analysis

of factors that may influence the impact of community businesses. Our past experience of similar reviews (e.g. Bagnall et al., 2018) suggested that the type and volume of information necessary to carry out a formal assessment of the impact of context would not be found in the identified research and non-research evidence. In this earlier review, we attempted to use the CICI framework (Pfadenhauer et al., 2017) but found that it was very resource intensive and most of the fields were left blank due to lack of information reported in the included studies. In that earlier review, we also made an assessment of how transferable the setting and intervention was to the UK setting. We intended to do the same in this review but found that as more than half of the studies were from the UK, this was not needed. We did use an adapted version of the TiDiER framework (Hoffman et al., 2014) to extract as much detail as possible on the interventions, which was helpful for the data synthesis. In the future, making use of a predesigned tool, such as the CICI framework, would help a greater understanding of the impact of the interactions between broader social contexts, implementation processes, and intervention settings on the success or failure of community businesses. Such work would require the data to be reported and the chosen tool to be sufficiently adapted/adaptable to the available evidence, however.

The UK bias in the included studies is unusual and in part may reflect the extensive website searching for unpublished literature, although this has not happened in our previous reviews. It may reflect the strong history of community development and grassroots organising in the UK. For this review, commissioned by UK organisations to inform UK policy and practice, this 'bias' is welcome, but it may limit transferability of the findings to non-UK contexts.

The review was limited to English language studies, which may have led to some relevant studies published in other languages being missed.

Ideally, we would have contacted study authors for missing information but we were not able to do this due to time constraints.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This systematic review identified a substantial body of evidence indicating that community businesses impact positively on community wellbeing in multiple ways, by providing a range of activities and services in response to local needs and values.

The three main mechanisms by which community businesses impact on community wellbeing were: community engagement, skills development, and strengthening community infrastructure.

Risks and potential negative impacts of community businesses on community wellbeing were also identified. These included staffing and volunteers, management and transfer of assets, availability of funding, and conflicts between obtaining funding and the values of the community business.

5.2 Recommendations for policy and practice

- There is a substantial body of evidence indicating that community businesses have a positive impact on community wellbeing, but support is required to help them navigate the potential financial and other risks involved.
- Community businesses impact on community wellbeing by offering a range of activities and services in response to local need.
- Community engagement, skills development and strengthening community infrastructure by asset ownership and collaborations with other organisations are the three main mechanisms by which community businesses impact on community wellbeing.
- Community businesses can increase civic participation and volunteering in a community.
- Community businesses can provide education, training and volunteering opportunities to increase skills and confidence for employment.
- Community businesses need to manage the tension between achieving sustainable and ongoing income sources versus staying true to their local community vision and values.
- More support is required for community businesses to obtain funding, particularly enterprise development support, to help groups to trade as part of their business model before they take on an asset or service. For example, providing a start-up grant and paid-for support to help groups to focus on the right aspects of sustainability for the start of their community business journey.

- More facilitation and support is required around asset transfer and ownership to help community businesses consider whether it is feasible for them and, if so, to find the right model.
- Policy makers and practitioners need to be aware of the length of time and resources required for community businesses to become sustainable.
- The process through which volunteers are recruited, retained and supported needs resourcing, particularly in areas of deprivation where finding volunteers can be hard.
- Leadership/succession planning and staff burnout are issues that needs to be addressed. Policy makers and practitioners need to consider how to secure interest from non-sector volunteers and leaders, for example by providing more and practical brokerage to help make connections across different sectors.

5.3 Recommendations for research

- Better quality evaluations of community businesses are needed. These should include comparison groups where possible (for quantitative study designs), and repeated measurements.
- More research is needed on community wellbeing outcomes of community businesses.
- Better reporting of all studies is needed – in this review, the methods were not clearly reported in most included studies. This affects the confidence we can place in the findings.
- The fact that fewer than half of our included studies came from electronic database searches highlights the need for researchers to search for grey literature when undertaking systematic reviews of community-based approaches.
- No studies were found of community businesses that did not have a physical hub. This suggests the need for primary research into these types of community businesses (e.g. trading solely online).

We identified some evidence within the review on the potential adverse impacts of community businesses involving the transfer of assets and responsibilities from public sector ownership to a number of individuals within a community. Future research could consider:

- How the transfer of public assets and responsibilities impacts on the ability of existing public providers (including health and social care, and local authorities) to

provide services (including their long-term viability in the context of austerity and the growing privatisation of service provision)?

- Whether small community organisations are sufficiently equipped and resourced to replace large public service providers (including funding; governance; professionalism/values underpinning work; PPI; skills, training, professional development, support and experience; cross-organisation, cross-discipline, cross-sector working), and how this may impact on the health and wellbeing of their staff and the communities they serve?
- The wider democratic and community empowerment implications of transfers (including how representative and accountable they are), and the how this may impact on the health and wellbeing of communities in the long term?

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Appendix 1 Search strategy

String 1 (Community)

volunt* OR lay OR collectiv* OR neighbour* OR charit* OR "service user" OR "third sector" OR "social economy" OR (communit* OR local OR public) N3 (involve* OR partner*)

String 2 (Community business)

"Community business" OR "community improve*" OR "not-for-profit" OR "non-profit" OR "social enterprise" OR "co-operative" OR "cooperative" OR "social entrepreneur" OR "community interest company" OR "company limited by guarantee" OR "social business" OR "social firm" OR "community enterprise" OR "affirmative business" OR "micro-enterprise*" OR "social interest company" OR "social business" OR "community interest corporation" OR "social interest company" OR "social interest corporation" OR "benefit society" OR "community anchor" OR "community cafe" OR community N2 (manag* OR run OR own* OR control* OR driven OR orient*)

String 3 (Wellbeing)

"well-being" OR wellbeing OR "quality of life" OR QoL OR happiness OR satisfaction OR (positive N2 "mental health") OR wellness OR health* OR "physical welfare" OR "purpose in life" OR flourish* OR prosper* OR resilien* OR contentment OR self-esteem OR belonging OR fulfil* OR capabilit* OR salutogen* OR eudaimon* OR eudaemon* OR eudemon* OR trust* OR thriv* OR vibran* OR "sense of community" OR empower* OR liveab* OR sustainab*

String 4 (Community wellbeing)

Economi* OR capital OR network* OR collaboration OR togetherness OR Job* OR employ* OR skill* OR training OR Inclusi* OR integrat* OR discriminat* OR ((community OR network OR public OR collective* OR neighbourhood OR volunt* OR economic OR personal OR individu* OR lay neighbour* OR "service user" OR professional OR social) N3 (development OR control))

String 5 (Impact)

Impact OR Effect* OR Benefit* OR Outcome* OR Evidence OR Performance OR Efficien* OR value OR accountab*

1+2+(3 OR 4)+5

Limiters

Title or Abstract; Boolean; English (where possible)

Appendix 2 Websites searched

List of websites searched (n=103).

