



**Supporting<sup>™</sup>  
Communities**  
Empowering Society

# **Social Value Report**

## **June 2019**

**Housing**  
Executive

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## Background

As part of the Service Level Agreement with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, Supporting Communities were tasked to 'Explore Social Value within the HCN member groups'.

This involved examining the Social Value of the Housing Executive's Community Grants Scheme awarded in 2017/18, 1 per area equating to 13 in total. Working in partnership with Supporting Communities' Community Development Officers and their local Housing Executive offices - 13 projects were put forward for examination. Due to circumstances beyond the control of Supporting Communities three projects were not assessed, therefore this report reflects the assessment of ten projects across Northern Ireland.

## Approach

Supporting Communities identified the need to access an impact measurement tool to analyse the social value of projects. After an open tender process, Rose Regeneration in partnership with East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Social Value Engine was awarded the tender to undertake a Social Return on investment evaluation of Supporting Communities as well as provide training and support to staff to use their measurement tool <https://socialvalueengine.com/>

To date, Rose Regeneration has worked closely with Supporting Communities staff building staff capacity to undertake future analysis of the social value projects we help to deliver. A training session was delivered by Rose Regeneration to a number of staff members on how to use the Social Value Engine, and telephone support is available as and when we need it.

In addition to the analysis of the projects, Supporting Communities has also developed and delivered an 'Impact Awareness' training course to Housing Community Network groups across Northern Ireland (i.e. District/Area and Inter-Agency fora were used to deliver this short awareness session).

This training will help to increase groups understanding and capacity when it comes to looking at their own impact and the impact that their projects are making going forward. Importantly it informs groups of the vital information they should be collating and using when analysing impact.

## Introduction

Measuring the tangible costs and outputs of a community activity is relatively straightforward. We may know what the inputs are (e.g. the funding, equipment or volunteers needed to run the activity) and the outputs expected of group (e.g. a target for the number of people participating in the activity); but the greater challenge is quantifying the wider social, economic and environmental outcomes the community groups are delivering.

This is what social value does. It asks the question 'if £x is spent on delivering an activity, what is the value of that same £x in terms of wider benefits for the local community?'

Examples of social value might be the value community members experience from increasing their confidence or living near green space; or it could be the value of the time the community group has spent collaborating with other organisations to improve health services in a local area.

## The Social Value Engine

Rose Regeneration has developed an approach to measuring social value using an online tool called the Social Value Engine:

The Social Value Engine helps organisations identify and measure the social value of the outcomes achieved by their activity. This information can then be used to:

- understand where your organisation is having the most impact;
- make decisions about where to invest resources;
- demonstrate the value of your activity to funders and other stakeholders

The Social Value Engine also helps describe how activities are building a better 'place' - a sustainable community where people want to live, work and invest.

It provides:

1. A systemised and academically robust assessment of social value for groups to forecast, plan and evaluate their activities.
2. More than 200 peer-reviewed financial proxies derived from reliable sources, which are regularly updated.
3. A description of how a project creates value and a ratio that states how much social value (in £/€) is created for every £/€ of investment.
4. An overview of how a group's activities are making a place better to live in and more sustainable.

## The Bristol Accord

The Social Value Engine uses the Bristol Accord to enable organisations to see how their activity is building a more attractive place –where people want to live and work, both now and in the future.

The Bristol Accord was developed in 2005 when the UK Government worked with all the EU Member States to agree what makes communities sustainable and to foster 'place making' skills.

A sustainable community should be safe, fair, thriving, environmentally sensitive, well run, served, well connected and well designed and built. This common framework for defining a successful sustainable community is shown in the diagram.

