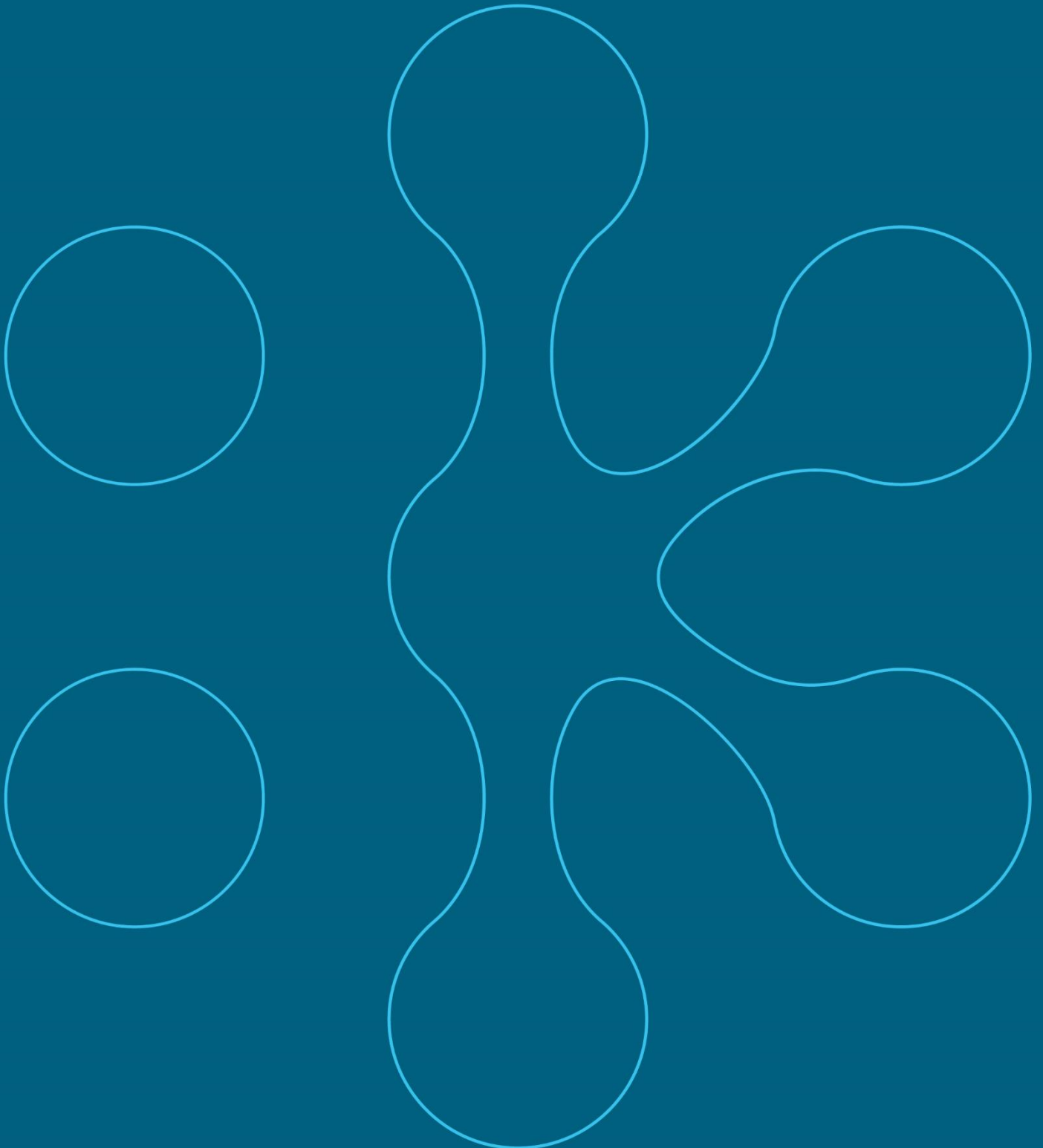




Economic Recovery Fund
Round 2 Evaluation

An
Evaluation
Report
To Sheffield City
Council
March 2025



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Executive summary

Introduction

The first round of the ERF programme was developed as a direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic and concerns about the impact on district high street footfall. It aimed to encourage more residents to spend time and money in their local area, driving up footfall and supporting local economic growth.

Round Two aimed to build on the successes of the first round providing a further £2m of Sheffield City Council funding for business-led local projects focused on district centre vitality. The key objectives of ERF Round 2 were:

- To help build the foundations for economic renewal across Sheffield by investing in communities and high streets, helping to build resilience to the cost-of-living crisis and future economic challenges.
- To make high streets and local centres feel safe and welcoming, so that residents want to spend time and shop there.
- To encourage businesses and groups to work together on ideas to improve their high streets and bring new energy to those that already are.
- To support high street businesses to work with their communities and leave a lasting legacy of community infrastructure that can continue to thrive once projects are complete.

The application process was open to local constituted community or business representative groups and, following learning from round one, the Council's ERF Programme team provided an Application Development Worker from a small, purpose formed team, to support project applicants and connected them to a Business Information Officer. Twenty-three projects were approved across the city supporting a wide range of activity, with contracts awarded in Autumn 2023. Delivery began in December 2023 and was due to conclude by Autumn 2024. Following some slippage in delivery timescales, extensions were granted to the end of December 2024 and for some into the first quarter of 2025.

A wide range of programme outcomes were targeted including: improved perceptions of local space/community; improved perceptions of the council; increased footfall and local spend over time; increased awareness of what centres offer; and increased capability of local people to have a say over decisions.

Evaluation

The aims set for the evaluation were:

- To assess the delivery, management, outputs, outcomes and impacts of ERF Round Two activity against those intended.
- To investigate what impact ERF has had on perceptions of Sheffield City Council and whether the programme has contributed to local cohesion.
- To provide wider examples of high street and place making policies and initiatives, outlining relevant examples and case studies of other programmes aimed at local economic growth.
- Consider the purpose, shape and form that future funding could take.

An assessment of the final Round 1 outputs was completed using project completion forms; a summary can be found in Annex One. The processes and tools used for the primary research were revised

following learning from the Round 1 evaluation (also undertaken by Kada Research). An updated, easy to complete resident survey was created with an incentive offered for completion. This led to a good number of responses (232), but these were geographically concentrated around five areas. For some metrics there is very limited baseline information and there are numerous other economic factors influencing district high street usage. As a result of limited data and attribution challenges, the impact assessment focuses on the social value of ERF2 activity.

Strategic context

The ERF programme has been delivered within, and strongly aligns with, a wider context of national and local government efforts to empower local communities to lead decision making on policies that best reflect local need. There is a strong rationale for continuing with many of the ways of working developed and implemented through the ERF programme.

The ERF programme is strongly aligned with Sheffield's City Council City Goals. It takes a place-based approach to development with a commitment to creating a welcoming, flourishing and prospering city with enriched thriving communities underpinned by strong positive relationships and community involvement in decision making. It is also strongly aligned with the Council Plan. 'Great neighbourhoods' is a strategic focus within the plan with an emphasis on clean and safe neighbourhoods and vibrant and welcoming high streets. The 2025-2034 Sheffield Growth Plan also contains a commitment to energised and animated neighbourhoods and empowered communities that can deliver economic and social impact in their areas.

The rationale for the ERF has evolved over time. It has shifted from a post Covid emphasis on encouraging a return to the high street to a widely accepted and strategically important emphasis on ensuring that district centres are vibrant, animated and resilient. The creation of the Local Area Committees (LACs) and the expanded role of community anchors, groups and organisations have also influenced ERF.

Sheffield City Council has taken the decision not to run a third round of ERF. Within this context this report considers the lessons learned from how Round Two of ERF was delivered and what guidance these provide for addressing the key local community and district high street objectives in future.

Spend

As of March 2025, £1,279,689 is forecast to be spent across all district centre and flexible fund projects, resulting in forecast project underspend of 9%. Eight projects are forecast to complete within budget. One has completed with a £300 overspend (Harborough Avenue) and Middlewood is forecasting a £4,467 overspend. The largest forecasted underspend will be for Spital Hill (£29,180), London Road (£26,515) and Westfield (£19,968). Across the total programme budget, a £341,198 underspend is forecast (14%).

The largest proportion of spend was on events (26%) and street art (21%). District project manager salaries constituted 18% of overall spend. A 15% cap was originally set for salary costs, but this was exceeded because of further project management support required following project extensions. The largest underspends are attributed to unallocated match funding (£174,087) and district centre (£111,387) cost lines. The largest overspend is attributed to Business Information Officer fees (£20,272).

Outputs

Output delivery has been strong. Output monitoring has been effective with appropriate mitigation/contingency actions where outputs have been at risk. The monitoring and reporting processes have been flexible and projects have been able to adapt the scope of delivery plans. It is important to note that across both rounds of ERF delivery, and across projects, there has been some variation in the way outputs have been measured and counted. This must be considered when assessing performance of each project against contracted targets. However, as of March 2025, the key output headlines are as follows:

- Round Two of ERF has delivered 495 interventions across the city with a further 89 forecast.
- 92% of the targeted outputs have been delivered to date with a final forecast of 108%.
- Targets have been exceeded for three activity areas, including greening (137%), events (104%) and street scene improvements (102%). The largest number of interventions/outputs were for street scene improvements (201).

Resident experience

There were 232 respondents to the resident survey. As Figure 5.1 shows the respondents largely came from five areas of the city (Crookes, Greenhill, Stannington, Firth Park and Ecclesfield); though attempts were made to disseminate the questionnaire in other ways, this geographic weighting reflects where the Kada team were stationed physically. The key headlines from the resident survey were as follows:

- Residents value their district centres. 88% of survey respondents believe that it has something to offer them.
- 73% of respondents use their district centres at least two or three times a week.
- 72% of respondents were aware of ERF funded street scene improvements.
- 36% of respondents had increased the frequency of their district centre visits in the last year.
- 65% stated that their perceptions of their district centre had improved in the last year.
- 57% want to see a continuation of community events, 46% want more greenery and 34% more public art.

Business experience

There were 25 responses to the business survey. 50% of respondents had been directly involved in ERF activity. Respondents made frequent references to the community benefits of ERF and the passion and drive of the project teams. Business identified improved perceptions of events, district high streets and their surroundings, and collaborative activity (see Figure 6.2) but they were less likely to identify tangible turnover impacts. Very few businesses identified ERF activity with sustained increased turnover.

Businesses would like to see continued marketing activity, district centre awareness raising and ongoing collaborative work focused on encouraging district centre usage. They identified increased support with keeping centres clean, attractive and safe as key priorities and they would like attention focused on increasing rubbish collection, local police presence and public transport usage alongside further support with parking.

Delivery, management and governance

The changes made to ERF management and delivery processes for Round Two following recommendations and learnings from Round One were well received. These focused on streamlining administrative processes, providing enhanced project management capacity, and balancing robust

processes with making the programme open and accessible to those with limited previous project management experience.

Considerable time was still required to build and sustain the partnership approach on which ERF depends. A wide range of organisations and individuals have been involved in delivering the ERF programme in various different roles. Amongst those leading local centre activity, project delivery experiences varied. Previous experience, project management expertise and the strength and involvement of pre-existing community and business groups were critical success factors for supporting successful delivery. Support and guidance from the ERF Programme Team was also recognised as vital in facilitating delivery of ERF activity. First time project leads found the list of potential interventions and the project management guidance that sat within a 'library of resources' provided to all applicants and participants, helpful.

Project leads with smaller project teams and/or in areas with limited pre-existing community infrastructure found management and delivery more challenging. Delivery of hyperlocal activities is challenging in areas with limited/no mature community and business representation infrastructure. In this context the use of paid support are supportive measures but in these cases there are concerns about whether ERF activity alone will create enough infrastructure to ensure ongoing delivery and impacts.

Project leads were very positive about the support they received from the ERF Programme Team praising them for their diligent, flexible and conscientious approach.

The partnership approach undertaken by ERF provides lessons for future community and local business empowerment work. Project leads reported that community engagement was easier to secure where long standing community organisations, engagement initiatives and strong relationships already existed. Securing partnership involvement from businesses and the creation of new business forums was time consuming and challenging. It was made easier where Business Information Officers had an established relationship or there were tangible shop improvements offered. The use of supporting steering groups varied. Future business engagement activity should reflect local business operational pressures, lack of time and the importance of long-term trusted relationships.

Unsuccessful applicants also raised concerns about areas not receiving funding when other areas had received two rounds of funding. The redistribution of some funds to the LACs for similar smaller scale projects in unsuccessful areas was an effective means of mitigating some of these concerns and a good means of providing project management experience.

Monitoring and compliance specialist were well deployed to ensure project teams got the full support and guidance they required to manage the public funds effectively and robustly. Where there was a risk of slippage the ERF Programme Team worked effectively with Steering Group input to put in place contingency plans or to rescope outputs. The Steering Group provided invaluable steer to the ERF Programme Team and made recommendations to the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee, ensuring a clear link into and oversight of the Council's formal governance structures. The contribution of private sector and community representatives brought a well-received widening of expertise and experience.

There is a forecast programme underspend in the region of £341,000. The ERF Programme Team are working with the Steering Group, Councillors and Senior Officers to repurpose these funds and ensure a strong legacy for the Programme.

Impact

Project leads reported a wide range of outcomes and impacts from ERF activity that have helped to support key City Goals. New community groups were formed and constituted, a large programme of events was organised and undertaken, new street infrastructure was installed, public art work was created, and local marketing materials were created.

The ERF programme has made tangible improvements to the district centres and stimulated a wide variety of well received community actions and activities. It has helped to foster, consolidate and deepen community networks. It has provided the opportunity, and an incentive for, community and business collaboration and an outlet for their thoughts, ideas and challenges.

Communities value ERF activities and their impacts. They see it as a sign that the Council and community partners care about their areas and are willing to take steps to support the health of their district centres.

In the case of areas such as Hillsborough, Abbeydale Road, Ecclesfield and Spital Hill business-led community groups have been created.¹ They will provide a strong addition to community infrastructure and an additional means by which local improvements can be delivered although this will require continued access to funding opportunities and ongoing external support.

The bottom-up community led approach is a key strength of ERF. Local businesses and communities appreciate the opportunity it has given for them to develop creative, diverse and innovative ideas for local improvements. ERF activity has catalysed community action, increased local capacity and infrastructure and upskilled volunteers across Sheffield.

It is very hard to quantify ERF's impact on footfall. The level of funding and small-scale nature of the interventions mean that it was not going to have significant sustained economic impact. Consultees emphasise the positive impact it has had on local perceptions of their district centres and on challenging the perceived cycle of decline facing many district centres. It has raised aspirations on what can be achieved through Council supported collaborative action.

Legacy

ERF activity has created a foundation upon which further community/district work can be undertaken and future impacts realised. It has fostered networks, collaborations and relationships and, in many cases, developed new ones. It has highlighted a clear appetite for local activity and ongoing investment in district centres. This ongoing activity is reliant on partnership work, business/community collaboration and project management expertise.

It has inspired conversation about how activity could be sustained continuing to develop local experience and expertise. Stakeholders widely acknowledged that local businesses must work together

¹ London Road Business Hub is also currently being formalised.

evolving their activity and increasing local awareness. It has also been a means by which communities can develop their own infrastructure and assets.

Stronger community partnership working and relationships will be a clear legacy of ERF. Maintaining, deepening and extending these partnerships is seen as vital to ensuring long-term impact but it is also regarded as challenging.

The Local Area Committees are well placed for supporting with future activity as they are increasingly embedded within the localities with the requisite relationships, understanding and Council links but there are concerns about limited capacity, resources and links to local businesses. The Business Information Officers are regarded as a pivotal resource for maintaining strong relationships with local businesses but there are also concerns about their capacity and whether facilitating collaborative activity is central to their role, as opposed to 1-1 business support.

ERF has shown that local businesses and the community can collaborate well on mutually beneficial activities, but this can be constrained by a limited volunteer and local business capacity/agency to maintain and improve infrastructure, event calendars and public realm improvements.

Lessons learned

Project delivery capacity is an issue particularly in areas with limited pre-existing community infrastructure. Voluntary support and community infrastructure continues to be strongest in the areas where district centre support need is lower. There is also a danger of overreliance on small groups of volunteers. Despite the increased level of support provided in Round Two, concerns remain about the amount of work required to deliver projects directly.

Where project management experience was limited project teams were heavily reliant upon officer support. Limited expertise and experience can lead to unrealistic expectations of what is achievable with public funds.

Holding outside community events in winter is challenging and very risky because of the potential of poor weather reducing attendance figures or leading to cancellation. Where events are new to a community substantial amount of marketing and awareness raising is required to ensure good attendance levels. Confirming land ownership can delay work and gaining the necessary permissions for work can be difficult.

Concerns were raised about how activity will continue and be sustained post ERF. Stakeholders suggest that continued work could be done to signpost community teams towards other funding opportunities.

ERF activity did not have the reach or funds required to deal with the systemic issues that local high streets face. These macro-economic factors are outside the scope of ERF's influence. Therefore, impacts on metrics such as turnover and business survival will always be limited. Ongoing dialogue and communication with local businesses can be key to their long-term survival and to perceptions of Sheffield City Council support.

Within a context of multiple economic factors affecting business performance and limited data measuring the exact economic impact of district centre activity is very challenging. The use of incentives and easily accessible online surveys increased response rates. The use of improved perception questions also partly mitigated the impact of having no baseline data.

Social value impact assessment

When undertaking the impact assessment, we have had to consider the availability and accessibility of local district centre data. Very limited pre-existing baseline district level data made quantifying economic impact challenging. Disentangling the impact of ERF2 activity with general trends in localities and other key macroeconomic contributing factors is also very challenging. The business and resident surveys both attempted to mitigate these challenges by asking questions about changed behaviour and perceptions (post ERF activity) but responses lacked specificity. We therefore decided to undertake a social value impact assessment which quantifies the wider benefits of ERF2 activity on community organisations, residents and neighbourhoods. We used the Social Value Engine to quantify these.