Access – The Foundation for Social Enterprise	https://access-socialinvestment.org.uk/
Altogether Better	www.altogetherbetter.org.uk/
American Public Health Association	https://www.apha.org/
Arts Council England	https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/
Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector (ARVAC)	http://arvac.org.uk/
Bank for International Settlements	https://www.bis.org/
British Council	https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports
Bromley by Bow Centre	http://www.bbhc.org.uk/
Business in the Community	https://www.bitc.org.uk/
Carnegie UK Trust	https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/
Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)	https://cles.org.uk/
Centre for Urban Design and Mental Health	https://www.urbandesignmentalhealth.com/
Clarity	https://www.claritycic.org/
Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC)	http://www.copac.coop/
Communities in Action Enterprises	http://www.communitiesinaction.org/
Community Catalysts	www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/
Community Development Exchange	http://www.cdx.org.uk/
Community Health Exchange	http://www.chex.org.uk/
Community Organisers	https://www.corganisers.org.uk/
Cooperatives Europe	https://coopseurope.coop/
Cooperatives for a Better World	https://cooperativesforabetterworld.coop/
Co-operatives UK	https://www.uk.coop/
Co-production Network for Wales	https://info.copronet.wales/
Create Streets	http://dev.createstreets.com/
Design Council	https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/
Durham University – Institute for Local Governance	https://www.dur.ac.uk/ilg/
Durham University – School of Applied Social Sciences	http://www.dur.ac.uk/sass/
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)	https://esrc.ukri.org/
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	https://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/
European Commission	http://ec.europa.eu/
Forum for the Future	https://www.forumforthefuture.org/
Glasgow Centre for Population Health	http://www.gcph.co.uk/
Greenspace Scotland	https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/
Groundwork	https://www.groundwork.org.uk/

Happy City	http://www.happycity.org.uk/
Health Empowerment Leverage Project (HELP)	www.healthempowerment.co.uk/
Health Foundation	http://www.health.org.uk/
HERE + NOW	http://www.thehereandnow.org.uk/
Heritage Lottery Fund	https://www.hlf.org.uk/
HM Government	https://www.gov.uk/
Inspiring Impact	https://www.inspiringimpact.org/
Institute for Voluntary Action Research	https://www.ivar.org.uk/
Institute of Health Equity	http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/
International Labour Organization	https://www.ilo.org/
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	https://www.jrf.org.uk/
Lancaster University – Centre for Health Inequalities Research	https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fhm/research/chir/
Landscape Institute	https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/
Liverpool and Lancaster Universities Collaboration for Public Health Research	http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk/
Lloyds Bank Foundation	https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/
Local Government Association	https://www.local.gov.uk/
Local Trust	http://localtrust.org.uk/
Locality	https://locality.org.uk/
London School of Economics – Personal Social Services Research Unit	http://www.lse.ac.uk/pssru/
National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)	https://www.ncvo.org.uk/
NCVO Charities Evaluation Services	https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/consultancy/ncvo-charities-evaluation-services
Nesta	http://www.nesta.org.uk/
New Economics Foundation	https://neweconomics.org/
NHS Health Scotland	http://www.healthscotland.com/
NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)	http://www.nice.org.uk/
NIHR (National Institute for Health Research) Journals Library	https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/
NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR)	https://www.sphr.nihr.ac.uk/
Nuffield Trust	https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/
Office for Civil Society	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-civil-society
Picker Institute Europe	http://www.pickereurope.org/
Plunkett Foundation	https://plunkett.co.uk/
Power to Change	https://www.powertochange.org.uk/
Project for Public Spaces	https://www.pps.org/
Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland) – Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement	http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement
Public Health England	http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

Redrow	https://www.redrow.co.uk/
Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)	https://www.rsph.org.uk/
RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce)	https://www.thersa.org/
Scottish Community Development Centre	http://www.scdc.org.uk/
Sheffield Hallam University – Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)	https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/
Simon Fraser University – Center for Expertise on Culture and Communities	https://www.sfu.ca/cultureandcommunities.html
Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) library	https://www.scie.org.uk/
Social Enterprise Alliance	https://socialenterprise.us/knowledgecenter/
Social Enterprise East of England	http://www.seee.co.uk/
Social Enterprise International	http://sei.coop/
Social Enterprise Scotland	https://www.socialenterprisescotland.org.uk/
Social Enterprise UK	https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/
Social Finance	https://www.socialfinance.org.uk/
Social Investment Business	https://www.sibgroup.org.uk/
The King’s Fund	https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/
The Museums Association	https://www.museumsassociation.org/
The National Lottery Community Fund	https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/
Think Local Act Personal – Building Community Capacity (BCC)	https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/
Third Sector	https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/
Turning Point	http://www.turning-point.co.uk
UK Faculty of Public Health	http://www.fph.org.uk/
University of Bath	http://www.bath.ac.uk/
University of Central Lancashire – International School for Communities, Rights and Inclusion	http://www.uclan.ac.uk/
University of Leicester – Research Centre for Museums and Galleries	https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg
University of Liverpool – Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place	https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute/
University of Liverpool - Institute of Population Health Sciences	https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/psychology-health-and-society/
University of Northampton	https://www.northampton.ac.uk/
UnLtd	https://www.unltd.org.uk/
Well London	www.welllondon.org.uk
Well North	http://www.wellnorth.co.uk/
Wellcome Trust	https://wellcome.ac.uk/
Welsh Assembly	http://www.assembly.wales/en/Pages/Home.aspx
WHO Europe	http://www.euro.who.int/en/
World Cooperative Monitor	https://monitor.coop/en/

Appendix 3 Validity assessment checklists

Quality checklist for qualitative studies (Snape et al., 2019)

Drawing on the CASP approach, the following are the minimum criteria for inclusion of qualitative evidence in the review. If the answer to all of these questions is 'yes', the study can be included in the review.

Study inclusion checklist (screening questions)

1. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? **Yes** **No** **Can't tell**

Consider:

Does the research seek to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants?

Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?

2. Is the research design appropriate for addressing the aims of the research?

Consider:

Has the researcher justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided which method to use)?

3. Is there a clear statement of findings?

Consider:

Are the findings made explicit?

Is there adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments?

Has the researcher discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)?

Are the findings discussed in relation to the original research question?

The following criteria should be considered for each study to be included in the review (i.e. those for which the answer to all of the screening questions was 'yes').

4. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?

Consider:

Is the setting for data collection justified?

Is it clear what methods were used to collect data? (e.g. focus group, semi-structured interview)?

Has the researcher justified the methods chosen?

Has the researcher made the process of data collection explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews were conducted, or did they use a topic guide)?

If methods were modified during the study, has the researcher explained how and why?

Is the form of data clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes)?

5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?

Consider:

Has the researcher explained how the participants were selected?

Have they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study?

Is there any discussion around recruitment and potential bias (e.g. why some people chose not to take part)?

Is the selection of cases/sampling strategy theoretically justified?

6. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?

Consider:

If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process?

If thematic analysis is used, is it clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data?

Does the researcher explain how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process?

Are sufficient data presented to support the findings?

Were the findings grounded in/supported by the data?

Was there good breadth and/or depth achieved in the findings?

To what extent are contradictory data taken into account?

Are the data appropriately referenced (i.e. attributions to (anonymised) respondents)?

7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?

Consider:

Has the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions, and (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location?

How has the researcher responded to events during the study and have they considered the implications of any changes in the research design?

8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?

Consider:

Are there sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained?

Has the researcher discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study)?

Have they adequately discussed issues like informed consent and procedures in place to protect anonymity?

Have the consequences of the research been considered i.e. raising expectations, changing behaviour?

Has approval been sought from an ethics committee?

9. Contribution of the research to wellbeing impact questions?

Consider:

Does the study make a contribution to existing knowledge or understanding of what works for wellbeing, e.g. are the findings considered in relation to current practice or policy?

Mixed methods assessment tool (Hong et al., 2019)

Responses: **Yes** **No** **Can't tell**

1. Qualitative

1.1. Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?

1.2. Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?