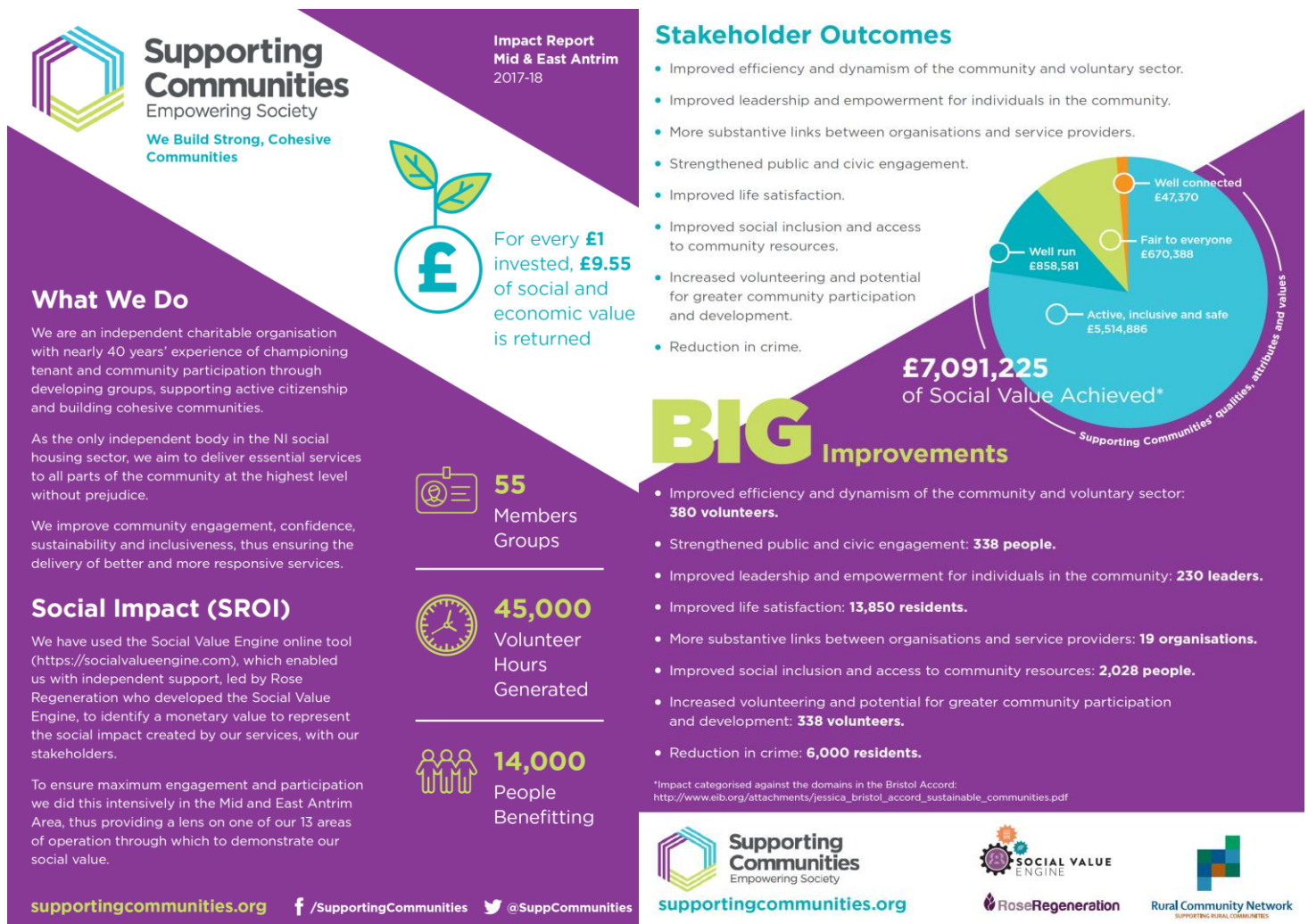


The Social Value Engine relates each impact identified during its analysis back to one of the eight domains within the Bristol accord, identifying how it has made a contribution to the overall sustainability of the area being assessed as well as applying a monetary social value to it. This provides a richer area analysis than simply a financial rate of return. It enables a more detailed narrative to be offered as a context for the level of social return.

# Supporting Communities Social Value Exercise

Ivan Annibal from Rose Regeneration and Anita Doonan, Funding and Social Value Officer with Supporting Communities, presented at the 2018 Housing Community Network Conference work undertaken to evaluate the social return on investment of Supporting Communities' development work in the Mid and East Antrim area in 2017/18 (See Impact Report below).

The report followed a similar approach identifying all the inputs and outputs which when calculated shows an excellent **£9.55 return of social and economic value for every £1 invested**, that's over **£7 million** of social value achieved in just this one Area of Supporting Communities cover in Northern Ireland!





## Social Value of Housing Executive Funding 2017/18

As noted earlier, this exercise provides a snapshot of the social value created from the Housing Executive Grants across Northern Ireland. The table below gives basic details of each project as well as the Social Return on Investment (SROI) figure in the right-hand column.

	Region / Area	Name of Group and Project	Brief on project	SROI
1	South Region  South West Area	West End Community Association	A 1 day Community Festival to help encourage and strengthen community relations, help celebrate cultural identities across all communities within the West End area of Enniskillen. The event consisted of children's entertainment, cultural and dance displays, face painting, BBQ, music and more in an outdoor venue with gazebos and other equipment to ensure a high quality event. Historically the area has suffered from segregation and an event like this helps to break down barriers and build on community cohesion. The event will help prepare for future projects to improve Health and Wellbeing in the Community.	<b>£1 = £6.74</b>
2	North Region  West Area	Glen Development Initiative	Establishment of a Men's Shed 3 days a week to cater for the needs of Men in the greater Glen area. Funding was used to purchase equipment with contributions from other funders towards other parts of the project. Beneficiaries are mainly older, retired people and the project offers them something to keep them busy, meet new people and learn new skills. Some has engaged who suffer from depression and the project has given them an outlet to get involved. Participants have engaged in engineering courses, woodworking courses, first aid and personal and social development courses. Similar to some other projects, interest developed for a Hens Shed for local women which is now operational on Monday evenings.	<b>£1 = £6.01</b>
3	North Region  Causeway	The Glens Community Association	Diversiory project – community festival over 3 days organised in the estate, inviting residents from other areas to be part of it. engaged with all ages. Aim was achieved which was to reduce ASB and to stop the annual bonfire and flags that are erected in the area. They worked in partnership with BoeValley and Ballykelly.	<b>£1 = £3.86</b>
4	South Region	Ballysaggart Area Community	Intergenerational project – bringing people	<b>£1 = £11.22</b>