Using this model we estimate that the social value impact of that ERF activity as follows:

- Community organisations impact = **£42,445**
- Impact upon individuals = **£1,690,597**
- Neighbourhood impact = **£5,670,432**
- Total social value impact = **£7,403,474**

This results in a **social return on investment of 3.6:1** (£3.60 for every £1 invested). This represents 'high' value for money, in line with DLUHC Appraisal Guidance² and indicates that the project has been successful in generating social value impact for Sheffield.

ERF Round 1 saw benefit-cost ratio range of between 1.99:1 and 2.24:1, or a return on investment of between £1.99 and £2.24 per every £1 spent consistent with a similar model and utilisation of the Social Value Engine. ERF Round 2 has seen better performance on social value impacts generated in comparison to Round 1.

Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are outlined in Chapter 10.

² [DLUHC Appraisal Guide](#)

As of February 2025 Round Two of the ERF has delivered:



208

improvements to the local street scene



50

community events



49

street art installations



37

new planters, trees or additional planting programmes



12

district centre marketing campaigns



10

banner installation programmes



4

business forums created



4

area maps created highlighting local shops and features



3

Christmas light installation programmes



3

shopfront improvement schemes



2

heritage/waymarked trails created



1

anti-littering campaign

1 Introduction

Kada Research were commissioned by Sheffield City Council in June 2024 to undertake an evaluation of the second round of the Economic Recovery Fund (ERF). This report provides the evaluation findings, informed by primary research with residents, businesses, project leads and stakeholders. The report sets out the benefits and impacts delivered by ERF Round 2 and provides recommendations for future programmes.

1.1 Introduction and aims

The Economic Recovery Fund (ERF) is a grant fund aimed at supporting district high streets, local centres and communities within Sheffield. It aims to encourage more residents to spend time and money in their local area, driving up footfall and supporting local economic growth. Initially introduced to re-energise local high streets as part of the city's Covid Business Recovery Plan, the second round of ERF has Continued support for high street renewal and regeneration.

The key objectives of ERF Round 2 were:

- To help build the foundations for economic renewal across Sheffield by investing in communities and high streets, helping to build resilience to the cost-of-living crisis and future economic challenges.
- To make high streets and local centres feel safe and welcoming, so that residents want to spend time and shop there.
- To encourage businesses and groups to work together on ideas to improve their high streets and bring new energy to those that already are.
- To support high street businesses to work with their communities and leave a legacy of community infrastructure that can continue to thrive once projects are complete.

Following the success of ERF Round 1 in 2021 to 2022, £2m of Council funding was provided for Round 2, to run from 2023 to 2024. The funding was split into two pots: the District Centre Fund (for projects involving one or several high street areas) and the Flexible Fund (for projects with a broader focus). A £260k Match Fund pot was also created, intended to be used by SCC to lever in other funding aligned to business and high street benefit.

1.2 Application process and activities

The application process was open to local constituted community or business representative groups and ran between February and May 2023, with scoring undertaken between June and August 2023. In September 2023 the proposed programmes were approved by the Finance Committee. First time applicants were able request funding from either pot but previous beneficiaries were limited to applying from the Flexible Fund with a £50,000 cap (to ensure a wider group of beneficiaries benefited from the District Centre Fund). The bid process required them to provide detail of the project team and lead organisation; a costed package of interventions which could be delivered within a year; and demonstrate how they represented the interests of and had support from local businesses. The Council's ERF Programme team provided an Application Development Worker from a small team brought together specifically for this purpose, to support project applicants where required and

connect them to a Business Information Officer already allocated to and working with businesses in their area. Updates on the pipeline were regularly provided to the Local Area Committee Team and the ERF Steering Group.³ The programme was formally approved by Finance Committee in September 2023, following which contracts with lead organisations were awarded between the September 2023 and February 2024, with delivery broadly beginning in December 2023⁴. Twenty-three projects were approved across the city with a wide range of activity planned (see Chapter 3). Key activities included:

- Improved branding and marketing
- Public realm and street scene improvements
- Holding events and markets
- Provision of more green, community spaces
- Opening new trails and footpaths
- More street art and murals
- Improved signage
- Improvements to car parks
- Introduction of business and trade forums

Project activities were planned to conclude and all outputs to be delivered by Autumn 2024. However, following some slippage in delivery extensions were granted to the end of December 2024 and into the first quarter of 2025, to allow the completion of as much activity as possible with the allocated funding.

1.3 Outcomes and impacts

The planned impacts from the ERF activity were as follows:

- Improved perception of local space/community
- Improved perception of the council
- Pride of place
- Increased value residents put on living in a good place/neighbourhood
- Increased footfall and local spend over time
- Create a community/local legacy
- Improved awareness of what centres can offer
- People enabled to fully participate in their community
- Increased capability of local people to have a say over decisions
- Building a strong voluntary and community centre through strengthening of community organisations and projects.

1.4 Evaluation aims and approach

The aims set for the evaluation were:

- To assess the delivery, management, outputs, outcomes and impacts of ERF Round 2 activity against those intended.
- To investigate what impact ERF has had on perceptions of Sheffield City Council and whether the programme has contributed to local cohesion.
- To provide wider examples of high street and place making policies and initiatives, outlining relevant examples and case studies of other programmes aimed at local economic growth.

³ The Local Area Committees were introduced in 2021. There are seven covering all Sheffield wards. They have certain devolved responsibilities and decision-making powers with a remit focused on empowering localities.

⁴ The three projects that required an accountable body appointing for them were the last to start in March 2024

- Consider the purpose, shape and form that future funding could take.

Once it became clear that there would be no funds for a successor programme the decision was taken to invest more resource in the primary research and to change the final evaluation aim to considering how best to maintain and deepen the legacy of the programme through SCC supporting activity.

The evaluation approach has involved:

- A desk review of key policies, documentation and reporting information.
- Stakeholder discussions with leading SCC officers, project leads, Business Information Officers, Councillors and members of the Steering Group.
- Primary research in the form of resident and business surveys
- A social value economic impact assessment
- Presentation of key findings and Q&A sessions with the Steering Group, Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee and with project leads and stakeholders at the celebration event.

1.5 Evaluation challenges

Based on lessons learnt from the Round One evaluation, the processes and tools used for the primary research were revised. An updated, easy to complete resident survey was created with an emphasis on district centre usage and perceptions of the impact of ERF activity (and how they have changed in the last year). An incentive was offered for completion and a QR code was shared at ERF events and via Sheffield City Council's online platform. This led to a good number of responses (232); however these were geographically concentrated around the events attended by the evaluation team, at which the survey was promoted (Crookes, Stannington, Greenhill, Firth Park and Ecclesfield).

There are a number of challenges associated with estimating the impact of ERF. For some metrics, e.g. footfall, business turnover levels, there is very limited baseline or monitoring information, which means it is hard to establish a 'before' and 'after' position. There are also a variety of other factors which will have contributed to change in each district centre over the same period as ERF Round 2 has been delivered, such as inflation/cost-of-living pressures and changing shopping habits.

The business and resident surveys attempted to address these challenges by asking questions about changed behaviour and perceptions (post ERF activity). Whilst this



provides an indication of change linked to ERF, it does not provide evidence of the scale of change experienced.

As a result of limited data and attribution challenges, the impact assessment focuses on the social value of ERF2 activity. This is not a traditional economic assessment but instead models and quantifies the wider benefits of ERF2 activity on community organisations, residents and neighbourhoods.

2 Strategic context and rationale

The ERF programme has been delivered within and strongly aligns with a wider context of national and local government efforts to empower local communities to lead decision making on policies that best reflect local need. There is a strong rationale for continuing with many of the ways of working developed and implemented through the ERF programme.

2.1 ERF Round 1

In 2021, in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, Sheffield City Council developed its Business Recovery Plan. This included the Economic Recovery Fund Round 1 (ERF1) which provided funding of £2m to encourage a post Covid return to district centres. The ERF1 was responding to what the World Bank described as the 'largest economic crisis in more than a century' as national GDP decreased by 25% between February and April 2020. Retail sales saw the largest recorded annual fall, with retail centres losing 33 weeks of sales. Whilst footfall rates in local centres recovered relatively quickly, vacancy rates, limited accessibility, limited daytime vibrancy and poor environmental quality remain as key challenges to their long-term viability. To respond to this the ERF Round 1 had four key objectives:

- To support local economic recovery by helping local businesses and hospitality centres to rebuild and grow following the pandemic.
- To help local businesses to safely reopen as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were lifted and to help them to build resilience to future economic challenges.
- To protect local jobs and businesses, especially in the sectors that were most affected by the pandemic.
- To generate demand and bring back customers and increase customer confidence – encouraging them to shop locally and at independent stores.

The evaluation of ERF Round 1 (undertaken by Kada Research between July 2022 and November 2022) highlighted positive feedback from stakeholders, positive media coverage, and a net social return of between £1.99 and £2.24 for every £1 spent. This success, together with on-going challenges facing district centres, led to further council funding being allocated to ERF Round 2.

2.2 Wider policy context

The objectives of ERF Round 2 align strongly with policy priorities both nationally and locally, including responding to the challenges facing high streets and the increasing adoption of hyper-local approaches to strengthen places and communities.

Future High Street Fund

The Future High Streets Fund (FHFSF) supports the diversification of high streets in response to changing consumer demands and the challenges of being dependent on retail. This need became more urgent as the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated long-term changes in how high streets are used. Sheffield City Council bid for funds to support with three major projects for the city centre. The introduction of the Future High Streets Fund reflected the importance people place on the condition of their high street, and the impact it has on perceptions of place and the pride people have in their area. ERF Round 2

can be seen as a hyper-local version of FHSF, recognising that local centres have a similar impact on perceptions and wellbeing, and providing a place-based mechanism to enable communities and businesses in Sheffield to address the specific issues affecting their area.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

A place-based approach is also evident in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, launched by the former Conservative government in 2022 to support their Levelling Up commitment. UKSPF provides locally administered funding for three priority areas: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills. It was designed as a flexible fund that could be adapted to meet local needs, with many areas delivering programmes that support local communities, business, facilities and district centres (particularly via the communities and place and supporting local business priorities). UKSPF programmes are expected to deliver outcomes including improved perceptions of place/community, improved perceptions of events and increased footfall – closely mirroring the activities supported through ERF Round 2. Two notable examples are the use of UKSPF funds in Kirklees to support the development of district centre masterplans and safe & inclusive high streets and the use of UKSPF funds in South & East Lincolnshire to support Christmas lights installation and heritage led high street regeneration.

The English Devolution White Paper

The national policy priority of increasing community involvement in designing and delivering improvements to local places has continued despite the change in Government. The English Devolution White Paper, published by the Labour Government in December 2024, outlines plans for wider and deeper devolution across England. It also sets out how the Government intends to reform local government, including a commitment to providing communities with the resources to lead change within their local areas.

The Locality Manifesto and community ownership

Locality – the national membership network which supports local community organisations to be strong and successful – strongly supports this commitment in the White Paper. The recently published Locality Manifesto⁵ exemplifies growing national calls for increased community power. It argues for a devolution of powers down to communities with a focus on empowering residents and business owners to find innovative bespoke ways of overcoming local issues. It calls for the use of community anchor organisations to help shape and deliver local services and help tackle broader social issues, with local authorities incentivised to work in partnership with communities: facilitating and deepening networks and allocating funds to those most able to bring impact⁶.

These ideas are reflected in the rationale for ERF which aims to encourage businesses and community groups to work together to develop and deliver ideas to improve their local centre and re-energise community engagement.

2.3 Local policy context

In parallel with national commitments to community engagement and empowerment, the importance of place and community to the city's residents and businesses is also recognised locally.

Local Area Committees

⁵ Locality, [Building Thriving Neighbourhoods: The Locality Manifesto](#), 2024

⁶ Community Ownership Commission, [Unleashing Community Ownership](#), 2024

There are seven Local Area Committees (LACs) across Sheffield each one representing four wards. They were established in 2021 following recommendations contained in the Empowering Communities report (March 2021). It proposed the creation of the LACs as a means of engaging, enabling and empowering⁷ Sheffield's localities through the devolving of certain responsibilities and decision-making powers. They are made up of the elected ward members and they work with local residents, businesses and community groups to discuss how their resources are best deployed within their local areas. Each LAC has established a set of priorities and ways of working to achieve their goals. ERF's genesis predates the establishment of the LACs slightly and as a result, the programme has developed in parallel to the LACs and their programme of work.

Sheffield City Goals⁸

Since ERF Round 2 began, Sheffield's residents, businesses, partners and stakeholders have come together to co-design the Sheffield City Goals, which reflect shared hopes and ambitions for the city. The 18 City Goals are grounded in people, places and spaces. This place-based approach to development aims to create a welcoming, flourishing and prospering city with 'enriched communities', 'strong positive relationships' and fulfilled residents. The goals are split into six key areas: a creative and entrepreneurial Sheffield, a green and resilient Sheffield, a Sheffield of thriving communities, a connected Sheffield, a caring and safe Sheffield, and finally, a Sheffield for all generations.

The goals were informed by quantitative and qualitative research to understand resident and business' ambitions for their city. A key finding from the qualitative research was that "communities need a chance, and the right support, to be heard, to take actions, and to lead" and "initiatives that are genuinely community-led can help build cohesion". In line with the ERF approach, the consultation highlighted the increased use of the Local Area Committees (LACs) working with local talent and business to reinvigorate local high streets and encouraging community leads to get involved in the decision-making process. One theme highlighted through the consultation was the importance of a more inclusive approach to regeneration ensuring that all voices are heard and allowing communities to ensure that decisions reflect local need

Sheffield City Council Plan 2024-2028⁹

The Sheffield City Council Plan is grounded in three key themes: people, prosperity, and planet. It commits the Council to listen working with residents in order to maximise community assets, unlock potential and create new opportunities. It prioritises long-term sustainable growth.

The Plan provides support for many of the ERF objectives and the programme's approach. It contains five strategic outcomes including a commitment to delivering "*great neighbourhoods that that people are happy to call home*" and ensuring that "*people [will] live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing*". It emphasises the importance of access to high quality, accessible, well maintained green spaces, clean and safe neighbourhood streets and excellent active travel options. It outlines how the Council will work closely with LACs to ensure that high streets are vibrant and welcoming. It also emphasises how they will work collaboratively with communities and community organisations empowering them to improve local opportunities, wellbeing and facilities.

⁷ Sheffield City Council, [Empowering Communities](#), 2021

⁸ Sheffield City Council, [Sheffield City Goals](#), 2024

⁹ Sheffield City Council, [Outcomes](#), 2024

Sheffield Growth Plan 2025-2035

Published in December 2024, the Sheffield Growth Plan outlines the Council's plans, strategies and activities for achieving economic growth and higher living standards¹⁰. It contains a commitment to 'energising and animating' every community and neighbourhood, empowering and supporting them to deliver economic and social impacts in their area. It makes specific reference to the Economic Recovery Fund as an example of unique and innovative Council activity that supports community empowerment, neighbourhood development and local recovery through business and community collaboration.

Communities Strategy

Sheffield City Council are currently working with residents and the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to develop a new Communities Strategy. This aims to place communities at the centre of all elements of Council work and activity. It is looking to provide a single framework and a co-ordinated approach to working in and with communities including areas such as safety, service delivery, engagement, community development and decision making.

Rationale for ERF Round 2

ERF Round 2 has therefore been delivered within a national and local policy context that is increasingly focused on hyper local approaches. Both national and local government have committed to policies that empower local people to prioritise, shape and (in some cases) deliver interventions that they believe best address local need.

Stakeholders consulted for the evaluation agreed that the rationale for the ERF has evolved over time: from a short-term intervention encouraging a return to the high street and demonstrating that the Council was responding to the immediate impacts of the pandemic, to a more nuanced understanding of the role that local centres play in people's perceptions of the city and how this contributes both to wellbeing and pride in place, and creating the conditions for wider economic growth.

Other factors have continued to influence ERF since its inception notably the creation of the LACs and the expanded role of community anchors, groups and organisations. Stakeholders agree that ERF has evolved to embrace wider collaborative community initiatives whilst retaining its commitment to supporting local businesses/high streets through addressing interconnected challenges.

The rationale for supporting and strengthening local centres, and working with communities and businesses to do so, is therefore now widely accepted. This rationale has been embedded in the goals adopted by the city's partners, the Council's strategic growth document and its ways of working. ERF has been a pioneering programme but as it concludes ongoing thought needs to be given to where any successor programme/continued activity best sits within Sheffield City Council structures. There is an ongoing risk that a future reliance on community infrastructure could dilute the focus on local business/high street support.

The remainder of this evaluation report considers the lessons learned from how ERF Round 2 was delivered and what guidance these provide for addressing the ERF objectives in future. As the Council moves into the next phases of budgetary and strategic decision making, the newly adopted Growth Plan begins to be implemented, and the role of the Local Area Committees continues to develop, the learning from ERF Round 2 can guide future approaches, in a context where ring-fenced funding for local centres may no longer be available.

¹⁰ Sheffield City Council. [Sheffield's Growth Plan 2025-2035](#).