1.3. Are the findings adequately derived from the data?

1.4. Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?

1.5. Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?

2. Quantitative randomised controlled trials

- 1.1 Is randomisation appropriately performed?
- 1.2 Are the groups comparable at baseline?
- 1.3 Are there complete outcome data?
- 1.4 Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided?
- 1.5 Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention?

3. Quantitative non-randomised

- 3.1 Are the participants representative of the target population?
- 3.2 Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)?
- 3.3 Are there complete outcome data?
- 3.4 Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?
- 3.5 During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?

4. Quantitative descriptive

- .1 Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?
- .2 Is the sample representative of the target population?
- .3 Are the measurements appropriate?
- .4 Is the risk of non-response bias low?
- .5 Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?

- **Mixed methods**

- .1 Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?

- .2 Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?
- .3 Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?
- .4 Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?
- .5 Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?

ROBINS-I assessment tool for non-randomised studies (Sterne et al., 2016)

1. Bias due to confounding

- 1.1 Is there potential for confounding of the effect of intervention in this study?
- 1.2 Was the analysis based on splitting participants' follow-up time according to intervention received?
- 1.3 Were intervention discontinuations or switches likely to be related to factors that are prognostic for the outcome?
- 1.4 Did the authors use an appropriate analysis method that controlled for all the important confounding domains?
- 1.5 Were confounding domains that were controlled for measured validly and reliably by the variables available in this study?
- 1.6 Did the authors control for any post-intervention variables that could have been affected by the intervention?
- 1.7 Did the authors use an appropriate analysis method that controlled for all the important confounding domains and for time-varying confounding?
- 1.8 Were confounding domains that were controlled for measured validly and reliably by the variables available in this study?

2. Bias in selection of participants into the study

- 2.1 Was selection of participants into the study (or into the analysis) based on participant characteristics observed after the start of intervention?
- 2.2 Were the post-intervention variables that influenced selection likely to be associated with intervention?

- 2.3 Were the post-intervention variables that influenced selection likely to be influenced by the outcome or a cause of the outcome?
- 2.4 Do start of follow-up and start of intervention coincide for most participants?
- 2.5 Were adjustment techniques used that are likely to correct for the presence of selection biases?

3. Bias in classification on interventions

- 3.1 Were intervention groups clearly defined?
- 3.2 Was the information used to define intervention groups recorded at the start of the intervention?
- 3.3 Could classification of intervention status have been affected by knowledge of the outcome or risk of the outcome?

4. Bias due to deviations from intended interventions

- 4.1 Were there deviations from the intended intervention beyond what would be expected in usual practice?
- 4.2 Were these deviations from intended intervention unbalanced between groups and likely to have affected the outcome?
- 4.3 Were important co-interventions balanced across intervention groups?
- 4.4 Was the intervention implemented successfully for most participants?
- 4.5 Did study participants adhere to the assigned intervention regimen?
- 4.6 Was an appropriate analysis used to estimate the effect of starting and adhering to the intervention?

5. Bias due to missing data

- 5.1 Were outcome data available for all, or nearly all, participants?
- 5.2 Were participants excluded due to missing data on intervention status?
- 5.3 Were participants excluded due to missing data on other variables needed for the analysis?
- 5.4 Are the proportion of participants and reasons for missing data similar across interventions?
- 5.5 Is there evidence that results were robust to the presence of missing data?

6. Bias in measurement of outcomes

- 6.1 Could the outcome measure have been influenced by knowledge of the intervention received?
- 6.2 Were outcome assessors aware of the intervention received by study participants?
- 6.3 Were the methods of outcome assessment comparable across intervention groups?
- 6.4 Were any systematic errors in measurement of the outcome related to intervention received?

7. Bias in selection of the reported result

- 7.1 Is the reported effect estimate likely to be selected, on the basis of the results, from multiple outcome measurements within the outcome domain?
- 7.2 Is the reported effect estimate likely to be selected, on the basis of the results, from multiple analyses of the intervention-outcome relationship?
- 7.3 Is the reported effect estimate likely to be selected, on the basis of the results, from different subgroups?

Appendix 4 List of included studies

Included studies n=43

- AIKEN, M., CAIRNS, B. & THAKE, S. 2008. *Community ownership and management of assets*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- AIKEN, M., CAIRNS, B., TAYLOR, M. & MORAN, R. 2011. *Community organisations controlling assets: a better understanding*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- BAILEY, N., KLEINHANS, R. & LINDBERGH, J. 2018. *An assessment of community-based social enterprises in three European countries. Research Institute Report No. 12*. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- BAILEY, N., KLEINHANS, R. & LINDBERGH, J. 2018. *An assessment of community-based social enterprises in three European countries: case study appendix*. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- BAILEY, N. 2012. The role, organisation and contribution of community enterprise to urban regeneration policy in the UK. *Progress in Planning*, 77, 1–35.
- BAKER, L., CAIRNS, B. & HUTCHISON, R. 2009. *From Settlement to Community Anchor. The enduring value of Cambridge House*. London: IVAR.
- BARRAKET, J. & ARCHER, V. 2010. Social inclusion through community enterprise? Examining the available evidence. *Third Sector Review*, 16, 13–28.
- BEDFORD, S. & HARPER, A. 2018. *Sustainable social care: what role for community business?* London: New Economics Foundation.
- BOSWORTH, G. J. & HEGARTY, J. R. 2017. 8,000 Landlords, 1 farm: The individual and societal benefits of community-owned farms. *Ecopsychology*, 9(1), 8–14.
- BUCKLEY, E., AIKEN, M. & BAKER, L. 2017. *Community accountability in community businesses. Research Institute Report No. 10*. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- CHAN, A. 2016. Personal Wellbeing of Participants of Social Purpose Enterprises: The Influence of Social Support. *Voluntas*, 27, 1718–1741.
- DEWHURST, J. 2016. *Rise High project: final report*. Leeds: Barca-Leeds.
- JOHNSON, S. 2016. *Rise High evaluation end of year 1 report*. Leeds: Barca-Leeds.
- DICKENS, L., COULDRY, N. & FOTOPOULOU, A. 2015. News in the community?: Investigating emerging inter-local spaces of news production/consumption. *Journalism Studies*, 16(1), 97–114.
- GORDON, M. 2002. The contribution of the community cooperatives of the highlands and islands of Scotland to the development of the social economy. *Journal of Rural Cooperation*, 30, 95–117.
- GORE, T., POWELL, R. & WELLS, P. 2003. *The contribution of community businesses to the rural economy of Yorkshire and the Humber*. Sheffield: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.
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- HIBBERT, S., PIACENTINI, M. & AL DAJANI, H. 2003. Understanding volunteer motivation for participation in a community-based food cooperative. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 8(1), 30–42.
- JUSKA, A., POVILIUNAS, A. & POZZUTO, R. 2006. Rural grass-roots organizing in eastern Europe: The experience from Lithuania. *Community Development Journal*. 41(2), 174–188.