	Mid Ulster	Association	together to break down barriers in the area. A DVD was developed to show the outcomes of the project – young and old working together.	
5	South Region South Down	Good Morning Down	The Good Morning Down project provides telephone calls and befriending service to older and vulnerable residents in South Down. 133 people are regularly supported through phone calls and attendance at social events. Information is provided on health promotion and crime prevention initiatives. 30 new beneficiaries came on during the year.	<b>£1 - £ 4.61</b>
6	South Region	Edgarstown Residents Association	A community safety project involving detached youth workers out and about the estates in the evenings and weekends engaging and supporting young vulnerable people. Deliver awareness sessions in local schools – drugs/alcohol, building self-esteem etc. Mainly involving 16-25 year old. Community house providing after school provision, teenage drop in, senior citizen events, maintenance team for the area etc. Have supported 5 young people off the streets, into the community as volunteers and have now graduated from Jordanstown with a Community Development degree.	<b>£1 = £5.84</b>
7	North Region Mid and East Antrim	Glenravel and District Community and Residents Association	Community project to address speeding vehicles in the area. The community group alongside the local primary school developed a project whereby the children designed banners for the area with messages to slow traffic down. Over 330 children from the school were involved alongside the Council, PSNI, NIHE, Roads Service. They also organised a road safety campaign week and high-vis vests were distributed throughout the community.	<b>£1 = £4.27</b>
8	Belfast Region North Belfast	Ardoyne Association	Was unable to agree a suitable time to carry out the exercise.	
9	Belfast Region South Antrim	Monkstown Community Association	Was unable to carry out the exercise, several attempts were made to contact the group.	
10	Belfast Region Lisburn and Castlereagh	Seymour Hill and Conway Residents Association	Men's Shed and Youth Hub project. The project involved establishing a men's shed in the area for local men to come together to socialize and carry out some manual activities together.  A spin off from the men's shed was the development of a women's project which	<b>£1 = £14.55</b>

			has proven very popular and has included fitness classes, resilience programmes and educational classes. the funding also supported the establishment of a youth Hub which now has 96 children on the books with another 70 engaging in activities. The Youth Hub has attracted new families to the activities and see a reduction in ASB in the area.	
11	Belfast Region  North Down and Ards	Glen Ward Community Development Association	'Growing Respect' project Involved 6 young boys who were engaging in ASB activities, all of whom are on the spectrum but with little or no support at home or from other agencies. The funding involved engaging once a week in the local community base, providing refreshments in each session and a team building trip. The young boys become more involved in the community and helped with clean up projects, gardening projects etc	<b>£1 = £6.05</b>
12	Belfast Region  South and East		Were unable to identify a suitable project to assess.	
13	Belfast Region  West	Good Morning West Belfast	Good Morning project providing a phone call and befriending service in the West Belfast area. 480 people are on their records which they contact on a regular basis. They also provide signposting to support services for benefits, home safety, fire safety, warm home packs etc.	<b>£1 = £9.53</b>

3 of the 13 above projects presented at the Community Conference in October 2018 in terms of the impact they have within their local communities, and the social return on investment they generate. The 3 projects were selected on basis of 1 per Housing Executive Region, namely; Edgarstown Residents Association in South Region; Good Morning West Belfast in Belfast Region and Glenravel & District Residents Assoc in North Region.

## Summary

Whilst the concept of measuring social value and impact is still quite new in Northern Ireland, there is a growing appreciation that for funders and community organisations it is becoming a necessary exercise to ensure that investments are made in the right places and that positive impacts are being made on the ground. Where there is a negative or very minimal SV return, funders could rightly question the wisdom of further investment.

Of the 10 projects which were assessed during this exercise, on average they each returned a social value of £7.27 which is a very healthy return. If this figure was taken and multiplied against all of the funding committed by The Housing Executive, it would no doubt run to many millions of pounds of social value.

For some of the projects assessed the Housing Executive contributed to the overall costs along with other funders, however for many it was the Housing Executive funding which enabled the community groups to get the projects started.

If the exercise is to be repeated, it would be advisable to encourage funded groups to keep good records during the project such as volunteer hours committed, other funding/resources invested, etc which could be collated in a monitoring/evaluation form.

## Conclusion

There has been the first exercise to measure the social value of some of the Housing Executive's funding streams and has generated quite an interest from community groups who are keen to show their worth. The exercise has also been worthwhile in demonstrating to the Housing Executive's Board and decision makers that investments such as community grants, etc can and do make a significant impact in communities.

During the Measuring Impact training, Supporting Communities informed participants that the SVE can also be used as a forecasting tool which can help organisations to gauge the possible impact of particular projects. As with anything in life, not all community projects are successful, therefore if it can be identified that a project will require greater inputs (costs) than potential social value returns then investment may not be the sensible option.

It is clear that Social Value and Impact Measurement are now here to stay and are becoming more widely used in all sectors. Continued reinforcement of good record keeping is necessary to ensure the social value of projects can be accurately measured.