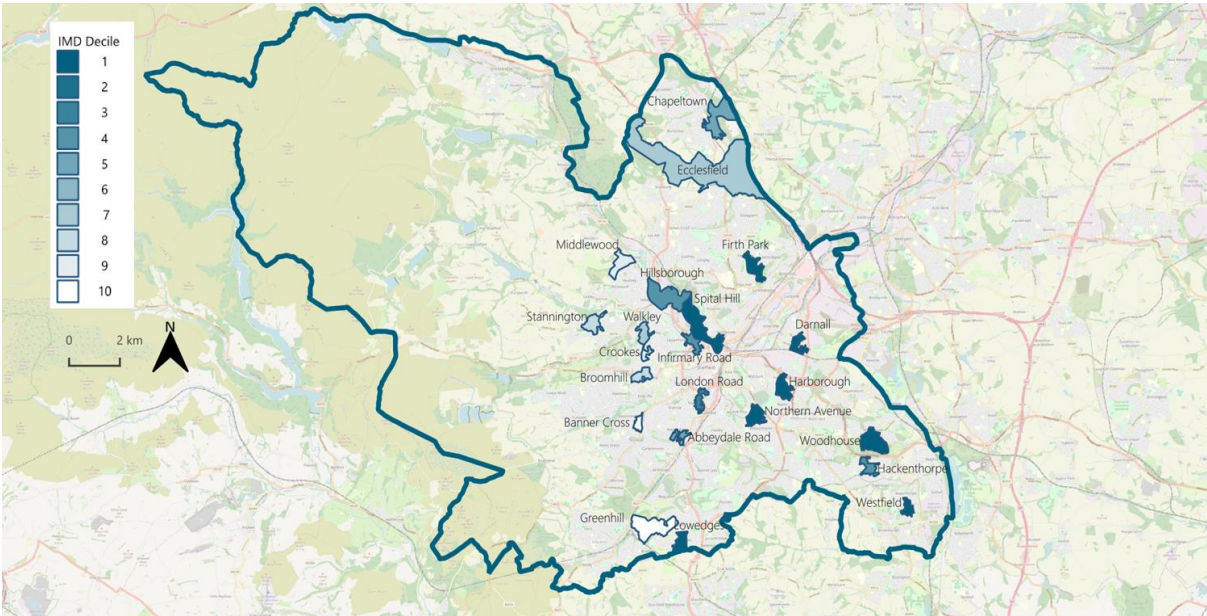
3 ERF Round 2 activity

Through ERF Round 2, 23 projects have been delivered across the city. The geography of ERF activity reflects the Sheffield’s demographic and socio-economic diversity, with projects concentrated in the city’s more deprived neighbourhoods. Activity was predominantly led by community groups or anchor organisations, supported by the Council’s ERF Programme Team. It has been overseen by a Steering Group including senior Members, senior Council Officers and private and community sector representatives.

3.1 Project locations

Figure 3-1 shows the locations of ERF Round 2 activity and the neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area or LSOA) in which each is situated. Each LSOA is shaded to display the relative deprivation of the area, with the darker shading illustrating higher levels of deprivation. The map highlights the significant inequality in the city, with the LSOAs in the east of the city being more deprived than those in the south west. Six of the ERF Round 2 areas are amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England, while two are within the least deprived 10%.

Figure 3-1 – ERF Round 2 Funded Areas and their respective LSOAs and IMD Rank



Source: Kada Analysis, IMD 2019

One-third of the areas receiving Round 2 funding also received funding through ERF Round 1. It was intended that this follow-up funding would contribute towards reducing inequalities between communities in Sheffield, whilst helping places to continue the long-term recovery from Covid-19. Districts that had benefited from larger grants of up to £200,000 in ERF Round 1 (including Firth Park,

Hillsborough, Broomhill and Walkley) were able to bid for up to £50,000 within the Flexible Fund, so as to provide new areas with the opportunity to apply via the District Fund.

3.2 Project teams

Project teams typically consisted of a core team, lead organisation and an assigned Business Information Officer. Core teams usually included a project lead, who was responsible for overseeing and delivering the project, and a supporting team member such as a treasurer. Lead organisations entered into a contract with the Council to deliver the project and were responsible for the project budget. They were usually independent organisations such as voluntary or community sector organisations.

Figure 3-2 Project lead organisations

Project	Lead Organisation
Banner Cross	SYCF (South Yorkshire Community Foundation)
Choose Chapeltown	SOAR Community Charity
Connecting Stannington	Rivelin Co.
Crookes Collective	Crookes Forum
Discover Darnall	Darnall Wellbeing
Ecclesfield High Street	SOAR Community Charity
Family Friendly Firth Park	Friends of Firth Park
Growing Greenhill	Greener Greenhill
Hackenthorpe Traders Connect	SYCF (South Yorkshire Community Foundation)
Harborough Avenue	Manor Castle Development Trust
Hillsborough Together	Hillsborough Together
Independent Abbeydale	Creative Arts Development Space (CADS)
It's All About Broomhill	Broomhill Independent Traders Association
London Road	SYCF (South Yorkshire Community Foundation)
Lowedges Boost	Greener Greenhill
Middlewood	Hillsborough Together
Next Stop Infirmary Road	Zest Community Charity
Northern Avenue	Manor Castle Development Trust
Revive Woodhouse 2	Norfolk Park TARA (Tenants & Residents Association)
Spital Hill	Friends of Abbeyfield Park
Walkley Working	Zest Community Charity
Westfield Matters	BVDT (Beighton Villages Development Trust); Westfield Big Local

Source: ERF Contacts Directory

3.3 Project summaries

The key activity delivered by each ERF Round 2 project is summarised below:

Abbeydale Road

The project team 'Independent Abbeydale' focused on providing the area with a fresh new identity with interventions including improvements to the public realm (including new benches, bin wrapping, banners and noticeboards) and shutter art for shop fronts as well as a new, prominent wall mural. A programme of events has been established including an Autumn and Spring market, and a marketing campaign including lamppost banners and bin wraps. This marketing campaign looked to provide the

area with a new identity moving away from the longstanding “Antiques Quarter” focus. Independent Abbeydale stickers have been distributed to over 100 local businesses and a loyalty scheme was undertaken. The newly constituted and formalised Abbeydale Traders Association now has over 100 members.

Banner Cross

The Banner Cross project team aimed to bring new life to their high street increasing local perceptions of civic pride. They sought to give the area a new identity running marketing activity focused on rebranding. Interventions included public realm improvements including new benches and lamppost banners. New street trees have also been funded by ERF to help green the area and Christmas and Easter activity trails were designed to encourage footfall on the high street and use of the local independent businesses.

Broomhill

Following a Round 1 project that included a wide-ranging shopfront improvement programme and the installation of a living wall the Broomhill project team continued street greening and public realm improvements in Round 2. These improvements included continuing to improve more shop fronts, changing the festive and regular banners, delivering a Christmas scheme of shop front trees and lights, a summer and winter planting scheme alongside a refreshed look and feel for the website. Noticeboards to house a map of the precinct and local information are forthcoming in Spring 2025.

Chapelton

The Choose Chapelton project team followed up their Round 1 project with a small events programme including a D-Day remembrance and celebration event, a marketing campaign (refreshing the map produced in Round 1 and creating new leaflets promoting the area), new signposts to support wayfinding and the installation of several new orienteering trails. The orienteering trails were created in partnership with the South Yorkshire Orienteering (SYO) following feedback from successful Round 1 activity. The precinct trail completed in the first round had proven popular with residents but there was a sense that activity should now be focused on older children and young adults. The trail will be launched in two small, family-focused taster events preceding an international orienteering competition (the JK25) that will partially be held in Chapelton and regular events will follow. Orienteering events regularly attract over three hundred competitors and the project team have confidence that this will help them to attract large numbers of people into the area on a regular basis, which it is hoped will support the local businesses.

Crookes

The Crookes Collective project team created a new community garden and a new orchard, and a programme of public realm improvements including new bins, benches, and planters. They accompanied this with a programme of innovative events including an outdoor cinema, Festival of Crookes and summer fete. These activities were supported by a marketing campaign that included new branding and an increased social media presence. Their street art project and a final Easter event is planned for Spring 2025.

Darnall

The ‘Discover Darnall’ project team wanted to make a destination for other Sheffield residents with interventions including public realm improvements (planting and new bins and benches), bespoke murals and artwork, a celebratory event and an anti-litter campaign. They have also worked to

communicate the offer to local residents through the Community Connector publication and a business directory showcasing the broad offer of local independents.

Ecclesfield

The Ecclesfield project team focused on rebranding the high street and increasing resident dwell time through the creation of new heritage trails, public realm improvements and a market events programme. They have created a steering committee and constituted and formalised a new trader forum to ensure a programme legacy and ongoing activity. A D-Day remembrance event was held in 2024 as well as Halloween and Christmas trails. The D-Day event was accompanied by a ration book voucher scheme that provided incentives to use local shops; the Christmas event was promoted with a 'penny magazine' style publication providing offers and incentives. The branding has been centred on the slogan 'Buy Ecc' with associated tote bags, banners and a promotional campaign. A heritage trail is forthcoming in Spring 2025.

Firth Park

The team planned to use their funding to plant trees on the central roundabout. They extended the programme of shutter art started in Round 1, as well as run an events programme including community market events as part of 'Family Friendly Firth Park'. This followed up on the well-received public realm improvements and events delivered under ERF Round 1.

Greenhill

The Greener Greenhill project focused on public realm improvements (planting schemes and public art and sculptures) designed to make the district centre more inviting, increasing footfall and dwell time. They also planned an accompanying promotional campaign, including social media activity, a loyalty card scheme and flyer production/distribution, encouraging people to explore the area. Small events were delivered at Christmas alongside continuous engagement with the local businesses.

Hackenthorpe

The Hackenthorpe team focused on small public realm improvements including new banners, benches and planters. These were both to improve the look of the area and provide seating where there was none, but also to discourage problematic and dangerous parking. The installation of festive lighting and shutter art helped to brighten and lift the area and was very well received by the general public.

Harborough Avenue

The Harborough Avenue project team wanted to bring new life to the district centre with an events programme, public art, public realm improvements (including new banners and signage), the installation of Christmas lighting and shop shared door improvements through colourful artwork.

Hillsborough

The Hillsborough team wanted to follow up their Round 1 project with further events (particularly at the main festive periods, in partnership with the Middlewood project). They ran an extension to the shop front improvement and shutter art programmes, and a series of business workshops. The business forum, Hillsborough Together, was able to cement its position as the focus for engagement and action.

Infirmary Road

The 'Next Stop Infirmary Road' project aimed to engage local traders with an emphasis on making sustainable positive changes to the area. These included shop front improvements and shutter art, street trees and new signage.



London Road

The London Road project team focused on the creation of a new collective identity with new welcome signs, banners, bin wraps and a mural for the Alderson Road car park. The mural was unveiled in December 2024 and a celebratory event is planned for Eid in April 2025. The street art/mural commission was given to the internationally recognised street artist Peachzz. Her piece contains birds that are native to many of the countries to which London Road residents have heritage. A shopfront improvement scheme has been accompanied by the distribution of graffiti removal packages via a borrow bank that local businesses can access. Greening of the Alderson Road car park is planned for Spring 2025. The London Road Business Hub are also in the process of formalising their organisation, with the ambition of continuing their activities in the future.

Lowedges

The Lowedges Boost project planned to install new double bins and benches to their district centre and improving the aesthetic with a painting and graffiti clean-up programme. Other public realm improvements included new benches, vibrant and extensive shutter artwork in one theme across the parade and a new noticeboard.

Middlewood

The Middlewood project team wanted to make their high street a destination for local people with a series of public realm improvements (new benches, bins, planters and banners), shop front improvements and shutter art installations. A joint Christmas event was held in partnership with Hillsborough in 2023 and 2024.

Newfield Green and Gaunt Precinct (Gleadless Valley)

Sheffield City Council's Gleadless Valley Regeneration Team led the delivery of small projects in two small retail areas. The projects focused on the visual improvement of the area through: new seating, improved green spaces, new signage, play markers, Luke Horton designed bin wraps and new public art was commissioned. There was also a small-scale series of events and litter-picking activities. The Newfield project has been put on hold due to land ownership issues.

Northern Avenue

Christmas lights were installed with a community switch on event involving local businesses and school children. Public art and new banners were installed with positive feedback received. A youth engagement programme was commissioned to try and encourage young people to change their perceptions of and engage with the business area. They were invited to create music and inform the designs of the mural that was commissioned by a local artist.

Spital Hill

Following a Round 1 project a new project team applied for funding in Round 2 to build on the initial interventions. This round of activity focused on working with local businesses and young people on littering and environment improvement work. Designs and artwork by local children inspired new bins wraps in the area. A "clean business is good business" campaign was run with businesses provided with kits for cleaning and maintaining the areas outside their premises. A women in business training programme was also run to support independent female traders in the area with their marketing and promotion, by providing digital equipment and an upskilling programme. A vibrant event was delivered in September 2024 that features a 'souk inspired market' and fashion show by acclaimed and upcoming designer from the local area, Kazna Asker. Premises were rented for the event at a central point on the high street which have served as a hub for the Spital Hill Network, a newly constituted group.

Stannington

The Connecting Stannington project aimed to bring locals and visitors to the high street through a promotional campaign and two events (one festive event and one summer event). Shop front improvements, green space improvement, new benches and bike racks were installed to improve the environment and increase dwell time. A creative map of the local area was created by a local artist which will be distributed to 5,000 local residents. Three pieces of street art (one for each retail area) have been commissioned and are due to be installed in Spring 2025.

Walkley

The Walkley project team followed up their Round 1 work with an application for Round 2 funding focused on delivering shop front improvements, public art installations, additional market style events and further support for the Walkley Festival. This was accompanied by a planned marketing and promotion scheme with leaflet drops and increased social media presence. As a direct result of these two projects the Walkley Festival team have consolidated into a new organisation 'Walkley Events'; the team credit the Fund for providing vital support and capacity building that has given sustainability to the group.

Westfield

The 'Westfield Matters' project aimed to improve the local street scene with benches, banners, bins, and improved green spaces, including a new herb garden planted by local school children. They also delivered new artwork for shutters and a footpath wall leading to the shops, and three community events.

Woodhouse

The Revive Woodhouse project team followed up a Round 1 project with a programme focused on consolidating and expanding existing activity. This included bi-monthly markets, new signage, and a newsletter. The team were able to deliver additional events and a new noticeboard on the market square housing a new print of a historic map and local information within their budget allocation.

3.4 Project Management and Governance

The ERF programme is overseen by a Steering Group made up of:

- Four senior councillors: the Chair, Deputy Chair and Group Spokespeople from the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee
- Three senior council officers including the Director, Economy, Skills and Culture and the Head of Communities for Local Area Committees and Head of Strategic Development and External Programmes
- 4 x private and community sector representatives

Monthly steering group meetings were initially held to oversee the establishment of Round 2, undertake the scoring and review of applications and provide recommendations to the Economic and Skills Development Committee regarding the proposed ERF2 programme. Once in the delivery phase meetings reduced in frequency to bi-monthly and focused on programme highlight reports, quarterly claims and budget reporting, delivery updates, risk management and general oversight of the programme.

The Council's ERF Programme Team is made up primarily of an Economic Policy Officer and an Assistant Project Officer. They provided a wide range of support to projects including:

- Supporting and managing the application process and pipeline of potential applicants, providing bespoke support to all that requested it, including by establishing a small team of 'Application Development Workers' to allocate along any team that needed help developing and writing their bid.
- Holding ERF welcome sessions to talk project leads through the process and how they expected to work together with leads on the project.
- Help to guide projects by solving problems, connecting project leads with other parts of the council and helping them through any council processes.
- Regular monitoring meetings for project leads to update on progress and budget
- Organising and delivering 'welcome' and 'thank you' celebratory events for project teams
- Connecting projects with each other and facilitating collaboration
- Including projects in communications about ERF as a whole, so that they promote and celebrate everything that teams are delivering for their high streets.
- Discussing any wider training or support that could help project leads in their area; offering training free of charge where possible either direct or through partners such as South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau.
- The development of a Resource Library to provide supporting information on a range of themes to help project areas with their delivery
- Support with project closedown reports – a short report on the project and what it has delivered; passing this to Local Area Committee Teams who take on the main point of contact once this process has completed.

The ERF Programme Team reported directly to the Steering Group providing regular highlight reports and programme activity, budget and risk updates. They liaised with the Local Area Committees and Business Information Officers looking for opportunities to involve them in project work and activity.

The Programme Team had the support of a Project Support Officer from the Accountable Body Team, who led on the delivery of the quarterly Claims Process and reconciliation with each individual project. A Highways Engineer was also aligned to the team, to manage all orders for street furniture that were placed with the Council's supplier, Streets Ahead/Amey. At points an SCC Communications Officer was aligned to support the team. In addition, as alluded to above, a wide variety of Council offers across many different teams contributed to the delivery of outputs funded by ERF.

Case Study

A diverse coalition of local businesses and community leads bring ERF benefits to Spital Hill

Spital Hill is located in to the north of Sheffield city centre in the Burngreave ward. It is very multicultural area with a rich mix of demographics. 63% of the adult population speak a first language that is not English with the last Census indicating that only 25% of the local population stated that their ethnicity was White British (compared to 74.5% across Sheffield and 73.6% across England). It has a high density of social housing with the proportion of residents who are Council and Housing Association tenants much higher than Sheffield average.

looked to submit an ERF application using the funds to improve the environment and appearance of the area's main high street aiming to increase business footfall and improve local and wider perceptions of the area.

There was an early determination that any ERF project team had to reflect the demographics of the area with members of the team that were trusted and respected within the local community. It was also imperative that they were able to speak to businesses in their first language. A project team composing six members was put together including five Arabic speakers and a visual/graphics lead. The wider team's roles and skills reflected the planned activity, with a women's business and digital inclusion lead, a business liaison officer, a youth worker, a festival artist, and environmental action workers.

Their successful ERF application led to the allocation of £74,000. The Spital Hill Network established an office and base for the project activity planning and facilitation. These included: sold out fashion shows with an internationally respected local Yemeni designer and maker; the first Spital Hill Festival; an Empowering Women event attended by over 70 local women; the Women and Digital programme that supplied female run businesses with laptops; weekly litter picking events and the Clean Business is Good Business campaign; the creation of a Spital Hill Business Forum; a film screening and q&a session for young female entrepreneurs delivered in both Arabic and English; a market; co-designed youth-focused festival events; regular skip collections,

The Spital Hill Network Project Team

The area faces a wide range of challenges. 14% of the ward's population claim unemployment benefit with 34% having no formal qualifications. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation the area is designated as in the top 10% of most deprived areas in the UK. Crime rates and anti-social behaviour rates per 1000 residents are significantly higher than across both Sheffield and England. Residents and local businesses frequently cite, traffic control, litter, fly tipping, and anti-social behaviour as significant issues. The quality of the building stock is also a major issue particularly when it is privately owned and occupied on variable lease terms.

In response to the opportunities presented by a second round of the Economic Recovery Fund the Spital Hill Network was created as the result of a collaboration between two local charities (Green City Action and Friends of Abbeyfield Park), residents and local businesses. The Network

Sheffield
City Council



THE
SPITAL HILL
NETWORK



community food projects with 489 free community meals provided; new logos/Spital Hill Festival branding, and shopfront displays. A research resource was also created highlighting the waste environmental challenges faced across North Sheffield with a 'green map' planned highlighting local energy requirements.