- KLEINHANS, R. & VAN HAM, M. 2016. *The support paradox in community enterprise experiments in the Netherlands*. IZA Discussion Papers, No. 9625. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).
- KLEINHANS, R. & VAN HAM, M. 2017. The support paradox in community enterprise experiments in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 31(4), 570–589.
- KOTECHA, M., DAVIES, M., MISCAMPBELL, G., BARNARD, M. & HUGHES, S. 2017. *What works: successful community transport*. Research Institute Report No. 7. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- LANG, R. & ROESSL, D. 2011. Contextualizing the Governance of Community Co-operatives: Evidence from Austria and Germany. *Voluntas*, 22, 706–730.
- LIONAIS, D. 2004. *Community businesses in depleted communities: lessons from Cape Breton and Mondragon*. Durham: Durham University.
- MALFAIT, R. & SCOTT-FLYNN, N. 2018. *Evaluation of the Reaching Out Project*. Leeds: Barca-Leeds.
- MAZZEI, M. & BRADFORD, V. 2009. *Building Futures East: an approach to tackling worklessness and NEET*. Manchester: Centre for Local Economic Strategies.
- CLES CONSULTING. *Phase 3 Final evaluation of Building Futures East Training Centre*. Manchester: Centre for Local Economic Strategies.
- MAZZEI, M. 2013. *Squaring the challenge: reconciling business and ethical goals in social enterprises*. Durham: Durham University.
- MORETON, R., MALHOMME, E., SOUTH, L. & TAYLOR, P. 2005. *Rural lifelines: older people and rural social enterprises – their role as providers and beneficiaries of service provision in rural England*. Woodstock: Plunkett Foundation.
- MORLAND, K. B. 2010. An evaluation of a neighborhood-level intervention to a local food environment. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 39, e31–e38.
- MORLEY, A., FARRIER, A. & DOORIS, M. 2017. *Propagating success: The Incredible Edible model. Final Report*. Manchester; Preston: Manchester Metropolitan University; University of Central Lancashire.
- MURGATROYD, N. & SMITH, P. 1984. *The third sector economy: an appraisal of community business ventures in the north east and their role in local economic regeneration*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Newcastle Council for Voluntary Services.
- PLUNKETT FOUNDATION. 2018a. *Community Pubs: A better form of business*. Woodstock: Plunkett Foundation.
- PLUNKETT FOUNDATION. 2018b. *Community Shops: A better form of business*. Woodstock: Plunkett Foundation.
- RASMUSSEN, R. L., OVERGAARD, C., BØGGILD, H. & THOMSEN, L. L. H. 2018. An explorative evaluation study of the mechanisms underlying a community-based fitness centre in Denmark – Why do residents participate and keep up the healthy activities? *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 26(6), 898–907.
- RICHARDS, L., VASCOTT, D., BLANDON, C. & MANGER, L. 2018a. *Factors that contribute to community business success*. Research Institute Report No. 13. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- RICHARDS, L., VASCOTT, D., BLANDON, C. & MANGER, L. 2018b. *What works: Successful community hubs*. Research Institute Report No. 14. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- RICHARDS, L., VASCOTT, D., BLANDON, C. & MANGER, L. 2018c. *What works: Successful Health and Wellbeing Community Businesses*. Research Institute Report No. 1. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- RICHARDS, L., VASCOTT, D., BLANDON, C. & MANGER, L. 2018d. *What works: Successful sport and leisure community businesses*. Research Institute Report No. 16. London: The Power to Change Trust.

- SERIO. 2017. *Final report. Research and analysis to explore the service effectiveness and sustainability of community managed libraries in England*. Plymouth: SERIO.
- SEYFANG, G. 2007. Growing sustainable consumption communities: The case of local organic food networks. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 27(3/4), 120–134.
- SHARED INTELLIGENCE. 2014. *Enterprising Libraries: The Waiting Room*. London: Carnegie UK Trust.
- SONNINO, R. & GRIGGS-TREVARTHEN, C. 2013. A resilient social economy? Insights from the community food sector in the UK. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 25(3–4), 272–292.
- STUMBITZ, B., VICKERS, I., LYON, F., BUTLER, J., GREGORY, D. & MANSFIELD, C. 2018. *The role of community businesses in providing health and wellbeing services: Challenges, opportunities and support needs*. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- POWER TO CHANGE. *Case studies of community businesses providing health and wellbeing services*. London: The Power to Change Trust.
- WESTLUND, H. & GAWELL, M. 2012. Building social capital for social entrepreneurship. *Annals of Public & Cooperative Economics*, 83(1), 101–116.
- WILLIS, D., COUTINHO, S., FITZPATRICK, A. & WILLIAMS, J. 2017. *The impact of community business on local communities: A feasibility study to test new measures based on the community life survey*. Research Institute Report No. 9. London: The Power to Change Trust.

Linked case studies n=19

Case studies to accompany Kotecha et al. 2017.

Available at: <https://www.powertochange.org.uk/research/works-successful-community-transport/>

- Barnet Community Transport
- Cuckmere Community Bus Ltd
- Tavistock Country Bus
- The Friendly Transport Service (The Friendly Bus)

Case studies to accompany Richards et al. 2018b.

Available at: <https://www.powertochange.org.uk/research/works-successful-community-hubs/>

- Aspire Ryde
- BS3 Community Development
- The Cheese and Grain
- Netherton Community Centre
- The Old Co-op Community Building

Case studies to accompany Richards et al. 2018c.

Available at: <https://www.powertochange.org.uk/research/works-successful-health-wellbeing-community-businesses/>

- MSH Health and Wellbeing CIC
- The Sweet Project
- Unlimited Potential
- Wellspring Healthy Living Centre
- Zest

Case studies to accompany Richards et al. 2018d.

Available at: <https://www.powertochange.org.uk/research/what-works-successful-sport-leisure-community-businesses/>

- Jubilee Park Woodhall Spa Ltd
- Origin Sports
- Projekts MCR
- Stocksbridge Community Leisure Centre
- Timperley sports club

Appendix 5 List of excluded studies

Exclude on intervention n=22

- AIKEN, M. & BODE, I. 2009. Killing the golden goose?. *Social Policy & Administration*, 43(3), 209–225.
- ALIA, K. A., FREEDMAN, D. A., BRANDT, H. M., GIBSON-HAIGLER, P. & FRIEDMAN, D.B. 2015. A participatory model for evaluating a multilevel farmers' market intervention. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*, 9(4), 537–548.
- ALKON, A. H. 2008. From value to values: Sustainable consumption at farmers markets. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 25, 487–498.
- AMELI, P. & KAYES, C. D. 2011. Triple-loop learning in a cross-sector partnership: The DC Central Kitchen partnership. *Learning Organization*, 18(3), 175–188.
- BERKA, A. L. & CREAMER, E. 2018. Taking stock of the local impacts of community owned renewable energy: A review and research agenda. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 82, 3400–3419.
- BERNO, T. 2017. Social enterprise, sustainability and community in post-earthquake Christchurch: Exploring the role of local food systems in building resilience. *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, 11(1), 149–65.
- CABRAS, I. & BOSWORTH, G. 2014. Embedded models of rural entrepreneurship: The case of pubs in Cumbria, North West of England. *Local Economy*, 29(6–7), 598–616.
- CAMBRIDGE POLICY CONSULTANTS & SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE CENTRAL RESEARCH UNIT. 1999. *An evaluation of the New Life for Urban Scotland initiative in Castlemilk, Ferguslie Park, Wester Hailes and Whitfield*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Central Research Unit.
- CLARK, J., FERRIE, J. & WATSON, N. 2010. *Third sector approaches to bridging the distance from the employment market for people with multiple and complex needs: an evidence review (Scottish Government Social Research: voluntary issues)*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government Social Research.
- DAYSON, C., BAKER, L., REES, J., BATTY, E., BENNETT, E., DAMM, C., COULE, T., PATMORE, B., GARFORTH, H., HENNESSY, C., TURNER, K., HACKLIN-JARVIS, C. & TERRY V. 2018. *The value of small: in-depth research into the distinctive contribution, value and experiences of small and medium-sized charities in England and Wales*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.
- ELSEY, H., FARRAGHER, T., TUBEUF, S., BRAGG, R., ELINGS, M., BRENNAN, C., GOLD, R., SHICKLE, D., WICKRAMASEKERA, N., RICHARDSON, Z., CADE, J. & MURRAY, J. 2018. Assessing the impact of care farms on quality of life and offending: A pilot study among probation service users in England. *BMJ Open*, 8(3), e019296.
- GLASS, A., MCTIER, A., CLELLAND, D. & MCGREGOR, A. 2007. *Sharing the benefits of growth: linking opportunity and need in North East Scotland*. Edinburgh: Communities Scotland.
- HENWOOD, M. 2012. *Empowering communities: community skills development and neighbourhood workforce planning: an evaluation of the Early Adopter programme*. Towcester: Melanie Henwood Associates.
- KENYON, J. A., MASON, C. & ROOKWOOD, J. 2018. Emerging third-sector sports organisations and navigating uncertainty in an 'era of austerity': a single ethnographic case study from Liverpool. *International Journal of Sport Policy*, 10(1), 25–42.
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION. 2016. *Combating loneliness. A guide for local authorities*. London: Local Government Association.
- LUTZ, J., SMETSCHKA, B. & GRIMA, N. 2017. Farmer cooperation as a means for creating local food systems – potentials and challenges. *Sustainability*, 9(6), 925.