"The Women and Digital programme and support from SHN has been really useful for me in changing the profile of my business from a ladies outfitter to a café outlet which has been my ambition for the last 5 years."

"The market has been a great success and I would be happy to help organise it on an ongoing basis, it's a great magnet to the area. For people across Sheffield".



The project lead Debroah Egan believes the impact of the funding and programme activity has been extremely positive. She cited the creation of a diverse business and community development organisation with a visible central base, a cleaner high street, ongoing cultural activity, a new annual festival, women focused business programmes and stronger local partnerships as key ERF outputs. She believes that it has created a foundation for ongoing impact across Spital Hill with a focus on building a funding matrix to sustain and develop activity.

The Network continue to lobby for further investment from a variety of different commercial and public sources facilitating partnerships with key local organisations including Sheffield University. They also continue to play an active role developing a local network of charities, businesses and residents playing a playing crucial contact, reference and lobbying role in work with external agencies.

A 2025 cohort will run for the Women and Digital training programme following the securing of support from King Charles' Responsible Business Network. A cultural programme is planned for 2025 focused on improving perceptions of the area and increasing footfall. The business and community litter picking group will continue working in partnership with the Clean Zone Network, local businesses and SOSSudan. Spital Hill Network is also partnering with a local community association on a bid for NHS South Yorkshire 'This is Us' funds to help tackle disconnection and loneliness.

Deborah believes that ERF activity has highlighted and showcased how the area has a diverse coalition of local residents and businesses who have a shared commitment to local improvement that with ongoing administrative and funding support could continue to achieve significant impacts for Spital Hill residents and businesses.

4 ERF Round 2 expenditure and performance

Performance against the targets set for ERF Round 2 as a whole and for the individual projects is generally strong. Despite a significant underspend (which potentially provides resource for future investment in local high streets), most areas are on track to deliver the expected outputs and over three-quarters of the target outputs have already been achieved. It is expected that output targets will be exceeded by over 10% by the time ERF Round 2 concludes.

4.1 Project expenditure

The ERF Round 2 programme was granted a funding pot to allocate to projects across the city. Initially, there was an overallocation of resource; a review process was implemented to decide whether fewer projects were to be funded or to allocate funding to all projects that secured a pass in the bidding process.

A thorough review process was implemented on the applications submitted. Deliverability and value for money was assessed, as well as a process to determine what funding could and should be allocated to projects to fit the budgets and maximise delivery activity. Delivery targets were also agreed.

Each ERF Round 2 project was given a funding allocation, based on the review process described. The district centre and flexible fund projects accounted for 58% of the total ERF Round 2 budget (other programme costs are shown in section 4.2). As of March 2025, £1,279,689 is forecast to be spent across all district centre and flexible fund projects¹¹. £1,400,523 is allocated against these, resulting in a forecast project underspend of £120,834 (9%).

The table below shows spend and variance from allocation by project. Across all ERF Round 2 projects, some of the figures presented below are final and others are awaiting final sign-off.

Figure 4-1 – Project spend and variance from allocation

Project	Funding allocation	Projected/Final spend	Variance from allocation	% spent
Banner Cross	£32,799	£21,105	-£11,694	64%
Choose Chapeltown	£50,000	£40,428	-£9,572	81%
Connecting Stannington	£49,962	£49,962	£0	100%
Crookes Collective	£99,917	£99,917	£0	100%
Discover Darnall	£100,024	£100,024	£0	100%
Ecclesfield High Street	£38,858	£34,796	-£4,062	90%
Growing Greenhill	£50,000	£50,000	£0	100%
Hackenthorpe Traders Connect	£41,826	£40,630	-£1,196	97%
Harborough Avenue	£71,115	£71,416	£300	100%
Newfield Green and Gaunt Shopping Precinct	£120,512	£120,512	£0	100%
Independent Abbeydale	£50,000	£50,000	£0	100%

¹¹ Nb. This figure doesn't include other associated costs such as staffing, communication, consultations/evaluation services, support and training or contingency fees.

London Road	£119,355	£92,840	-£26,515	78%
Lowedges	£37,320	£37,215	-£105	100%
Middlewood	£49,534	£54,000	£4,467	109%
Next Stop Infirmary Road	£32,116	£32,001	-£115	100%
Northern Avenue	£67,000	£53,253	-£13,747	79%
Revive Woodhouse 2	£73,794	£73,794	£0	100%
Spital Hill	£73,953	£44,773	-£29,180	61%
Westfield Matters	£71,904	£51,936	-£19,968	72%
Family Friendly Firth Park	£43,132	£40,924	-£2,207	95%
Hillsborough Together	£49,485	£48,353	-£1,131	98%
It's All About Broomhill	£42,917	£36,809	-£6,108	86%
Walkley Working	£35,000	£35,000	£0	100%
Total	£1,400,523	£1,279,689	-£120,834	91%

Source: ERF2 Fund Overview (2025)

The final level of underspend will not be confirmed until final project completion and sign off after the end of April 2025. Some lessons have been learnt from delivery of Round 1 with closer financial and project management. Where projects have gone over budget, this was a result of approved variances to meet unforeseen costs. Delivering the district centre projects under-budget is a notable achievement, when considering that many output targets have been achieved or exceeded.

Figure 4-2– Total ERF Round 2 budget breakdown

Cost category	Cost line	Funding allocation	Projected spend	Variance from funding allocation	% spent
Projects	District Centre	£1,229,989	£1,118,602	-£111,387	91%
	Flexible Fund	£170,533	£161,087	-£9,447	94%
	Sustainable Cultural and Community Assets Projects	£75,000	£70,877	-£4,123	95%
Match fund	LAC project support (to Aug 24)	£30,000	£30,000	£0	100%
	LAC project support (to March 25)	£30,000	£24,000	-£6,000	80%
	LAC – Enhance	£35,000	£35,000	£0	100%
	LAC – Enable extension (Sept 25)	£30,000	£32,500	£2,500	108%
	Unallocated	£174,087	£0	-£174,087	0%
Other	BIO fees (rolled over from ERF1)	£303,000	£323,272	£20,272	107%
	SYCF (Accountable body and PM management)	£36,847	£36,847	£0	100%
	Staffing	£150,000	£155,600	£5,600	104%
	Communications support	£15,000	£17,882	£2,882	119%
Project costs	Application Development Workers	£32,687	£32,687	£0	100%
	SCC fees and recharges	£5,000	£3,000	-£2,000	60%
	Highways	£10,000	£8,000	-£2,000	80%
	Evaluation	£50,000	£31,325	-£18,675	63%
	Support and training (projects)	£10,000	£9,356	-£644	94%
	Contingency	£50,000	£5,911	-£44,089	12%
Total		£2,437,144	£2,095,946	-£341,198	86%

Source: ERF2 Fund Overview (2025)

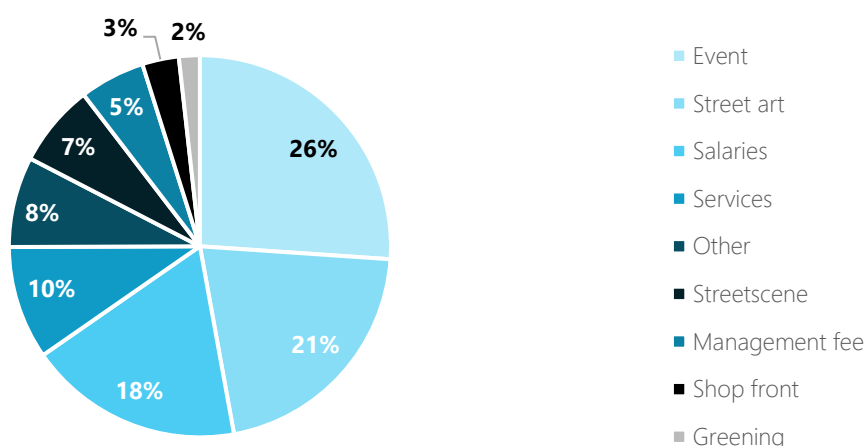
Across the whole ERF Round 2 programme budget, the total projected underspend is £341,198 (14%). Delivering the programme under budget means there is potential to redistribute and utilise the unspent allocation in future high street and regeneration activity. The evaluation has considered future provision

of support for district high streets and local centres. Findings from these conversations can be found in Chapter 7.

4.2 Project spend by intervention type

The largest proportion of the ERF programme fund was spent on events (26%), which also includes marketing and salaries relating to events. The second largest proportion was spent on installing street art (21%). Together these accounted for just under half of the project spend, reflecting the higher costs of delivery. Salaries, which are solely for project manager costs, made up 18%. At the outset a cap on salary costs was set at 15%. This higher figure can be explained by the extension of many projects that then necessarily needed to allocate additional funds to enable their project management resources remained in place for the duration of the project. Spend on marketing has been categorised as 'services' to differentiate it from project management and accounts for 10% of project spend. The remaining budget spent has been split across street scene development (7%), management fees (6%), shop front improvements (3%) and greening (2%), as well as 'other' (8%).

Figure 4-3 – Spend breakdown on category of intervention



Source: ERF2 Fund Overview (2025)

4.3 Programme outputs

Throughout both rounds of ERF, projects have monitored and collated outputs delivered. These outputs have been counted and reported in appropriate claims forms by each project which have been assembled and assessed by the ERF Programme team.

It is important to note that across both rounds of ERF delivery, and across projects, there has been some variation in the way outputs have been measured and counted. This must be considered when assessing performance of each project against contracted targets. Importantly, the ERF Programme team had the flexibility to vary contracted outputs as delivery progressed, and these outputs were reconciled at project close. The flexible nature of output monitoring has given rise to some differences and potential inconsistencies in reporting mechanisms employed by each project. This should be considered when looking at the analysis below.

The outputs delivered in Round 1 are summarised in a table in Annex One. Figure 4.5 highlights the outputs that had been achieved across ERF Round 2 as at the end of February 2025. Consider all outputs delivered, 92% of the contracted outputs have been achieved to date¹². Activity is still continuing across projects with output delivery expected to reach 108% of the target by the end of ERF Round 2 delivery.

Figure 4.4 sets out that the majority of projects completed the outputs they set out to deliver, and in areas where there were particular challenges, projects were adapted and adjusted to ensure the best outcomes as a result of ERF budgets.

Figure 4-4 – Outputs achieved against targets

Output category	Contracted target	Achieved to date	Forecast to be achieved	Total outputs (completed and forecast)	% achieved to date	% forecast to be completed against target
Greening (planters, trees, planting)	27	37	4	41	137%	152%
Events	49	51	8	59	104%	120%
Streetscene - street furniture and shop front (bins, benches, noticeboards, Christmas decorations, refresh and repair)	198	201	31	232	102%	117%
Business forums and engagement	73	65	3	68	89%	93%
Marketing (branding, banners, bin wraps, leaflets, maps, promo campaigns)	71	56	37	93	79%	131%
Street art (murals, shutters, cabinets)	102	74	4	78	73%	76%
Other	20	11	2	13	55%	65%
Total	540	495	89	584	92%	108%

Source: ERF2 Outputs Collated (March 2025)

Figure 4-5 – Outputs achieved against targets by area*

	Completed	Contracted outputs	Actual and forecast total	Variance	% achieved
Abbeydale	Y	19	30	11	158%
Banner Cross	N	6	18	12	300%
Broomhill	Y	12	10	-2	83%
Chapelton	N	12	8	-4	67%
Crookes	N	46	43	-3	93%
Darnall	N	45	36	-9	80%
Ecclesfield	Y	6	10	4	167%
Firth Park	Y	16	21	5	131%
Greenhill	N	11	10	-1	91%
Hackenthorpe	Y	31	51	20	165%
Harborough	N	45	50	5	111%
Hillsborough	Y	17	19	2	112%
Infirmarary Road	N	28	19	-9	68%

¹² Targets have evolved through the programme with some originally planned activity not taken place (i.e. proved to undeliverable, not cost effective, changing priorities). These outputs have been collated from individual project claims forms.

London Road	Y	24	26	2	108%
Lowedges	Y	9	9	0	100%
Middlewood	N	23	23	0	100%
Newfield Green and Gaunt	N	12	20	8	167%
Northern Avenue	Y	37	31	-6	84%
Spital Hill	Y	35	35	0	100%
Stannington	Y	28	31	3	111%
Walkley	Y	23	22	-1	96%
Westfield	Y	28	35	7	125%
Woodhouse	N	35	40	5	114%
Total (to date)		548	597	49	109%

Source: ERF2 Outputs Collated (2025) and Project Claims Forms

* There is the potential for some slight inconsistencies in output data reported due to the nature of the collation process (as described above).

Case Study

Round Two of ERF brings further impacts to Firth Park

The Firth Park ERF project was led by the merged Community Forum and Friends of First Park. The Friends of First Park are a long-established community group who were formed in 2000 to improve local facilities, the park environment and to build a strong sense of community. They meet monthly to discuss issues of concern such as road safety, parking, litter, fly tipping and to co-ordinate community activities such as planting and local events. The Community Forum was established in 2019 as an amalgamation of three tenant and resident's associations who came together to amplify their voice and lobbying power.

a series of events, street art projects and park enhancements. It followed up on successful Round One activity that included the installation of banners, a Jubilee event and park safety improvement work. The work was led by the Steering Group who worked closely with local businesses leveraging long standing relationships they had within the business community.

The project lead Sheena Clarke believed that project delivery had run relatively smoothly with a wide range of well received activities undertaken and outputs achieved. She cited previous experience (from Round One), the support of the ERF Programme Team, project team expertise, and the more manageable scale of Round Two activity as key contributing reasons for the project's success. She also highlighted the importance of having someone with the necessary expertise to take on the shutter art commissioning for helping to effectively manage a complex process.

They worked with 14 different local businesses to install shutter artwork and murals, and to improve the local street scene putting in new planters, banners and encouraging regular litter picks and street cleaning events. Picnic tables, lights and plant installations were also put in around the park entrance to make it more welcoming. A

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Following a successful Round One project in Firth Park an application for Round Two funding was submitted. This process was driven by Abtism Mohamed who at the time was the local Councillor (prior to becoming the MP for Sheffield Central). Following the successful application, the Friends of Firth Park were brought in to oversee and deliver project activity. Their subsequent merger with the Community Forum (who led the first ERF project in Firth Park) consolidated resources, expertise and experience.

The community led project aimed to improve perceptions of Firth Park and address local business concerns about anti-social behaviour and negative perceptions of the area through

series of successful Maker's Markets and events were also planned and delivered, including a Christmas Market with the project team working with a range of community members, organisations and businesses.

"They've (the Maker Markets) have gone very well. They're getting better each time."

Sheena highlighted a series of challenges faced by the team including some difficulties with business engagement and finding time and resource for ongoing administration but she emphasised that Round Two activity has had a significantly positive impact on Firth Park. Sheena believes that despite footfall increases being hard to attribute directly to project activity ERF activity has increased community engagement levels and improved perceptions of the district centre.

"It (ERF) has lifted spirits and made attitudes towards the area more positive. The events have improved perceptions of what the district centres can offer."

She cited improved good relationships with local business and the community as a clear positive impact of the project. Sheena also stated that it provided vital experience for some steering group members upskilling them in event management and providing them with experiences of how to work effectively with outside agencies such as Sheffield City Council's Highways Department.

"One of the things that's been very positive about the project is that the people that have been involved have really come on a lot in terms of their skills."

Feedback from local residents has been good. People are very positive about the street/shutter art and the planting schemes that were part of both rounds of ERF. The project team reported many positive comments about the street scene and environment improvements. Business owners who have their shutters painted were very positive about the process and pleased with the final result.

"We've help to improve the feeling in the area, starting to increase positive attitudes."

Sheena believes the ERF's legacy will be sustained if there are local people are prepared to continue volunteering and plan and organise activities. She emphasised that feedback from community members and local businesses has been positive with local people valuing the improvements. Moving forward she would like to see more links to mainstream Council activity, other business and community organisations across Sheffield. links to long running Mela Festival, and a wider volunteer base overseeing different types of activity to ensure a long and lasting legacy for ERF activity within the area.



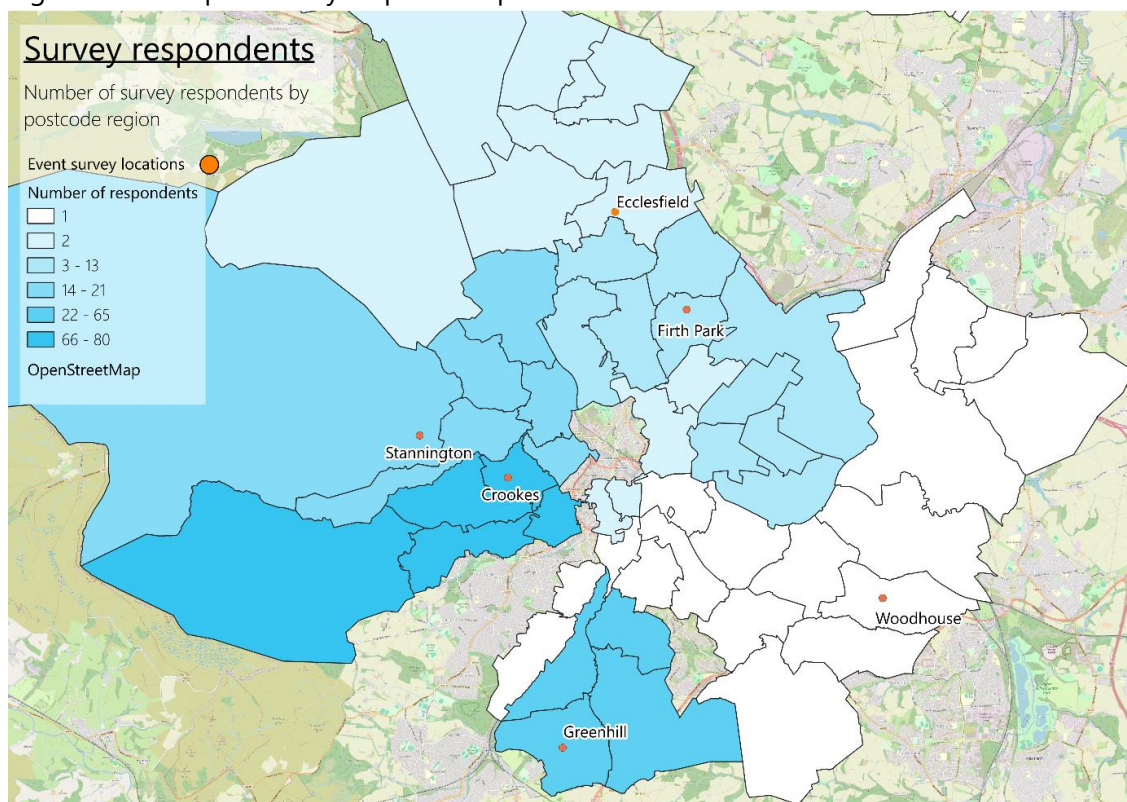
5 Resident experience of ERF Round 2 investment

Over 230 residents provided feedback on their local centres, with most positive about what their centre had to offer and the ERF activity which had taken place. Nearly two-thirds said their perception of their local centre had improved, and around one-third said they were visiting more frequently. A range of further improvements were identified as future priorities by residents, with community events the most popular.

5.1 Gathering resident feedback

An online survey was created to gather feedback on resident experience of ERF Round 2 investment in their local high streets. The survey link was distributed in person at a number of ERF-funded events and promoted in a digital format via all of the project leads, who were asked to share it using their social media channels and other networks. In total, 232 residents completed the survey which represents a good number of responses compared to other similar evaluations. The map below shows the home postcode of survey respondents (where provided), with the orange dots showing the location of events where the survey was promoted. Compared to the ERF project locations, a high proportion of responses were received from residents in the more affluent south and west of the city, with over 85% of respondents living in three postcode areas: S10 (40.8%), S8 (33.7%), and S6 (11.2%). This should be borne in mind when reviewing residential feedback; whilst the survey responses provide insight into resident views, the data may not be representative of residents across the whole city.

Figure 5-1 – Map of survey respondent postcodes



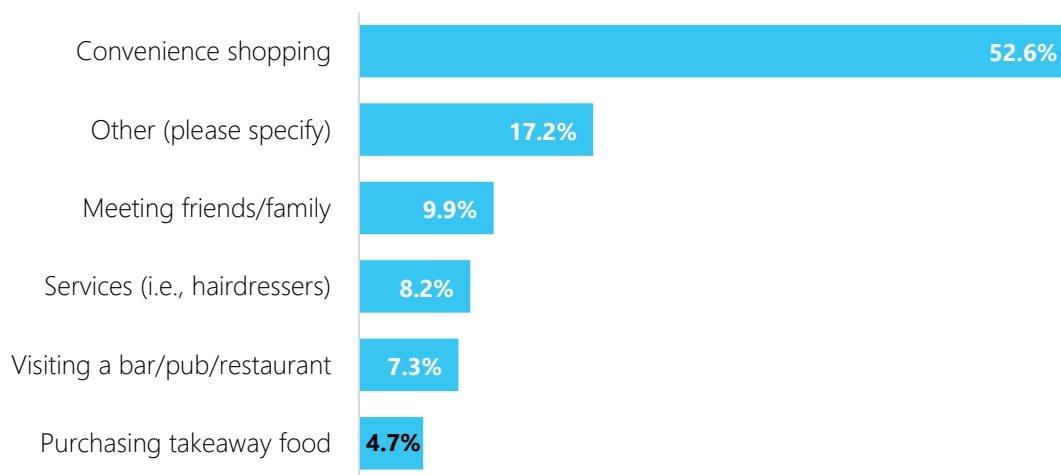
Source: Kada Analysis (2025), n=196

The greatest proportion of survey respondents were aged between 25 and 40 (41.1%). Just over a third of respondents were aged between 41 and 64 years old. Very few responses were received from younger people (aged 16-24), and the proportion of responses received from males was very low (12.6%).

5.2 Use of local centres

Over half of those responding to the survey (52.6%) said that they mainly visited district centres for convenience shopping, with one in ten visiting district centres to meet friends or family. Fewer than 10% said they use district centres to access local services such as hairdressers or to visit a bar, pub or restaurant.

Figure 5-2 – Typical reason for visiting centre



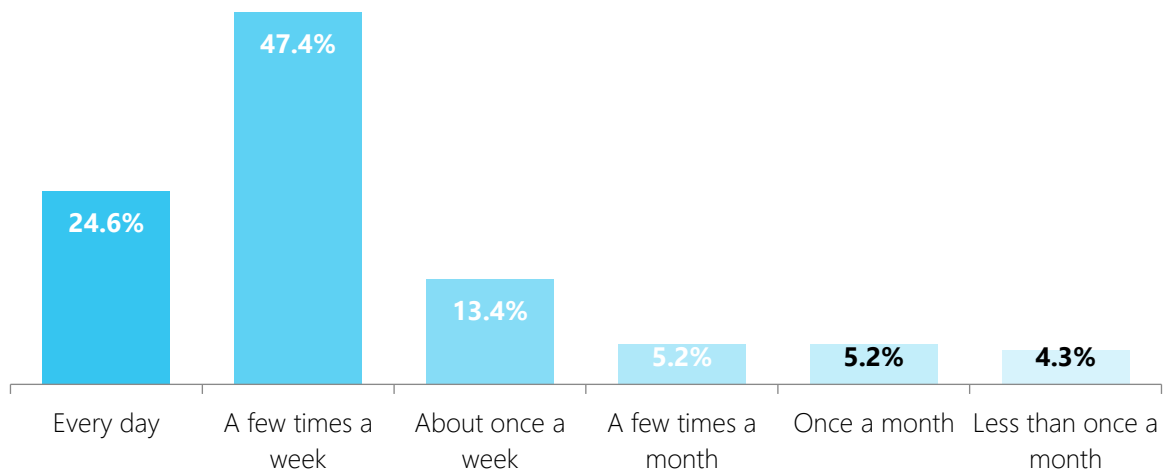
Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=232

'Other' reasons for visiting included:

- Passing through en route to work/other areas
- School drop-off (most cited)
- Community groups (i.e. running clubs)
- Walking the dog
- Accessing public transport
- To access work

Respondents most commonly said they visited their district centre a few times a week (47.4%), with one quarter saying they visited every day. Walking is the most common way for respondents to visit the district centres (70.9%) although one in five respondents said they most often drive to their local centre (20.9%).

Figure 5-3 – Frequency of visit to local/district centre

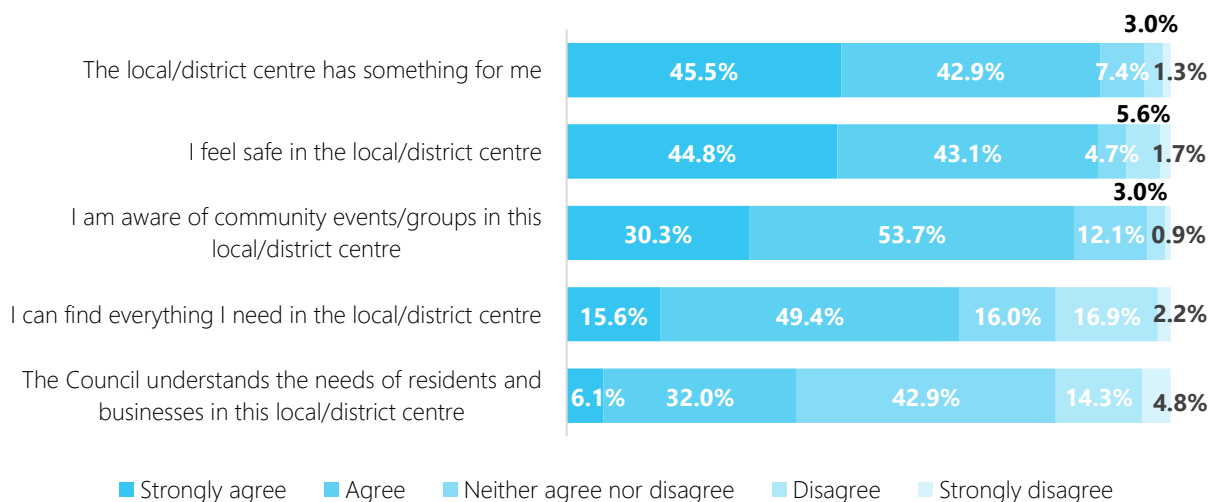


Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=232

5.3 Perceptions of the local centre

Survey respondents were largely positive about their local centre. Nearly 90% (88.3%) either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the district centre has something for them. Almost as many (87.9%) said that they feel safe in their district centre and 84% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they were aware of community events and community groups. Nearly two-thirds (64.9%) ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they could find what they needed in their district centre. Nearly four in ten (38.1%) ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that Sheffield City Council understands the needs of residents and businesses in the district centre, although slightly more (42.9%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 5-4 – Perceptions of the local centre (arranged by strongly agree %)

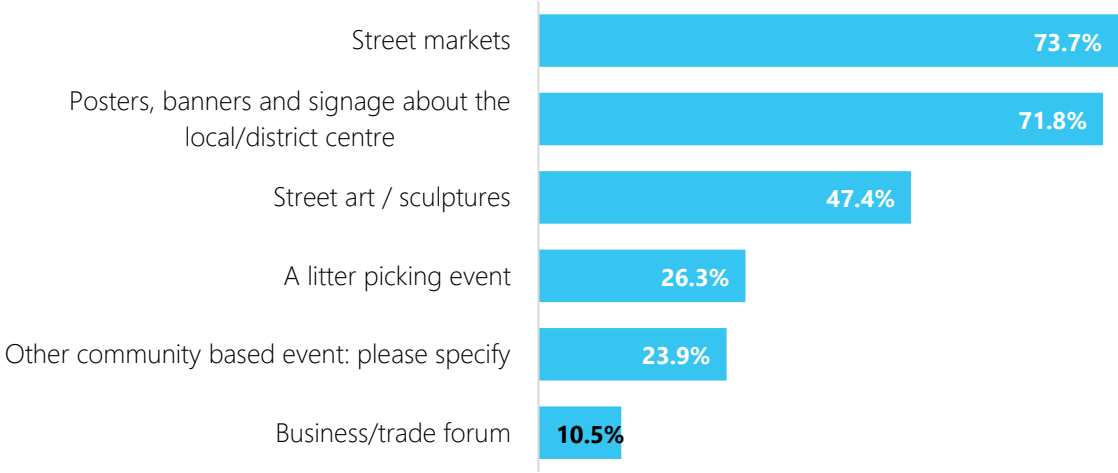


Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=231¹³

¹³ 232 respondents answered ‘the local district has something for me’, whereas 231 respondents answered the other categories for this question.

Nearly three-quarters (73.7%) of respondents had seen or participated in street markets funded through ERF Round 2 in their district centre, with nearly as many (71.8%) having seen the new posters, banners or signage. Just under half (47.4%) had seen street art in their new district centre and one quarter had seen or participated in a local litter picking event (26.3%).

Figure 5-5 – ERF events seen/participated in

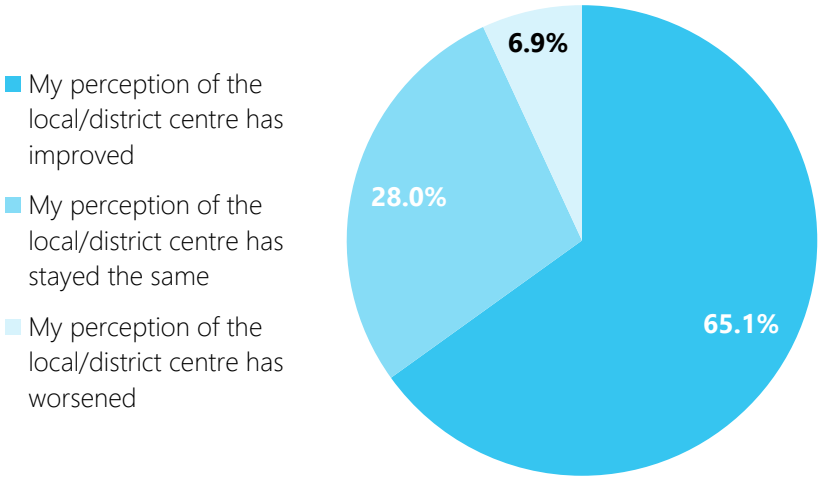


Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=209¹⁴

On balance, respondents were positive about change in their local centre, with 65.1% saying their perception of the local centre had improved over the last year and only 6.9% of respondents feeling that their local centre had declined over the last year. Perhaps as a result, respondents were on balance visiting their local centre more frequently, with over one-third (35.9%) visiting the centre more frequently than they were 12 months ago, whilst only 5.2% said they visited less frequently. The remaining 58.9% of respondents said that the frequency of their visit to the local centre had not changed over the last year.

¹⁴ Responses total more than 100% for this figure as respondents were able to select multiple categories.

Figure 5-6 – Change in perceptions of the local centre

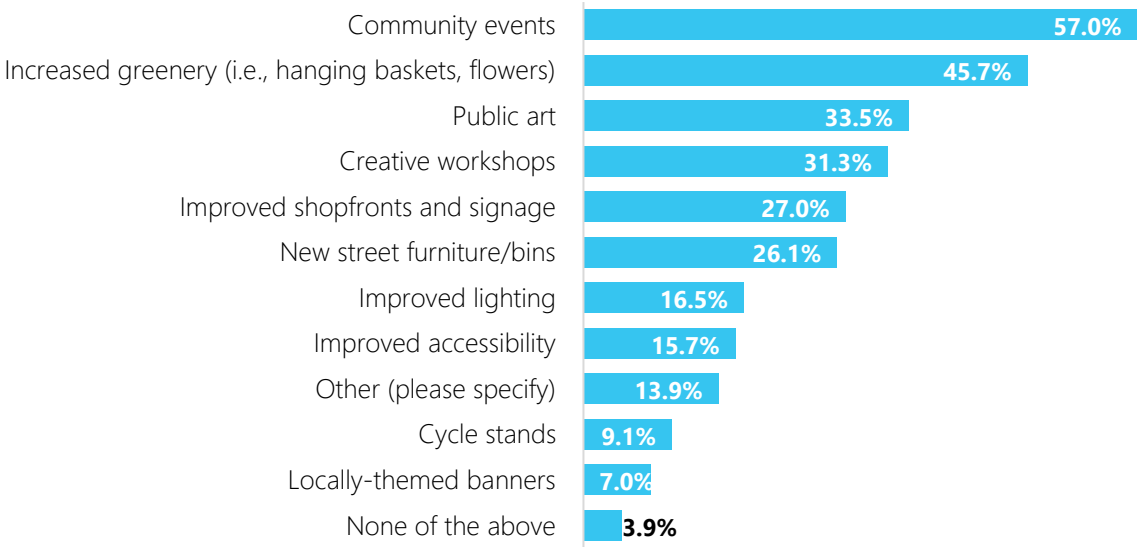


Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=232

Respondents were asked what further improvements they would like to see in their district centre. The most commonly desired (by 57.0%) was more community events while 45.7% would like to see more greenery. One-third (33.5%) would like to see more public art with a similar proportion interested in creative workings (31.3%). Further improvements to the environment were also identified, including improved shopfronts (27.0%) and new street furniture / bins (26.1%).¹⁵ Of the residents that cited 'Other', the main desired improvements to district centres included a bigger range of shops and more retail variety, with a particular wish for more independent businesses on the high street, better use of space for independent businesses, improved parking facilities, reduced traffic and lower speed limits on local streets.

¹⁵ These responses should be caveated by the fact that 75% of the responses were from residents living in the S10 and S8 postcodes in the more affluent West of the city.

Figure 5-7 – Desired improvements to high street



Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=230¹⁶

¹⁶ Responses total more than 100% for this figure as respondents were able to select multiple categories.

Case Study

The impact of ERF on Ecclesfield's high street

Ecclesfield, made up of Ecclesfield West and Ecclesfield East Wards, is a village and civil parish about 4 miles north of Sheffield city centre. ERF has helped Ecclesfield improve their high street and has resulted in a number of successful events that have brought the community together and unified the village identity.

Through the allocation of Round 2 ERF funding, the Ecclesfield project team has been dedicated to revitalising the high street and fostering a sense of community engagement. This has been realised through a multifaceted approach with a focus on four main areas of improvement which have been pursued in the marketing programme.

Central to all these efforts and areas of focus has been the rebranding of the area, which has been designed to foster local pride and create a unified identity for Ecclesfield. The branding, centred around the slogan 'Buy Ecc,' has been widely adopted throughout the community. The project has rolled out branded merchandise such as tote bags and banners, helping to spread the message and increase visibility. This campaign has not only raised awareness about the high street's offerings but also generated a sense of belonging and local pride.

"The best thing that's happened in Ecclesfield – we've been waiting for this."

The team have also worked on significant public realm improvements that not only enhance the area but have created welcoming, accessible spaces for all. Large planters, hanging baskets, new safer fencing, new bins and lamppost banners have all been installed. Consultations with residents and passers-by in the area found that there was an appreciation and understanding of the importance of maintaining a pleasant high-street environment. Residents and key community members have continued to maintain the planters since they have been installed, as they have been seen as so valuable by residents. Another key initiative set up as a result of ERF has been the development of heritage trails, designed to connect the community with its rich local history while also encouraging exploration and increased foot traffic along the high street.

A huge impact of ERF on Ecclesfield has been the programme of events delivered. The team have successfully organised several highly attended events. In 2024, the area held a poignant D-Day remembrance event, which brought together the community in honouring those who fought during World War II. This event was supported by a unique ration book voucher scheme, which provided incentives for residents to shop locally and support small businesses. This initiative not



only celebrated the historical importance of the day but also promoted economic activity in the local area.

In addition to the D-Day event, the Ecclesfield project team have organised seasonal events that brought numerous residents and festive cheer to the high street.

Two Christmas events were organised, as well as one at Easter and for Halloween in 2024. The Halloween event was seen as a significant success for the village; attendance was extraordinarily high and at a level much larger than initially expected by event organisers and the project team. A Halloween trail was also set up which captivated families with themed activities. The trails were also pursued for the Christmas events and encouraged both locals and visitors to enjoy the holiday spirit through a series of immersive experiences.