- MACKINNON, J., REID, M. & KEARNS, A. 2006. *Communities and health improvement: a review of evidence and approaches*. Edinburgh: Health Scotland.
- MCGREGOR, A., FITZPATRICK, I., MCCONNACHIE, M. & THOM, G. 1995. *Building futures: can local employment be created from housing expenditure?*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- ROY, M. J., BAKER, R. & KERR, S. 2017. Conceptualising the public health role of actors operating outside of formal health systems: The case of social enterprise. *Social Science and Medicine*, 172, 144–152.
- SAINTIER, S. 2017. Community energy companies in the UK: A potential model for sustainable development in local energy?. *Sustainability*, 9, 1325.
- THOMAS LANE, E., JONES, R., JONES, A. & MITCHELMORE, S. 2016. Exploring the potential of local food and drink entrepreneurship in rural Wales. *Local Economy*, 31(5), 602–618.
- WIND-COWIE, M. 2010. *Civic streets*. London: DEMOS.

Exclude on localness n=2

- AGE SCOTLAND. 2017. *The shed effect: stories from shedders in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Age Scotland.
- CONNELLY S., MARKEY, S. & ROSELAND, M. 2011. Bridging sustainability and the social economy: achieving community transformation through local food initiatives. *Critical Social Policy*, 31(2), 308–324.

Exclude on outcomes n=12

- COBURN, J. & RIJSDIJK, R. 2010. *Evaluating the success factors for establishing a thriving social enterprise in Scotland: case studies to inform and inspire (Scottish Government Social Research: voluntary issues)*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government Social Research.
- CO-OPERATIVES UK. 2017. *Owning our care*. Manchester: Co-operatives UK.
- COX, E. & SCHMUECKER, K. 2010. *Growing the Big Society: Encouraging success in social and community enterprise in deprived communities*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: IPPR North.
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- MAVRA, L. 2011. *Growing social enterprise: research into social replication. A report from the Social Enterprise Coalition*. London: Social Enterprise Coalition.
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Appendix 6 Validity assessment

Qualitative studies

Key: Y = Yes; N = No; ? = can't tell; n/a = not applicable; 1 = poor quality; 2 = moderate quality; 3 = good quality

Study	Qualitative method appropriate?	Research design appropriate?	Clear statement of findings?	Data collection appropriate?	Recruitment strategy appropriate?	Rigorous data analysis?	Researcher relationship considered?	Ethical issues taken into account?	Contribution?	Quality
Aiken 2008	Y	Y	n/a	Y	?	n/a	?	?	Y	1
Bailey 2012	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	N	?	N	1
Bailey 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	Y	Y	2
Baker 2009	Y	Y	N	?	?	?	?	?	Y	1
Barraket 2010	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	N	?	Y	2
Bedford 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	Y	2
Buckley 2017	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	Y	2
Dickens 2015	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	N	?	Y	2
Gordon 2002	Y	?	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	?	1
Gore 2003	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	N	?	Y	1
Hibbert 2003	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	Y	2
Henderson 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	Y	2
Juska 2006	?	?	?	?	?	?	N	?	?	1
Kleinhans 2017	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	3
Kotecha 2017	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	3

Lang 2011	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	n/a	2
Lionais 2004	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	Y	?	n/a	2
Mazzei 2013	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Morland 2010	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	N	?	Y	2
Murgatroyd 1984	Y	Y	?	?	?	?	?	?	Y	1
Rasmussen 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	Y	Y	2
Sonnino 2013	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	N	?	Y	1
Stumbitz 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	Y	3
Westlund 2012	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	N	?	Y	2

Quantitative non-randomised studies (ROBINS-I)

Key: H = high risk of bias; L = low risk of bias; ? = unclear; 1 = poor quality; 2 = moderate quality; 3 = good quality

Study	Confounding	Selection	Intervention classification	Deviations	Missing data	Outcome measurement	Selection of reported results	Quality
Bosworth 2017	?	L	?	L	?	H	?	1
Chan 2016	?	?	L	L	H	H	?	1
Plunkett Foundation 2018b	L	L	L	?	?	L	?	2
Willis 2017	H	L	L	L	?	L	L	2

Mixed Methods studies (MMAT)

Key: Y = Yes; N = No; ? = can't tell; n/a = not applicable; 1 = poor quality; 2 = moderate quality; 3 = good quality;

Study	Qualitative					Quantitative descriptive					Mixed methods					Quality
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Aiken 2011	Y	Y	?	?	?	Y	?	?	?	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	1
Dewhurst 2016						Y	Y	Y	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	3
Hayton 1995	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	1
Malfait 2018											Y	?	?	?	?	1
Mazzei 2009											N	?	?	?	?	1
Moreton 2005											Y	?	?	?	?	1
Plunkett Foundation 2018a						Y	Y	?	?	?						1
Richards 2018 (all)	Y	Y	Y	?	?	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	?	?	?	2
Morley 2017	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
SERIO 2017	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	Y	?	Y	N	Y						2
Seyfang 2007											Y	Y	?	?	?	1

Appendix 7 Table of included studies

Quality assessment (QA) key: 1 = low quality; 2 = moderate quality; 3 = good quality

Study ID	Country/ setting	Study design	Area/population characteristics	Community business name and aims (if reported)	Community business description	Business activity/model	Funding sources	Level of participation (Arnstein's ladder)	Outcomes	QA
Aiken 2008	UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), Germany, Italy and Poland, Sweden and USA	Mixed methods evaluation	Evidence from all over the UK and some international perspectives		Community-based organisations that own and/or manage assets such as land and buildings (e.g. community centres, resource centres, development trust premises, settlements and social action centres, former churches, community-owned parks or woodland)	Housing Environment, nature conservation Commercial property letting A wide range of business models	Unclear	Unclear	<i>Community level</i> + Community wellbeing <i>Organisational level</i> + Economic + Community needs identified + Building collaborations	1
Aiken 2011	UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)	Mixed methods (including case studies in cross-case synthesis)	Mixed setting – 15 case studies from rural and urban locations across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland		Asset-owning or managing community-based organisations (e.g. village hall, development trust, settlement and social action centre, community centre, community farm, community land trust, arts/cultural centre, sports centre, community wind farm, community shop, religious or faith centre, preservation or heritage trust, advocacy	Community hubs Employment: training and education; business support Housing Energy Community-based organisations in control of assets, business model unclear	Unclear	Informing	<i>Community level</i> + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/connections/networks/capital + Social cohesion + Economic outcomes <i>Organisational level</i> + Community needs identified	1

					and advice centre, park trust, housing co-operative)					
Bailey 2012	UK (England, Wales) case studies, international literature in evidence review	Case studies	Mixed setting – 5 case studies based across England and Wales	Community development trusts managing transfer of community assets <i>Aims</i> A wide variety of aims and objectives which often arise either from adverse policies or a sense of neglect Community development is a major priority	Community enterprises aka community development trusts managing transfer of community assets (Caterham Barracks Community Trust, Creation Development Trust, Lyme Regis Development Trust, Manor and Castle Development Trust, Westway Development Trust)	Community hubs Employment; training and education; business support Housing Health, social care and wellbeing Sports and leisure Arts centre/facility Shops and cafés Environment, nature, conservation Childcare Community business Community development trust	Transfer of assets	Partnership	<i>Organisational level</i> + Economic + Process outcomes + Community needs identified	1
Bailey 2018	UK (England), Netherlands and Sweden.	Case studies	Mixed setting in 9 case studies based across a range of different communities in 3 countries		Community-based social enterprises in a variety of sectors (e.g. training for employment, services for young people, cafés, shops, organic food production and sales)	Employment; training and education; business support Housing Health, social care and wellbeing Sports and leisure Shops and cafés Food catering and production Craft, industry and production Childcare	Trading and non-trading activities	Partnership Placation	<i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations Other	2

						Plus commercial property letting Community business (various legal structures including company limited by guarantee, community interest company) Charity Co-operative				
Baker 2009	UK (England)	Case study	London Borough of Southwark		Cambridge House, a community anchor organisation	Community hub Health, social care and wellbeing Childcare Plus commercial property letting Community anchor	Statutory sources Trading Other	Unclear	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing <i>Community neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Social relations/connections/networks/capital <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations Other: managing multi-purpose role	1
Barraket 2010	Australia	Qualitative	Mixed settings – 10 community enterprises throughout Victoria, including 2 serving the needs of newly arrived refugee and migrant		Community enterprises	Employment; training and education; business support Finance	Unclear	Unclear	<i>Individual level</i> + Social isolation/loneliness + Civic participation + Other: economic inclusion <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Changes in neighbourhood environment	2

			communities and 3 operating in Neighbourhood Renewal areas						+ Social relations/ connections/ networks/ capital + Social participation + Civic participation	
Bedford 2018	UK (England)	Qualitative	Mixed setting – including 5 community businesses selected to be representative of the sector across England		Community businesses – sustainable social care (Greenslate Community Farm, NEDCare, Unlimited Potential, Ideal for All, BS3 Community)	Employment; training and education; business support Health, social care and wellbeing Shops and cafés Childcare Charity Community business	Trading Commissioned services Grant funding Other	Unclear	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Social isolation/loneliness + Quality of life + Health + Civic participation + Employment <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Social relations/connections/networks/ capital + Civic participation + Building collaborations + Other: spreading eco-systems of care <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Community needs identified Increased representation on local boards Building collaborations	2
Bosworth 2017	UK (England)	Survey	Farm set in 128 acres in the Midlands region of England	<i>Aim</i> The owners wished to sell the land The tenants needed to raise £800,000 (approximately \$1,144,000) in order to buy the	Community owned farm	Food, catering and production Environment, nature, conservation Community business	Crowdfund ing Shares	Partnership	<i>Individual level</i> + Civic participation + Volunteering + Other: satisfaction, involvement, connectedness	1

				land and 'save' the farm						
Buckley 2017	UK (England)	Case studies	Mixed setting – including 12 case studies based across England.		Community businesses with a wide range of activities, e.g. Friends of Stretford Public Hall, Alt Valley Community Trust, Burton Street Foundation, Bristol Ferryboats, Bythams Community Shop, Sutton Community Farm, Pennine Community Power	Community hubs Employment; training and education; business support Health, social care and wellbeing Sports and leisure Shops and cafés Food, catering and production Energy Charity Community business (community benefit company, social enterprise, co-operative and community benefit company) Co-operative	Grant funding Trading Crowdfunding/shares Commissioned services, other	Various – this study focusses on community accountability	<i>Individual level</i> + Civic participation <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Civic participation <i>Organisational</i> + Building collaborations	2
Chan 2016	Canada	Survey	Unclear – various locations in Ontario (the study is a survey of workers and training participants of social purpose enterprises)	Social support in Social Purpose Enterprises <i>Aim</i> Social purpose enterprises provide employment and job training to individuals with complex and often multiple	Social purpose enterprises	Employment; training and education; business support Business models not reported	Trading Government funding Grants	Not reported	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing	1

				challenges to work						
Dewhurst 2016	UK (England)	Mixed methods evaluation	Urban area of Leeds with high levels of unemployment, single occupancy and social isolation		Rise High tower block project run by Barca	Health, social care and wellbeing Community business	Commissioned services	Manipulation/Therapy	<i>Individual level</i> Individual wellbeing + Quality of life + Health + Mental health <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> Process outcomes Economic outcomes <i>Organisational</i> - Process outcomes.	3
Dickens 2015	UK (England, Wales)	Qualitative study (12 semi-structured in depth interviews; part of a larger participatory research project)	Mixed (Salford, Greater Manchester; Toxteth, Liverpool; Brighton on England's south coast, and the Blaenau Gwent region of South Wales)	PVM, a social enterprise based in Salford <i>Aim</i> 'to support people to have a voice ... and describe their own reality' and 'contribute to raising community and individual aspiration'	Community reporting (PVM Community Reporter Programme)	Employment, training and education, business support Craft, industry and production (Communication, community reporting) Social enterprise	Unclear (PVM operates a 'social licensing' franchise model that enables other community groups to purchase CR training packages, receive accreditation and participate in a dedicated online network of reporters)	Citizen control	<i>Individual level</i> + Civic participation + Education + Other: motivation, relationships, training and skills <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Civic participation Process outcomes	2

							and content.)			
Gordon 2002	UK (Scotland)	Case studies	Rural – 7 community businesses located in Highlands and Islands of Scotland		Community co-operatives in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in a variety of sectors	Shops and cafés Craft, industry and production Finance Co-operative	Trading Grants	Placation	<i>Individual level</i> + Employment <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/connections/networks/capital Civic participation Economic outcomes + Other: use of Gaelic language <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process Community needs identified Increased representation on local boards	1
Gore 2003	UK (England)	Case studies (outcomes relate to 20 case studies)	Rural locations in Yorkshire and Humber region		Rural community businesses (e.g. village shops, cafés, farms, transport services, childcare, post offices, farmers' markets, training schemes)	Health, social care and wellbeing Transport Shops and cafés Various – companies limited by guarantee, charities, private limited company, public limited company	Trading	Unclear	<i>Individual level</i> + Employment + Volunteering <i>Community level</i> + Economic outcomes <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Other: internal and external factors contributing to growth of rural community businesses	1
Hayton 1995	UK (England)	Case study	Urban (inner city housing estate in		Cruddas Park Community Trust	Pubs	Trading Other	Placation	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing	1