The Christmas events were further promoted through a creative 'penny magazine' style publication, which offered various deals and discounts to encourage shopping within the community and create a vibrant shopping experience during the festive period. The events established in Ecclesfield as a result of ERF have been a major success for the area, with one resident stating it was **"one of the best days we've had in 14 years here!"**

In order to deliver all the activity outlined above, the creation of a new community group has been a major success in terms of delivering ERF activity in Ecclesfield. The group has become constituted as a result of ERF and hopes to continue following the end of the funding

period. The steering group has met 13 times to discuss the project and progress of activities. This group will strive to ensure delivery of future initiatives and form part of a long-term programme of high street activity that continues to thrive and evolve with community input.

Through the channels set up as a result of the group, local traders have become active participants in the development of the area, collaborating on various projects to strengthen the high street's appeal and business opportunities. Local businesses are in a WhatsApp group to keep them connected and encourage sharing and communication.

Looking ahead, the Ecclesfield project team is preparing for the launch of a new heritage trail, which is to open in Spring 2025. This forthcoming trail will further enrich the community's connection to its history while offering an exciting new attraction to visitors.

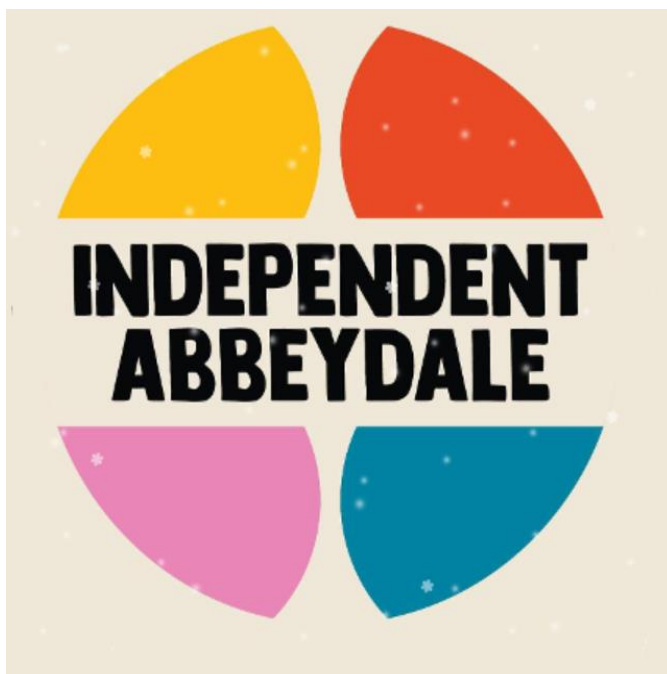
ERF Round 2 has had a significant impact on community activity in Ecclesfield and has helped established the mechanisms by which the community can continue to deliver events and programmes to its residents. The community group aims to ensure that Ecclesfield's high street remains a thriving, dynamic hub for years to come.



6 Business experience of ERF Round 2 investment

Twenty-five survey responses were received from businesses with clear themes emerging albeit from a small sample. Businesses in Sheffield local centres are experiencing challenging trading conditions, with the cost-of-living crisis, which underpinned the need for ERF Round 2, exacerbating long-term changes in shopping patterns. Businesses highlighted many positive impacts from ERF activities, including improved perceptions of local high streets and community engagement in events and activities. However, few could identify tangible impacts on footfall or turnover.

6.1 Gathering business feedback



Feedback was gathered from businesses both through an online survey promoted via the ERF Round 2 project leads, Business Information Officers and the evaluation team, and during visits by the evaluators to areas where ERF Round 2 activity was being delivered. A leaflet was distributed encouraging completion of the survey via an accessible QR code. Twenty-five responses were received.

Respondents operated in a range of sectors represented on the high street: retail (9), food and beverage providers (6), health providers (4) and six from other service sectors or who did not provide their sector. On average, respondent businesses had been trading for 16 years, with the period of operation ranging from under one year to

nearly 80 years of trading.

6.2 Experience of ERF Round 2

Just over half of respondents (13) had been directly involved with ERF Round 2, with some receiving grants for physical improvements such as new windows, new signs, repainted shutters and planters. Others were involved in events such as street clean ups, festivals and Christmas fairs. A handful were involved in planning and ideas, or attended meetings to keep informed about ERF Round 2 delivery. Of those who had been involved in the ERF application process (five) the majority found the process "very good" and "easy", although one highlighted the need for "a lot of advice and support...from our Business Information Officer."

The businesses were asked about strengths and challenges of the ERF Round 2 programme.

Figure 6-1 – Strengths and Challenges

Strengths	Challenges
Brings the community together.	Red tape.
Exceptional communication from the local project team. Kept businesses up to date with news and updates throughout the process and encouraged businesses with meetings and emails to partake in decision making.	Providing a budget for items that were subject to change. Not knowing the full capacity of what would be required when planning and proposing a budget for example: events. Events needed much more than we had initially planned as they were developed.
The local project team associated with ERF have been very passionate and driven in their aim to regenerate the area. Have been visible, approachable and supportive in giving advice and time.	
Great people.	
Process has been pretty straightforward.	
Good Business Information Officer.	

Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=10

One business highlighted the value of *"family-orientated"* activities, and another praised the local organisers and community engagement undertaken, saying that the local centre had *"made the best of everything we have been given"*. Another asked for *"more of the same – it's great"*.

When asked about potential improvements to ERF delivery, suggestions related to:

- The type of activity funded through ERF, with a request for projects focussed on business growth, rather than events.
- An increase in the scale of support available, highlighting the need for more resource and more time to deliver, in order to ensure sustained positive impacts.
- More budget and support for project management including continued access to external skilled project managers, recognising how resource-intensive this has been for some communities, and further support and guidance on how to deliver large scale projects particularly in terms of navigating Council processes and seeking land ownership permissions
- Faster delivery with streamlined processes.

6.3 Impact

Businesses were asked how they felt ERF Round 2 had impacted on various elements of business/high street activity, as well as their general view of change in each of these areas over the past year. They were asked to rate the impact of ERF on a scale of one to 10 (with 10 being very significant impact).

The areas where ERF was felt to have had the most significant impact were on the perceptions of events in the local community; on a shared sense of community purpose; on perceptions of the high street; on perceptions of high street surroundings; and on working relations within the community. Businesses reported that ERF Round 2 activity had had less impact on more tangible metrics such as footfall and turnover. The ratings can be found in the table below.

Figure 6-2 – Business perceptions of the impact of ERF Round 2 (rated 1 to 10 where 10 = very significant impact)

	Average rating
Perceptions of events in the local community	8.8
Community shared sense of purpose	8.4
Perceptions of this high street	8.2
Perceptions of the high street's surroundings	8.2
Working relations within the community	8.2
Collaboration with other businesses	8.0
Business to community collaboration	7.7
Business survival chances/likelihood of businesses staying open	7.1
Perceptions of council support	7.0
Footfall	6.9
Turnover	6.7

Source: Kada analysis (2025), n=10

- Perceptions of events in the local community:** Businesses who responded had mixed views on the frequency and quality of events run in the local community over the past year. However, the events delivered through ERF were deemed to have been very successful in improving perceptions of local events.
- Community shared sense of purpose:** Some of the businesses consulted thought there had been an increase in a shared sense of purpose within their communities in the past year. Local organisations and networks were deemed to have an important role/influence in this (i.e. libraries and pre-existing community groups). Businesses and community members that took part in ERF activity made frequent reference to satisfaction in seeing their activities improve the high street and its surroundings.
- Perceptions of this high street:** The businesses consulted had positive perceptions of their high streets post ERF, making reference to the “*boosts*” of activity and improvements. Many business respondents stated that that public realm improvements including planters, seating, and banners have had a positive visual impact on district centres and make places that received ERF funding feel better maintained, resulting in a positive impact on local perceptions of district centres.
- Perceptions of the high street’s surroundings:** Businesses had a range of views on their high street’s surrounding, ranging from “*reasonable*”, “*busy*” and “*good*”, to “*poor*” and “*pretty grotty*”. Those who expressed a view indicated that ERF delivery is improving high street surroundings and making the community “*prouder*” of their district centres.
- Working relations within the community:** Generally, respondents felt that working relationships in communities that received ERF support were “*good*” or “*positive*”. Respondents reported that ERF has improved community relations, often inspiring increased levels of dialogue, collaboration and mutual support.
- Collaboration with other businesses:** Views on the strength of collaboration with other businesses within the local centre varied, with comments ranging from “*good*” to “*poor*”. Businesses gave a number of examples of how ERF was strengthening collaboration, with “*businesses talking more when ERF activities are happening*” and displaying ERF-funded signage making them feel “*part of the community*”. However a small number of respondents expressed concern about a lack of business group activity, or the dominance of particular groups of businesses.

- **Business to community collaboration:** Businesses consulted generally felt that there had been good engagement between communities and businesses because of ERF events/interventions, with room for more of this in the future.
- **Business survival chances:** Businesses outlined that ERF has had a positive impact on business survival chances as more people are getting to know about businesses on the high street and what they offer to the community. One business stated that on days when ERF activity is happening, the high street is busy and therefore has had a positive impact. However, on days when there isn't an event, there was a sense of limited impact. Just under half of businesses who expressed a view had concerns about business survival due to factors outside the remit of ERF, including increases in *"rent, utilities, cost of running business"*.
- **Perceptions of council support:** Of the businesses consulted, views on council support were mixed. Several comments highlighted a distinction between the support provided by Council officers involved in ERF (e.g. *"Individual support by representative is A+", "Fabulous - lovely and informative - good communication"*) and other interactions with the Council, which could be *"poor"*. One business stated that ERF made them aware of other council support they did not previously know about.
- **Footfall:** Over the past year, footfall trends for the businesses consulted have been mixed, with almost equal numbers stating that it has increased, remained the same or fallen. However, a number of businesses highlighted that ERF has helped raised their business profile, and increased footfall especially on event days, with ERF activity bringing people to the local centre.
- **Turnover:** The businesses consulted have experienced different trends in their turnover over the past year, with more stating that it had fallen or remained the same than had experienced an increase. Businesses found it hard to assess the impact of ERF on turnover. Some explained that they saw ERF activity more as an opportunity to advertise their business and brand, with others highlighting that while turnover increased around event activity, there was no change outside of these times.

6.4 High street improvements



Businesses were asked about further improvements which would improve the local centre / high street, and a wide range of suggestions were made. These included:

- Continuation of some of the marketing activity developed through ERF, including awareness raising, PR and communications work to promote local businesses. Specific requests included a physical noticeboard on which events and activities could be publicised.
- On-going work to bring businesses and communities together and encourage people to visit their local high street, including community projects and activities, an increased number of free events, organised gardening groups and litter picking teams.
- Improvements in the supporting services which keep local centres clean, attractive and safe to visit, with suggestions including more frequent bin collections and cleaner streets, more control over parking restrictions, increased police presence, and increased bus provision. One business raised a specific concern about the Council's handling of proposed developments in the local area.
- Factors which businesses thought would increase footfall (but are not in the gift of the Council), including increased numbers of independent shops, and greater coherence in opening hours to increase footfall levels.

Case Study

The impact of “Growing Greenhill”

“Growing Greenhill” was the ERF project delivered by the Greener Greenhill management group. Greener Greenhill are community group who are dedicated to tackling climate change and nature crisis through local actions. This includes planting and growing, installing benches in green spaces, talks, walks and recycling support.

“For Growing Greenhill, generating footfall for local businesses and encouraging people to shop locally were key aims of the activity. Making the central area more attractive to residents was also a central part of the work undertaken, with one member of the group stating that the overall aim was to see people “linger for longer”.

Greener Greenhill were heavily involved in the application for ERF funding, a process that was made more accessible through the support of an application development worker. The initial application process was slowed slightly due to some confusion around spreadsheets and some difficulty in being able to fill in some online application forms. The format of these forms were later changed to make them more accessible. In the future, delivery could be even more successful if the amount and complexity of the paperwork and monitoring required could be reduced or simplified. This may also encourage more organisations to get involved in similar projects, resulting in more community activities being delivered across Sheffield.

Three High Street businesses joined the steering group, providing valuable insights and support. These

businesses went on to praise the successful and timely delivery of the activity, with Greener Greenhill expecting to see the positive relationships continue in the future. However, it was felt that some businesses did not fully understand the potential benefits of engaging with ERF support and as a result did not feed into engagement or participate in activity. Marketing and awareness raising as to why local perceptions of the high street are important could increase business buy-in should similar activity be rolled out in the future. The steering group also engaged councillors and local VCSE organisations, fostering a united sense of community spirit.

The support from the ERF team at the Council was excellent. Greener Greenhill were able to contact Ian and Sarah about anything and received prompt and supportive replies. Further to this, due to previous application and delivery experience within Greener Greenhill, the team were able to deliver activity and manage the budget well.

“I think the support has been really good from the ERF team, from Ian and Sarah. You can always contact them when you need them”.

Growing Greenhill ultimately delivered a number of public realm improvements, including planting schemes such as those at the local library and public art. Alongside this, they all developed their social media activity, a loyalty card scheme for businesses and flyers to encourage residents to explore their local area. Through the funding, Greener Greenhill were also able to run small Christmas events.



Measuring the impact of Growing Greenhill can be difficult, as the key goal of improving perceptions of the area by making it more attractive can be difficult to quantify. Further to this, the expenditure monitoring forms were quite difficult, and not always applicable to every activity. In future, greater flexibility in monitoring expenditure could be given, with individual delivery groups able to tailor spreadsheets to fit their requirements.



“I think that bit [expenditure monitoring] is overly complicated and having done Council monitoring for other stuff, it doesn't have to be that complicated. So I'm sure that can be simplified ... I think as long as each project keeps track of their budget on a spreadsheet, that spreadsheet can be in any format they want.”

That said, the Greener Greenhill team have received lots of positive comments from residents, largely related to the planting and greenery work they had undertaken as a result of ERF funding. The activity also raised the profile of the group, resulting in more businesses and residents engaging with and sharing their work.

Community involvement was highlighted as a clear strength of the activity. Through the planting schemes, the activity saw an increased number of residents volunteering. Volunteering has been shown to have extensive mental wellbeing benefits, highlighting how projects such as this can benefit residents of Greenhill. However, it was felt that residents were often unaware of where the funding had come from, making it even more difficult to attribute changes in resident perceptions directly to ERF funding.

“In Green Hill, we've had a lot of positive comments, a lot of it has been to do with planting, and people have really appreciated it. And we've now got a Facebook presence, and there's a lot of positivity around that, and businesses engaging with those Facebook posts now and starting to share them.”

Increasing business buy-in will be key to ensuring the legacy of ERF. Whilst the community and steering group engagement has been positive in making sure delivery was successful, following the end of ERF, it is important that this engagement is maintained. The social media activity does go some way towards continuing the legacy of the project, but the group is eager to see increased buy-in going forward.

7 Delivery, management and governance

Changes were made to ERF management and delivery processes for Round 2 following recommendations and learning from Round 1. These focused on streamlining administrative processes, providing enhanced programme management capacity, and balancing robust processes with making the programme open and accessible to those with limited previous project management experience. This was appreciated by those leading ERF in local centres, but considerable time was still required to build and sustain the partnership approach on which ERF depends. Support and guidance from the ERF Programme Team was recognised as vital in facilitating delivery of ERF activity.

7.1 Programme delivery

A wide range of organisations and individuals have been involved in delivering the ERF programme in various different roles – from supporting the delivery of individual projects in local centres to managing the overall programme budget and ensuring alignment with other Council activity.

Amongst those leading local centre activity, project delivery experiences varied. Previous experience, project management expertise and the strength and involvement of pre-existing community and business groups were critical success factors for supporting successful delivery. Leveraging the relationships and expertise of Business Information Officers, community anchor organisations, large diverse project teams and previous project leads led to effective project delivery. Project leads welcomed the opportunity to bring in experienced project managers to support delivery, particularly those with experience of working with community groups and businesses. Developing business and community relationships where they did not previously exist is resource intensive and time consuming.

Capacity was also crucial to success and, again, external support, provided by individuals from pre-existing community and business groups, was regarded as a very important resource. Project leads who experienced staff sickness and those that worked with smaller project teams and/or in areas with limited pre-existing community infrastructure found management and delivery more challenging. They welcomed the extensions to project delivery times (provided by the ERF Steering Group) to help overcome these challenges.

Several project leads reported that they frequently worked extra hours beyond their allocated / budgeted hours (or in the case of volunteers beyond their initial expectations) with some highlighting the amount of time spent on administering ERF activity (often seen as bureaucracy). With management fees capped, this meant that the budgeted time was frequently not sufficient for the required work.

Several external factors also affected project delivery and momentum, including poor weather and seeking clarity around land ownership and permissions. These led to some project leads taking a flexible approach to delivery working closely with the ERF Programme Team to rescope projects. Within this context, project leads have welcomed the flexible nature of the programme and the ongoing support and understanding of the ERF Programme Team in allowing project adaptation.

7.2 Partnership working



Project teams undertook a wide variety of engagement activity to try to ensure that businesses and residents were fully involved in ERF activity. The partnership approach undertaken by ERF provides a blueprint for future community and local business empowerment work. Project leads reported that community engagement was easier to secure where long-standing community organisations, engagement initiatives and strong relationships were already in place.

Business engagement was easier on a one-to-one basis where project leads could develop good relationships, often working in collaboration with Business Information Officers whose input was very helpful in ensuring business engagement. These relationships were also made easier when the ERF project was offering a tangible investment such as shopfront improvements. In some cases, group social media accounts have been created but usage rates vary.

"Without the BIOs we would not have had a direct contact into the businesses."

"The main strengths of the ERF project delivery in terms of partnership working lie in the effective collaboration between local businesses, project officers, and other communities. This collaborative approach not only fostered shared ownership of the project but also strengthened the sense of community, ensuring sustainable and meaningful improvements."

"Collaborating with local businesses, project officers, and other communities proved vital in shaping the project's direction and ensuring its relevance to the area."