			Newcastle upon Tyne)			Craft, industry and production Community business			+ Employment <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing Civic participation <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Increased representation on local boards Building collaborations	
Henderson 2018	UK (Scotland)	Case studies	Mixed – urban, rural and remote. 6 case studies based across Scotland		Community anchor organisations (Ardenglen Housing Association, Glenboig Neighbourhood House, Govanhill Housing Association and Community Development Trust, Greener Kirkcaldy, Huntly and District Development Trust, Stòras Uibhist)	Community hubs Employment; training and education; business support Housing Health, social care and wellbeing Transport Sports and leisure Shops and cafés Energy Finance Housing association (industrial and provident society co-operative and community benefit society) Charity (company limited by guarantee, limited company with charitable status) Community interest company	Trading Commissioned services Other funding	Partnership	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Social isolation/loneliness + Quality of life + Mental health + Civic participation + Employment + Volunteering + Education + Other: maximising incomes <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/connection/networks/capital + Social cohesion + Civic participation + Building collaborations + Other <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified Increased representation on local boards	2

						Community development trust			Building collaborations Other: local democracy, social change, community resilience	
Hibbert 2003	UK (Scotland)	Qualitative study (a series of in-depth interviews)	Unclear – an anonymous community in a deprived area in Scotland		Community Action for Food, a food retail co-operative, café and cookery classes	Shops and cafés Co-operative	Trading	Unclear	<i>Individual level</i> + Social isolation/loneliness + Mental health + Civic participation + Volunteering <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Other qualitative outcomes: community capacity <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes	2
Juska 2006	Lithuania	Qualitative (ethnography?)	Rural (Balninkai village in rural Eastern Lithuania)		Balninkai Community Centre	Community hubs Health, social care and wellbeing Community development trust	Grants	Citizen control	<i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Changes in neighbourhood environment Civic participation Economic outcomes <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Building collaborations	1
Kleinhans 2017	Netherlands	Case studies Qualitative study	Unclear		Project Community Enterprises, a project of LSA (National Association of Active Residents) to support community-based entrepreneurship, and the businesses they support	Employment, training and education, business support Health, social care and wellbeing Sports and leisure Shops and cafés Craft, industry and production Environment, nature, conservation	Grant	Partnership	<i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes	3

						Community business				
Kotecha 2017	UK (England)	Case study (4 case studies in the paper but only 1 included in this review)	Rural – Cuckmere Valley, East Sussex		Cuckmere community bus	Transport Charity (company limited by guarantee)	Trading	Citizen control	<i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Other	3
Lang 2011	Austria and Germany	Case studies	Rural – Gurtis, a remote village that has suffered economic decline Urban – Luthe, a middle-class neighbourhood in the town of Wunstorf		The Gurtis village shop and the Luthe community pool	Sports and Leisure Shops and cafés Co-operative	Trading Partnership funding Grant funding Charitable donation	Delegation	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Civic participation + Volunteering <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social cohesion Civic participation + Economic outcomes	2
Lionais 2004	Canada	Case study	Mixed – Cape Breton, an area of high unemployment, high economic dependency and low incomes on Atlantic coast		New Dawn Enterprises, an umbrella organisation for a number of community ventures	Employment, training and education, business support Housing Health, social care and wellbeing Sports and leisure Commercial property letting Company limited by guarantee	Trading	Placation	<i>Individual level</i> + Employment Other: perceptions of community and of organisation <i>Organisational level</i> Community needs identified	2
Malfait 2018	UK (England)	Mixed methods	Urban – deprived areas of Leeds (LS12, LS13, LS28)		Reaching Out, a project run by Barca	Health, social care and wellbeing	Grant funding	Consultation?	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Mental health	1

						Community business			<i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified	
Mazzei 2009	UK (England)	Mixed methods	Urban – deprived area of Newcastle upon Tyne		Building Futures East Centre – community development trust.	Employment; training and education; business support Community development trust and Company limited by guarantee	Trading Grant funding Partnership funding	Consultation	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Employment <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Building collaborations <i>Organisational level</i> Community needs identified	1
Mazzei 2013	UK (England)	Case Studies	Mixed – 25 case studies based in areas of high deprivation in Greater Manchester and Tyne and Wear		Social enterprises with a range of activities e.g. Bolton Steps, Benchmark, The Cyrenians, Wesley Community Furniture, Unicorn Grocery, Community Energy Solution, Neoartists studio rental	Employment; training and education; business support Housing Health, social care and wellbeing Arts centre/ facility Shops and cafés Food, catering and production Energy Commercial property letting Charity (some company limited by guarantee) Community interest company Co-operative Community development trust	Trading Commission ed services Grant funding Fundraising Other	Unclear	<i>Individual level</i> + Employment <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Civic participation + Building collaborations <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations	3

						Other forms of community business				
Moreton 2005	UK (England)	Case studies	Rural England – case studies selected to represent the rural social enterprise sector in England (only 4 included in this review) Rural England in general has a higher proportion of older people and they receive less support than in urban areas Older people are the focus of the study		Rural social enterprises: Talaton shop, Lydbury shop, Action by Differently Aabled People in Tynedale, Gorran & District Community bus	Transport Shops and cafés Charity (company limited by guarantee) Social enterprise (industrial and provident society, community-owned association)	Trading Commissioned services Grant funding	Citizen control	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Social isolation/loneliness + Civic participation + Volunteering <i>Community/Neighbourhood level</i> + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/connections/networks/capital + Social cohesion + Other: community mobilisation, provision of unique service	1
Morland 2010	USA	Qualitative study	Urban – East New York, a low-income neighbourhood		Building Food Justice in East New York	Shops and cafés Co-operative	Trading Grants	Partnership	<i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes	2
Morley 2017	UK (England)	Mixed methods (surveys, interviews and focus groups) Economic evaluation or SROI	Urban – Todmorden, a market town in the Upper Calder Valley Population is less ethnically diverse, poorer and more deprived than national averages		Incredible Edible Todmorden	Food, catering and production Environment, nature, conservation Social enterprise	Trading Grant funding	Citizen control	<i>Individual level</i> Individual wellbeing + Volunteering <i>Community level</i> + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Civic participation + Economic outcomes + Other qualitative outcomes <i>Organisational level</i>	3

									Other (enablers, challenges, wider development)	
Murgatroyd 1984	UK (England)	Case studies	Mixed – 4 case studies based in the North-East of England		Community business ventures: Pallion Residents Enterprises Ltd (Sunderland), East Cleveland Employment Group/Staithes Fishing Co-operative (Staithes) Little Women (Sunderland) Consett Co-operative Enterprises (Consett)	Employment; training and education; business support Transport Sports and leisure Arts centre/ facility Food, catering and production Craft, industry and production Commercial property letting Co-operative, Community business (company limited by shares)	Trading Grants	Citizen control Delegation Placation	<p><i>Individual level</i> + Employment + Education</p> <p><i>Community/neighbourhood</i> + Community wellbeing + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/connections/networks/ capital + Social cohesion + Building collaborations</p> <p><i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations Other: Resilience</p>	1
Plunkett Foundation 2018a pubs	UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)	Mixed methods (secondary analysis of routine data and questionnaires, with follow-up telephone interviews)	Unclear – information from 85 community businesses across the UK		Community pubs	Pubs Community business	Trading	Partnership	<p><i>Individual level</i> + Social isolation/loneliness + Health + Volunteering</p> <p><i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Social relations/connections/networks/ capital + Civic participation + Economic outcomes</p> <p><i>Organisational level</i> Economic</p>	1