Each ERF project was encouraged to have a steering group to oversee and deliver the project and to ensure compliance with the ERF's management and monitoring requirements. These steering groups were often composed of long-standing local volunteers and community group members with attempts made to increase the level of business representation. In some areas, such as Hillsborough, a new business forum was created who met regularly and co-ordinated closely with steering groups and liaised with business community and encouraged local engagement. These groups also provide a platform for the promotion of ERF and a forum for feedback.

Securing business inputs and attendance at ERF partnership meetings was often difficult, with many citing operational pressures and limited staffing as reasons for not attending. Differing opening times also proved to be a barrier to engagement with night time economy businesses more difficult to engage. Again, the efforts of the Business Information Officers to build relationships with local businesses and encourage them to get involved were highly valued by project leads. Future business engagement activity will have to reflect their operational pressures, lack of time and the importance of long-term trusted relationships.

7.3 Management and governance

Project leads were very positive about the support they received from the ERF Programme Team in terms of management and governance. Comments focused on the helpful nature of the team who they reported were always responsive and generous with their time. This applied from the initial application process through project delivery and monitoring and liaising with other parts of the Council.

Following recommendations from the first round of ERF, some groups received support from a small group of consultants who were procured, via the recruitment agency used by Sheffield City Council, to support projects to develop and submit their ERF Round 2 application. The support of this team of 'Application Development Workers' was positively received, and the increased capacity and understanding that it provided resulted in successful applications. In general, this approach was regarded as a good means of navigating the bureaucratic demands of the application process. However, some concerns were raised that this did not allow members to develop their skills (potentially somewhat undermining the ERF objectives of building community infrastructure and businesses and communities working together), and that it could result in a disjointed application process where the external support worker had limited understanding of the area.

Project leads welcomed the efforts that had been made to streamline the application stage, but some still found it to be a time-consuming process. Some projects inherited pre-existing budgets which they stated restricted their freedom to shape the programme in the way they would have wanted. Unsuccessful applicants also raised concerns about areas not receiving funding when other areas had received two rounds of funding. The redistribution of some funds to the LACs for similar smaller scale projects in unsuccessful areas was an effective means of mitigating some of these concerns and a good means of providing project management experience.

The list of potential pre budgeted interventions, provided as part of a pack of supporting materials made available by the ERF Programme Team, was welcomed particularly for first time applicants who had limited experience and knowledge of costs and implications of delivering activities.

The programme's management and governance procedures and processes were adapted from Round One with extra capacity added to the ERF Programme Team. Project teams submitted quarterly finance and output updates and evidence using Sheffield City Council templates to the specialist Accountable Body Team, who formed a key part of the ERF Programme Team. This Monitoring and compliance specialist was well deployed to ensure project teams got the full support and guidance they required to manage the public funds effectively and robustly. The project leads also met monthly with the Programme Team to discuss activity updates, key challenges, budgets, monitoring and evaluation procedures and any pertinent issues.

The ERF Steering Group met monthly. It was chaired by the Chair of the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee and made-up of four senior councillors, three senior Council officers, and four private and community sector representatives. They received regular highlight reports from the Programme Team and discussed and provided oversight on budget, activities, output delivery, project issues and risks. Whilst the Steering Group have no formal decision-making power, the Group provided invaluable steer to the ERF Programme Team and made recommendations to the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee, who then took formal decisions in relation to the ERF. The continued contribution of private sector and community representatives brought a well-received widening of expertise and experience, as was the case in ERF1.

There is a forecast programme underspend in the region of £341,000, though the final amount will be determined once delivery is completed after the end of April 2025. The Programme Team are working with the ERF Steering Group, Councillors and Senior Officers to repurpose these funds with a view to ensuring a strong legacy for the Programme.

Project expenditure and output delivery have been effectively monitored with clear guidance on the evidence required. Where there was a risk of slippage or concern that outputs might not be delivered, the ERF Programme Team worked effectively, with Steering Group input where needed, to put in place contingency plans and closely monitor the situation. Extensions to delivery periods have been provided where activity has been delayed, e.g. because of poor weather. The rescoping of outputs was often necessary to overcome some project difficulties (i.e. land ownership issues) as well as in reaction to changing circumstances and realities as projects moved from concept into the realities of delivery. The Programme Team continue to work closely with project leads where needed to ensure that some outputs are realised, within the context of what can realistically be achieved within existing time, resource and capacity.

Although some project leads called for reduced bureaucratic demands, stakeholders and the ERF Programme Team highlighted the need to balance this with a thorough approach to due diligence and the regular submission of key monitoring and evaluation information, given the use of public money. Project leads were, on occasion, not fully aware of the level of risk associated with the provision of public grants to inexperienced organisations. Where this was the case significant levels of SCC resource was required to provide the required support and oversight.

The Programme Team were again very positively regarded with project leads praising their diligent, responsive and supportive approach throughout the delivery period.

8 Impacts, legacy and lessons learnt

ERF activity has continued to have significant impacts in local centres and for communities where projects have been delivered. Round 2 will leave a clear legacy of physical and community infrastructure improvements and renewed confidence in the value of local centres. Ongoing SCC support will be required to secure and deepen the programme's legacy. Securing long-term economic impact is challenging.

8.1 Impacts of ERF Round 2

Project leads reported a wide range of outcomes and impacts from ERF activity (see Section 4.3) that show how Council supported community activity can help support key City Goals such as community empowerment and decision making, vibrant and creative local spaces and supporting local business. New community groups were formed and constituted, a large programme of events was organised and undertaken, new street infrastructure was installed, public art work was commissioned, and local marketing materials were created.

The ERF programme has had clear impact with stakeholders in agreement that it has made tangible improvements to the district centres and stimulated a wide variety of community actions and activities. It has also helped to foster, consolidate and deepen community networks. It has provided the opportunity, and an incentive for, community and business collaboration and an outlet for their thoughts, ideas and challenges.

Street furniture and public realm improvements



Public art work such as shopfront murals have been positively received with project leads reporting regular anecdotal feedback on how they have brightened up the public realm and increased local awareness of shopping districts. Shopfront improvement programmes have been undertaken with local businesses and positively received by both businesses and customers.

"A number of shops have had money spent on them that probably wouldn't have happened for some time given what the traders have said about their finances and challenges."

New street furniture including bins, seating, signage, hanging baskets, planters, play markers, and banners have improved local perceptions of their local shopping districts helping to increase dwell time. The installation of Christmas lights and trees have been very well received with residents perceiving them as evidence that communities were taking pride in their districts and increasing the sense of community.

"ERF has fundamentally improved so many physical aspects of the shopping areas Green spaces have been cleared and shown love, money had been put into events which would have struggled without ERF support or may not have happened at all."

"The artwork brightens up the area and the improvements are a step forward in making the space more inviting and functional for the community."

"The sense of excitement (about the Christmas lights) was tangible with phone calls to friends and family members to "bring the kids" you won't believe it."

"After living on Hackenthorpe almost 50 years it's such a delight to see the lovely Christmas lights round the shops. Massive thanks for brightening up our area."

Some projects provided outputs focused on increasing safety and the reduction of anti-social behaviour in and around district centre. Public artwork was created with the aim of improving local perceptions of the centre and discouraging vandalism and graffiti. Bins were installed to reduce littering and street furniture was improved to encourage positive activity in district centres. These interventions are valued by residents and business owners.

Community events

Events were largely based around key points in the calendar including the summer holidays, Halloween, and Christmas. Other notable events included street cleaning days, women in business training opportunities, markets and community food initiatives. In many cases these events were co-ordinated with wider community involvement including local school children and community groups. Some events were well attended and positively received. Residents value events as a sign of community spirit whilst businesses see them as good means of increasing footfall. Where events had limited marketing and/or suffered with poor weather attendance rates were much lower.

There has also been some expectation management undertaken by the Programme Team with conversations focused on what can realistically be achieved in the context of limited experience and the use of limited public funds. The effective facilitation and delivery of events (i.e. the outdoor cinema in Crookes) provides a rich source of experiences on how other events can be ambitious whilst still working within clear rules and procedures.



"On the night of our Halloween event the chip shop reported their best takings in 14 years."

"The Christmas event went extremely well and was appreciated greatly by the shop keepers and local residents."

"The market has been a great success. It is a great magnet for attracting people to the area."

"The area feels invested in with the installation of the community artwork and litter bins, the events have made people feel positive about where they live. Promoting a shop local message is an important means by which businesses can feel supported and recognised by the Council."

Communities valued the input of ERF and the project teams in supporting new events. They see it as a sign that the Council and community partners care about their areas and are willing to take steps to support the health of their district centres.

The creation of new business and community groups and strengthening of community action

Notable examples of new community and business groups include the 'Spital Hill Network' Community Interest Company, 'Ecclesfield Together' Traders Group and the 'Independent Abbeydale' Traders Group. Hillsborough Together was formed during ERF1 also, and the London Road Business Hub are also currently in the process of becoming formalised to ensure they can continue into the future. The Independent Abbeydale Traders Group has built up a membership of 100 traders focused on the Independent Abbeydale brand. The Spital Hill Network became formally constituted allowing it to function as a social enterprise and apply for grant funding. It is made up of representatives from across the community including businesses and grassroots charities with makeup that reflects the multicultural demographics of the local area. It now has a central office as a direct result of ERF activity enabling that space to be opened up, it is working with key partners and developing a network to continue the work undertaken under ERF including local environmental activities (litter picking and street cleaning) and support, advice and education programmes. These activities have already received positive praise from

local residents who continue to appreciate further decision-making powers being given to local communities.

"Their (Spital Health Network) work had a real impact on the community. The area is cleaner and people are taking more care."

In the case of areas such as Hillsborough, Abbeydale Road, Ecclesfield and Spital Hill business-led community groups have been created and developed with leads reporting that the business community and residents increasingly see them a recognised group that support local improvements. Project leads reported that this has sparked further interest in how activity can be continued, deepened and developed.

"Independent shops are the lifeblood of Hillsborough shopping centre; this is a great event and hopefully it will keep happening year after year."

"I've lived in this area for about 30 years, and the last few years it has really improved, since the delivery and business group have been working with us on improving the area it has been fantastic"

"A really positive opportunity for local areas to make an impact and improve the community feel. I've lived in Hillsborough for 20 years now and it's nice to see the High Street changing."

The bottom-up community led approach is a key strength of ERF. Project teams appreciate the opportunity to develop their own creative and innovative means by which to support their communities and district centres. This provides a sense of empowerment and community ownership whilst facilitating and catalysing collaborative partnership work and the development and deepening of community networks. The community led approach has also provided increased scope for ensuring that activity and dialogue reflect local diversity and the demographics of local areas.

ERF funding has proved to be a catalyst to community action, the upskilling of local volunteers and the building of extra local capacity and infrastructure. It has inspired and deepened collaborative work and tangible improvements to district centres and there is a clear appetite for continued activity. In one notable example a national organisation has been encouraged to hold a sporting event in an area following ERF project activity and another has been spurred on to create a charitable project linked to ERF activity, building on the skills and knowledge developed through ERF delivery. That said, securing business engagement and collaboration and establishing business forums continues to be challenging and resource intensive. Attempts to establish formal business forums through ERF activity were often unsuccessful.

Improved perceptions

Stakeholders believe (and the feedback from the business survey indicates) that it is difficult to quantify ERF's impact on footfall. The scale of the funding available, and the many other factors affecting use of local centres, indicate that it was unlikely to have a significant economic development impact.

Stakeholders, project leads and businesses focussed on the positive impact the programme has had on residents' perceptions of their district centres and perceptions of community and Council activity. They emphasise ERF's role in reversing the cycle of decline and raising aspirations on what can be achieved through Council supported collaborative action.

ERF improvements and events have been received positively by residents who saw them as tangible signs that the district centres were being cared for and valued. The ERF approach has been widely

regarded as a good means for implementing activities that improve district centres and their wider community perception.

8.2 Future and legacy

Stakeholders agree that ERF activity has created a foundation upon which further community/district work can be undertaken and future impacts realised. It has fostered networks, collaborations and relationships and, in many cases, developed new ones. It has highlighted a clear appetite for local activity and ongoing investment in district centres. This ongoing activity is reliant on partnership work, business/community collaboration and project management expertise.

Project leads also reported that activity had also inspired some good conversations about how activity could be sustained and improved in future and how best to undertake other possible initiatives. There was a wide acknowledgement that retail businesses must work together evolving their activity and ensuring that their communities know about their offering and services.

ERF activity has enabled businesses and community groups to become further involved in their areas providing a mechanism for them to engage and provide feedback and ideas on future development. It has also been a means by which communities can develop their own infrastructure and assets. It has acted as a catalyst for other community work and funding opportunities. Significant ongoing work will be required to ensure wider and sustained local business involvement in development work.

Stakeholders are very keen to learn lessons from ERF looking at how best the Council can work flexibly with local partners to maximise impact on local communities and fully embed themselves in localities. Many project leads stated that there was an appetite to continue the activities in their communities building upon the successes, capacity and expertise developed.

Increased partnership working was regularly mentioned as a positive impact of ERF Round 2, with local organisations, businesses and residents collaborating to put on events, plan and deliver activities and co-ordinate district improvements. Project leads cited the importance of intra generational work in ensuring that activity represented the full spectrum of ideas.

"The business trader's group has created a sense of ownership of the high street from businesses who were previously isolated and/or did not engage."

Stronger community partnership working and relationships will be a clear legacy of ERF. Maintaining, deepening and extending these partnerships is seen as vital to ensuring long-term impact. Project leads working to develop a shared sense of shared responsibility, input and positive partnership working was widely regarded as a critical success factor for projects

"The ERF community development experience has identified a wider need for new and stronger community relationships in the area."

ERF has been an important mechanism for upskilling community volunteers and providing them with an opportunity to develop their project management expertise and experience of working with Council services.

"Through this experience, the team have gained insights into the procedural and logistical challenges involved in maintaining and upgrading public spaces, allowing for more informed decision-making in future projects."

The Local Area Committees are well placed for supporting with future activity as they are increasingly embedded within the localities with the requisite relationships, understanding and Council links. Moving forward there is an appetite for them to undertake a stronger, more defined role in local place-making and supporting high street businesses. In some cases, projects are seeking external funding opportunities to continue their community development work and to consolidate and increase impact.

Stakeholders agree that the key issue with the LACs is limited capacity and resources and the strength of their links with local businesses. There is also a concern that there will be a gap between the completion of ERF and any successor programme and that there is risk that the foundations created by the programme are not maintained and built upon.

"To sustain ERF's legacy, ongoing funding is essential. While significant progress has been made in terms of community engagement, physical improvements, and establishing activities like the play markers, continuing this work requires consistent financial support."

"The enthusiasm from local businesses, residents, and community groups, such as the Happy Saplings Toddler Group, demonstrates the value of these initiatives. However, to keep delivering these activities and expand them further, securing funding for future phases is crucial."

"I am concerned that post ERF we will revert to where we were previously without any financial support. The area was run down, had not received investment in many years. It is very easy to revert to this and will happen quickly without projects playing a pivotal part in development and maintenance of the area."

The ERF Programme Team have suggested the repurposing of the programme underspend to create dedicated capacity to support the LACs with these issues and to help ensure long-term impacts and legacy for ERF activity. This would also ensure the retention of some of the key expertise, experience and relationships developed under the programme and provide an opportunity to extend some activity into districts that did not benefit from ERF.

The Business Information Officers are regarded as a pivotal resource for maintaining strong relationships with local businesses and securing their involvement in ongoing community work. As this would be in addition to and different from their primary role (providing 1-1 business support) it raises significant concerns about their position and capacity to continue offering additional resource.

8.3 Critical success factors

ERF has shown that local businesses and the community can collaborate well on mutually beneficial activities, but this can be constrained by a variety of different factors.

There was a consensus that one of the critical success factors for ensuring a strong legacy is ensuring that there is sufficient capacity and funding and effective local partnerships to take forward the work. In some cases, capacity could come from continued volunteer involvement, through community and business groups (long standing or newly constituted). Infrastructure and public realm improvements will require continued maintenance to ensure a long-lasting legacy (i.e. sustained footfall increases and improved resident perceptions).

Businesses have limited capacity to get involved in events and in the cases of national franchises they are very dependent upon national decision makers. Bringing businesses together to work in collaboration and to create business representative groups is highly dependent on facilitators that have the time, resource, and capacity to develop relationships, build trust and drive activity. The longer established Business Information Officers have the relationships to undertake this role, but they have very limited capacity, and some are new to the position as the team with some recent turnover of staff. Where facilitators did not exist, experience shows that bringing business together is very difficult. Project delivery leads found it challenging to obtain firm commitments of trader support with them frequently citing operational pressures and uncertainty about benefits as reasoning.

"They're (traders) so busy running their businesses that a lot of them didn't have time (or didn't want to spend their free time) at meetings and basically 'volunteering'. This would remain a challenge in terms of numbers of engaged traders."

Other factors thought to influence the level of business engagement included:

- Makeup of the businesses (daytime or night-time, independent or franchise/national chain)
- Consistent and regular involvement of local business ERF champions
- Existence of pre-existing collaborative networks/relationships
- Density of the businesses (i.e. a concentration of business around a distinct district centre)
- Capacity for business involvement (i.e. single employee)
- Long-term local spend trends.

8.4 Lessons learned

Project delivery capacity is an issue particularly in areas with limited pre-existing community infrastructure. The level of community led grant work is heavily reliant upon capacity and, in many cases, voluntary support. Voluntary support and community infrastructure continues to be strongest in the areas where district centre support need is lower.

"We have learned that there is no substitute for paid, in-person capacity working with high street businesses and community groups."

In this context the addition of paid for project management support has been welcomed in areas that have low levels of community infrastructure/project management expertise (and high district centre need). Despite the increased level of support provided in Round Two, concerns remain about the amount of work required to deliver projects directly, particularly the level of administrative/bureaucratic assurance required for grant management work.

Increased project teams understanding of Council work, due diligence approaches and operations is a definite positive impact of ERF but ongoing support will be required for some teams to ensure effective, efficient and diligent project management processes. As outlined in Section 7.3 some project leads/teams were not fully aware of the levels of due diligence required when spending public funds with significant levels of SCC resource required to support these projects.

Providing central Council support for locally delivered grants is resource intensive, efficiencies could be found centralising key aspects but this must always be weighed up against commitments to developing community/local business infrastructure and empowering local residents and organisations.