									Increased representation on local boards	
Plunkett Foundation 2018b shops	UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)	Survey	Unclear – survey information from 328 community businesses located across the UK, the highest density being in South-West England		Community shops	Shops and cafés Community business (community benefit society, community interest company, company limited by guarantee, co-operative, other)	Trading	Partnership	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/connections/networks/capital + Economic outcomes	2
Rasmussen 2018	Denmark	Qualitative study	Urban- a deprived neighbourhood of Aalborg		Community-based fitness centre	Sports and leisure Community business	Trading	Partnership	<i>Individual level</i> + Social isolation/loneliness + Health + Mental health - Other: unintended consequences <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Social relations/connections/networks/capital + Social cohesion <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes	2
Richards 2018a factors	UK (England)	Mixed methods (survey and case studies)	Mixed – survey of 126 community businesses in England (including 15 case studies Please see Richards et al. 2018b, 2018c, 2018d		Community businesses from the community hub, health and wellbeing, and sport and leisure sectors Please see Richards et al. 2018b, 2018c, 2018d	Community hub Health and wellbeing Sport and leisure Community interest company Partnership Limited liability partnership	Trading Commissioned services Grant funding Other	Unclear – various	<i>Individual level</i> + Employment + Volunteering <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Other: success factors, barriers to success.	2

						Charitable company limited by guarantee Company limited by guarantee Charitable incorporated organisation Charitable trust Community benefit society Unincorporated association Development trust Local residents association Parish Council Registered charity Voluntary run and funded group Company limited by shares Social enterprise Community sports club and association				
Richards 2018b CH	UK (England)	Mixed methods	Mixed – 5 case studies based in the Isle of Wight, Bristol, Frome, Netherton, and North Yorkshire		Community businesses in the community hub sector: Aspire Ryde, BS3 – Southville Centre, Cheese and Grain, Netherton Community Centre, The Old Co-op	Community hubs Shops and cafés Childcare Commercial property letting Charity (charitable incorporated organisation, charity and company limited by guarantee)	Trading Grant funding Other	Unclear – various	<i>Individual level</i> + Social isolation/ loneliness + Employment + Volunteering <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social cohesion + Civic participation + Building collaborations Economic	2

						Community business (private limited company)			<i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations	
Richards 2018c H&WB	UK (England)	Mixed methods	Urban – 5 case studies based in London, Manchester, Sheffield and Bristol		Community businesses in the health and wellbeing sector: Zest, The SWEET Project, Unlimited Potential, MSH Health and Wellbeing, Wellspring Healthy Living Centre	Employment; training and education; business support Health, social care and wellbeing Sports and leisure Libraries Shops and cafés Commercial property letting Charity (charitable company limited by guarantee) Community interest company Community business (company limited by guarantee, community benefit society)	Trading Commissioned services Grant funding Other	Unclear – various	<i>Individual level</i> + Mental health + Volunteering <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/connections/networks/capital + Building collaborations <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified Increased representation on local boards Building collaborations	2
Richards 2018d S&L	UK (England)	Mixed methods (survey and case studies)	Mixed – 5 case studies based in Lincolnshire (rural), Newcastle upon Tyne, Manchester (urban and outskirts), Sheffield (outskirts)		Community businesses in the sport and leisure sector: Jubilee Park Woodhall Spa Ltd, Origin Sports, Projekts MCR, Stocksbridge Community Leisure Centre, Timperley Sports Club	Sports and leisure Shops and cafés Commercial property letting Charity (company limited by guarantee) Community business (private	Trading Grant funding	Unclear – various	<i>Individual level</i> + Employment + Volunteering <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Changes in neighbourhood environment + Social relations/ connections/ networks/ capital + Building collaborations	2

						limited company, industrial and provident society, company limited by guarantee, unincorporated association)			Process outcomes Economic outcomes <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations	
SERIO 2017	UK (England)	Mixed methods (survey of users and interviews with stakeholders)	Mixed – community-managed libraries based across England, including 9 case studies		Community libraries – including: community-managed libraries, community-supported libraries and independent libraries	Libraries Charity Company limited by guarantee Community interest company	Trading Local authority funding Grants Donations Fundraising/crowdfunding Other	Unclear – various	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Social isolation/loneliness + Civic participation + Volunteering + Education <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Social relations/connections/networks/capital + Social cohesion + Civic participation + Other: community resilience <i>Organisational level</i> Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations	2
Seyfang 2007	UK (England)	Mixed methods evaluation (customer surveys and interviews with stakeholders)	Mixed – Norwich city and surrounding area		Eostre Organics, organic growing and sales	Food catering and production Co-operative	Trading	Informing	<i>Individual level</i> + Civic participation + Other: personal impact on environment) <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Social relations/connections/networks/capital <i>Organisational level</i>	1

									Community needs identified Building collaborations	
Shared Intelligence 2014	UK (England)	Described as an evaluation but no further details	Urban – Colchester		The Waiting Room, physical venue for St Botolph’s Community Enterprise	Community hubs Arts centre/facility Libraries Shops and cafés Craft, industry and production Community business	Grant funding	Partnership	<i>Individual level</i> + Social isolation/loneliness + Employment <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Social relations/connections/networks/capital <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Community needs identified Building collaborations	1
Sonnino 2013	UK (England)	Case study	Unclear – 5 case studies in Oxfordshire		Community food enterprises (Bread Co-op, Community Garden, Organic Urban Growing, Farmers’ and Community Market, Community Farm)	Food, catering and production	Trading	Citizen control Delegation Partnership	<i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing Process outcomes	1
Stumbitz 2018	UK (England)	Case studies	Mixed – 10 community businesses based across England in areas ranging from a rural community to a disadvantaged inner-city location		Community businesses providing health and wellbeing services	Community hubs Health, social care and wellbeing Sports and leisure Arts centre/ facility Shops and cafés Craft, industry and production Environment, nature, conservation Childcare Commercial property letting	Trading Commissioned services Grants Other	Unclear – various	<i>Individual level</i> + Individual wellbeing + Social isolation/ loneliness + Mental health <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing <i>Organisational level</i> Economic Process outcomes Community needs identified Building collaborations	3

						Charity (most with a company limited by guarantee trading arm) Community business Community interest company Community benefit society				
Westlund 2012	Sweden	Qualitative study	Urban – Stockholm		Fryshuset, a former cold store used for social activities in association with the YMCA	Community hubs Sports and leisure Arts centre/facility Social enterprise	Grant Fees Sponsorship	Partnership	<i>Individual level</i> + Social isolation/loneliness + Civic participation <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> + Community wellbeing + Social relations/connections/networks/capital + Social cohesion Process outcomes Economic outcomes <i>Organisational level</i> + Economic + Process outcomes	2
Willis 2017	UK (England)	Survey (comparison of Community Life Survey results in area local to community business with a	Urban – 6 different towns/cities in England (Liverpool, Leicester, Leeds, Sheffield, Brixham, London)		Community businesses in a variety of sectors (Homebaked, b-inspired, Bramley Baths, Burton Street Foundation, Youth Enquiry Service, The Ivy House)	Community hubs Employment, training and education, business support Sports and leisure Pubs Food, catering and production	Trading	Citizen control	<i>Individual level</i> Individual wellbeing Social isolation/loneliness Volunteering <i>Community/neighbourhood level</i> Changes in neighbourhood environment Social relations/connections/networks/capital	2

		matched control area)				Community business			Social cohesion Civic participation Other	
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