Where project management experience was limited project teams were sometimes reliant upon officer support. Across most projects inexperienced managers learnt quickly working effectively within project structures and parameters making strong use of guidance material and the support of the ERF Programme Team. In isolated cases limited expertise led to unrealistic expectations of what is achievable with limited resources and a limited understanding of the amount of work entailed to deliver events when using public funds.

Holding outside community events in Winter is challenging. Poor weather can lead to low attendance and, in some cases, event cancellation. Where events are new to a community substantial amount of marketing and awareness raising is required to ensure good attendance levels. The appointment of an events consultant was welcome providing assurance that oversight and planning were in line with industry standards. Moving forward the use of advisors is a good means of ensuring that project teams expectations about what can be delivered in terms of community events is in line with event management best practice.

Concerns were raised about how activity will continue and be sustained post ERF. Stakeholders suggest that continued work could be done to signpost community teams towards other national funding opportunities (i.e. UKSPF) and other means by which local capacity/infrastructure could be sustained/developed. Other concerns were raised about the potential overreliance on a specific demographic of volunteer (i.e. affluent, white and over 65). Concerns centred on how reflective this was of local communities.

Seeking land owner permissions before undertaking work is a major restriction on district centre improvement work. Confirming land ownership can delay work and gaining the necessary permissions for work can be difficult, particularly when not owned by SCC. The ERF Programme Team had a good understanding of these issues providing welcome flexibility on activity (i.e. changing scope if permissions were not granted).

Businesses and community groups agree that further work is required to ensure long-term sustainable impacts. There is a widespread perception that although ERF activity is welcome it did not have the reach or funds required to deal with the systemic issues that local high streets face (i.e. cost of living pressures, crime, accessibility, austerity, land ownership and evolving shopping habits).

There is widespread acknowledgement that the macro-economic factors that are currently making trading very challenging are outside the scope of ERF’s influence. Inflationary pressures, limited national economic growth, changes in shopping habits and budgetary decisions are regularly cited by local businesses as the biggest factors affecting them. These mean that the impacts of programmes like ERF on metrics such as turnover and business survival will always be limited. Ongoing dialogue and communication with these businesses on how best to support them is paramount with a clear interest shown in how best to continue improving business perceptions of Sheffield City Council support.

Within a context of multiple economic factors affecting business performance and limited data measuring the exact economic impact of district centre activity is very challenging. The use of an incentivised easily accessible and easily marketed (using a QR code on a flyer) survey resulted in a high completion rate. The use of improved perception questions also partly mitigated the impact of no baseline data.



9 Social value impact assessment

ERF2 activity has created a wide range of benefits for local centres and the businesses based within them, as well as for the wider communities in which activity has taken place. Some of these benefits can be quantified, using social value techniques. This approach depends on the use of some 'proxy' values, where benchmarks established through previous research studies are applied to the ERF programme. The analysis indicates that ERF 2 generates a total of £7.4m in social value impacts, providing a social return on investment (SROI) of £3.60 for every £1.00 invested.

9.1 Introduction and economic data considerations

Undertaking an impact assessment relies on the availability and accessibility of key data and information, including the scale of benefits generated, and an estimate of the equivalent monetary value of those benefits. As previously outlined, baseline data at a district level on key metrics relating to or associated with ERF2 activity is limited; this makes quantifying economic impact challenging.

Whilst additional data was captured through the primary research process, there are challenges in disentangling the impact of ERF2 activity from more general trends (i.e. improvements or challenges) in localities across Sheffield, as well as macroeconomic factors such as inflation and cost-of-living pressures and the impact of changing shopping habits on business growth and activity. The business and resident surveys both attempted to address these challenges by asking questions about changed behaviour and perceptions (post ERF activity), but a balance had to be struck between encouraging responses (through designing a simple and user-friendly questionnaire which could easily be completed) and attempting to gather very specific data on e.g. business turnover levels and individual spend (which would require more technical and detailed questions, potentially reducing response rates).

The impact assessment therefore focuses on the social value of ERF2 activity. This is not a traditional economic assessment but instead models and quantifies the benefits of ERF2 activity on community organisations, residents and neighbourhoods, using 'equivalent monetary values' for a wide range of benefits.

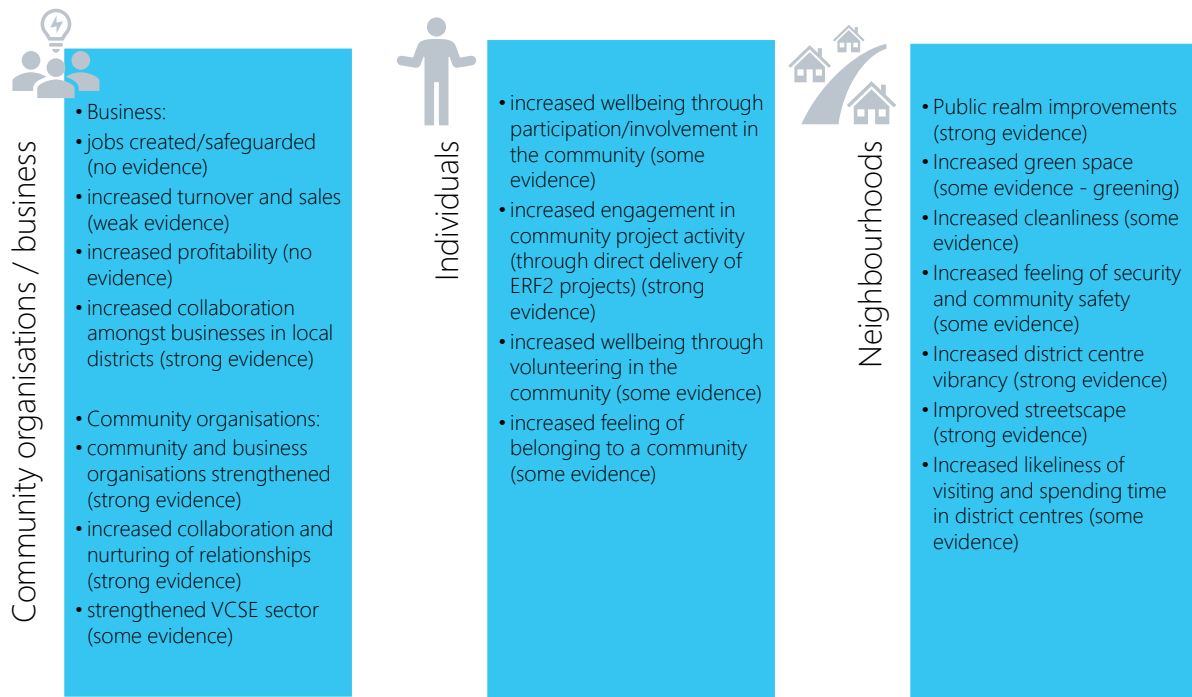
9.2 Approach to estimating the social impact of ERF2

Social Value UK defines social value as a way to 'understand and record the relative importance people place on the wellbeing changes they experience'¹⁷. These things are important but are not commonly expressed or measured in the same way as financial value.

The diagram below illustrates the range of benefits ERF2 activity has contributed to – for businesses and community organisations; for individuals involved in the programme; and for the neighbourhoods and communities where investment has taken place. It demonstrates the wide range of benefits which

¹⁷ Social Value UK, What is Social Value and Why does it Matter? Accessed [here](#).

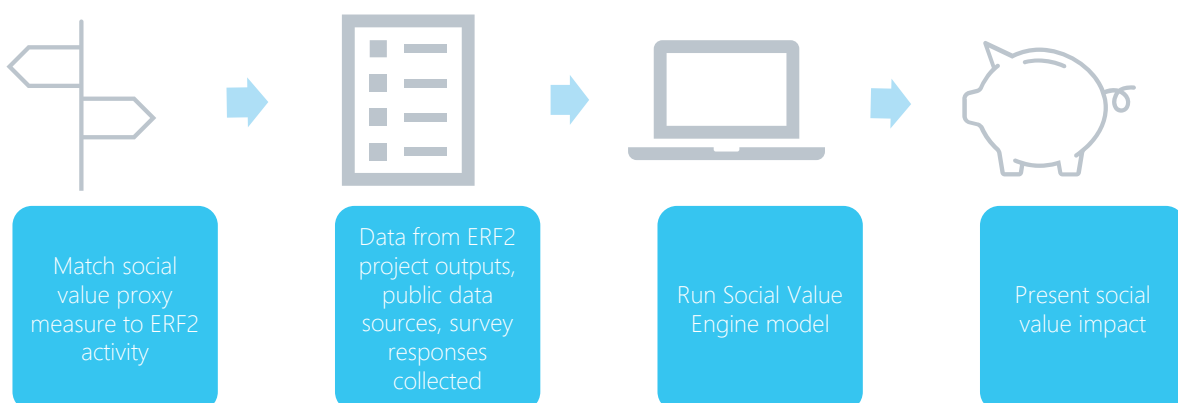
ERF 2 activity may have supported, and highlights where the evidence for each benefit is strong or weak.



Many social value benefits are ‘intangible’ – difficult to measure objectively and therefore often hard to value (‘non-monetisable’). Social Return on Investment (SROI) principles are the most common way to estimate the value of these benefits. SROI uses ‘proxy values’ to assign an economic value to a non-monetised outcome.

To monetise the social impacts delivered by ERF2, the assessment incorporates SROI principles to quantify wider wellbeing and environmental benefits that have arisen as a result of ERF2 activity. The assessment uses the Social Value Engine (SVE) tool, which provides financial proxies for a range of outcomes derived from a range of peer-reviewed evidence bases. The SVE is an online tool accredited by Social Value UK.

The diagram below demonstrates the process undertaken.



9.3 Quantifiable impacts of ERF2

Based on the above approach, this section provides an estimate of the social value of ERF2 activity.¹⁸

Community organisations and business benefits

Given the range of other contributing factors, and the nature of ERF investment, it is not possible to directly link business benefits (sales, turnover, profit, jobs created/safeguarded) to ERF activity. However, businesses in the ERF areas, and those closely involved in delivering ERF activities, did identify benefits they had experienced as a result. Some of these cannot be quantified (e.g. increased 'vibrancy' of the local centre), but others do have proxy values which can be applied to generate an estimate of benefits.

For example, as a result of ERF2 activity across districts in Sheffield, both businesses and community organisations have been able to improve relationships and systems of working within the locality, for example through increased numbers of community meetings and through setting up business forums to enable increased collaboration on the high street. The structures and networks facilitated by ERF have strengthened community and business organisations. Proxy values are available to capture the organisational benefit of increased efficiencies and improved governance which ERF activity has contributed to, and the benefit of more people (business leaders and residents) being able to contribute to decisions regarding district centres. The table below outlines the social value of ERF activity on community organisations and businesses

Figure 9-1 Community organisations impact

Social value outcome	Proxy description	Impact
Building a strong voluntary and community sector and strengthening of community organisations/projects	Improved governance leading to time efficiencies	£39,185
Increasing the capability of people to have say over decisions through meetings with council officials	Average cost of a meeting with a council official	£3,260
Total impact		£42,445

Source: Kada Research (2025)

Individuals

Although ERF did not target support on individuals, those who have been involved in project design, development and delivery have had the opportunity to develop new skills and experiences, and benefit from being part of a collaborative effort to improve their local neighbourhood. All of these activities have social value benefits in the form of the wellbeing that individuals experience from being involved in community groups and activities. Through regular ERF meetings, project leads, and other meeting attendees (businesses, volunteers, community members) have established a system of delivery for community activity. The table below outlines the social value impact ERF activity has had on individuals involved in project delivery.

Figure 9-2 Impact on individuals

Social value outcome	Proxy description	Impact
People enabled to fully participate in their community	Value of regular attendance at a local organisation	£1,690,597
Total impact		£1,690,597

Source: Kada Research (2025)

¹⁸ Underlying assumptions are set out in Annex Two.

Neighbourhoods

Many of the ERF2 interventions have focussed on improving the streetscape and the environment of district centres for residents, for example, greening through hanging baskets and ground planters, public art installations and improved signage, shopfronts, street furniture and cleanliness. The increased investment has provided local people with reassurance that their local areas are valued. As a result of such interventions, the residents survey found that many respondents felt that the local area had improved. Residents experience wellbeing benefits from living in a good place/neighbourhood and there is a proxy value for this feeling. The table below outlines the social value impact ERF activity has had on Sheffield districts and neighbourhoods.

Figure 9-3 Neighbourhood impact

Social value outcome	Proxy description	Impact
Residents value living in a good place/neighbourhood	Value ascribed to living in a good place	£5,670,432
Total impact		£5,670,432

Source: Kada Research (2025)

9.4 Impact summary / Value for Money assessment

The table below provides a summary of the social value estimated to have been generated as a result of ERF2 activity.

ERF2 impact overview

Theme	Social value outcome	Proxy description	Impact
Community organisations	Building a strong voluntary and community centre and strengthening of community organisations/projects	Improved governance leading to time efficiencies	£39,185
	Increasing the capability of people to have say over decisions through meetings with council officials	Average cost of a meeting with a council official	£3,260
Individuals	People enabled to fully participate in their community	Value of regular attendance at a local organisation	£1,690,597
Neighbourhoods	Residents value living in a good place/neighbourhood	Value ascribed to living in a good place	£5,670,432
Total			£7,403,474

Source: Kada Research

Considering current spend, the social value assessment generates a social return on investment of 3.6:1 (i.e., £1.00 of ERF investment has generated £3.60 of social value) and represents good value for money. This represents 'high' value for money, in line with DLUHC Appraisal Guidance¹⁹ and indicates that the project has been successful in generating social value impact for Sheffield.

ERF Round 1 saw benefit-cost ratio range of between 1.99:1 and 2.24:1, or a return on investment of between £1.99 and £2.24 per every £1 spent consistent with a similar model and utilisation of the Social Value Engine. ERF Round 2 has seen better performance on social value impacts generated in comparison to Round 1.

¹⁹ [DLUHC Appraisal Guide](#)

VfM Assessment

VfM	
Social value benefits	£7,403,474
ERF2 spend	£2,065,141
SROI	3.6:1

Source: Kada Research (2025)

10 Conclusions and recommendations for the future

10.1 Conclusions

The evaluation of Round Two of the ERF programme has led to the following conclusions:

Economic and social value Impact

- ERF activity in district centres has generated significant social value impact for individuals, businesses and community organisations and for residents, but it is hard to attribute direct economic impact.
- Both rounds will leave a legacy of improved physical and community infrastructure and renewed confidence in the value of district centres.

Working with local businesses and community organisations

- The local business community value the interventions but their ability to drive and steer activity is restricted by limited capacity, resource and expertise.
- Community anchor organisations and groups can support projects but there is a risk that this may dilute activity away from the original focus on strengthening the district centre offer and supporting local businesses.

Legacy

- ERF has created a large appetite for continued community/business activity and partnership work focused on improving district centres.
- Ongoing SCC support with capacity, expertise and experience is required to secure and deepen the programme's legacy and ensure resilient and welcoming high streets. This presents an opportunity for increased LAC involvement.
- Without ongoing targeted resource/support there is a risk of growing disparities between areas. Places which have the business/voluntary/community infrastructure to take forward ERF activities and ideas will be able to build on the investment made to date, whilst in areas where capacity is more limited, the opportunity to build a positive legacy from ERF activity is more constrained.
- ERF champions will be required to ensure that the institutional memory/experiences are not lost and to ensure legacy, learning and ongoing momentum/drive.

Learnings for future similar programmes

- The model of community led Council supported programmes is seen as the right direction of travel and it is very well aligned with the City Goals/Growth Plan.
- Community infrastructure helps to with delivery but it can dilute the business focus.
- Awarding grants to small local organisations some of whom have limited experience and expertise can be resource intensive (in terms of SCC Officer time). Efficiencies can be gained from recentralising some key delivery/decision making functions but this would go against the commitment to hyperlocal/community led decision making.
- Both ERF rounds have provided a wealth of models, outputs and experiences that could positively inform future district centre work.

10.2 Options for taking forward ERF legacy

Given the ending of the funding for the ERF programme, but with significant allocated funds remaining unspent, there are a number of options open to Sheffield City Council as it considers how to ensure a continued legacy for ERF activity and local business and district centre activity:

Option One

Use the ERF underspend and other identified resource for increased/sustained Business Information Officer activity. The Business Information Officers have proved to be a vital and well received resource working closely with local businesses to develop relationships and provide/signpost key sources of support. These relationships have been leveraged to support ERF activity and could be utilised in future to ensure that the local business voices continue to be represented. They could be used to co-ordinate collaborative activity and signpost funding opportunities.

Opportunities: The learning, resources, relationships and infrastructure developed under ERF continue to be utilised and consolidated whilst retaining a direct outlet for the local business voice.

Risks: BIOs limited capacity and the focus of their key responsibilities hinders their ability to undertake this role effectively. Activity is focused on individual business needs rather than collaborative activity.

Option Two

Use the ERF underspend and other identified resource to employ ERF champions to work alongside the Local Area Committees to ensure ongoing support for ERF projects and to identify opportunities for future district centre activity. These roles would come with a delivery budget to support future bids/delivery.

Opportunities: A dedicated resource that could be solely focused upon ensuring ERF learning, resources, activity and infrastructure continues to be developed and continues to have impact in the localities. They would ensure that the institutional memory built up over two rounds of ERF activity is not diluted/lost. They would also ensure that work continues to be focused upon high street health and collaborative activity. It would also prevent additional pressures being placed upon LACs.

Risks: The resource is mostly spent on staffing with little resource available to fund district centre activity. Resource may be too limited to share across the different LACs leading to disparities in activities/funding. The resource is lost once funds are exhausted with no current contingency plans in place for ensuring a long-term legacy for ERF activity.

Option Three

Take underspend as a saving and have confidence that ERF has created the momentum, resources and structures for similar activity to continue through volunteer, business forum and community organisation activity.

Opportunities: Empowered communities/business forums continue activity without a dependency on Council funding. These groups look to other funding sources to sustain activity. The expertise and experience created under ERF is deployed with more community agency/control of decision making.

Risks: Momentum is lost with activity slowing down/ceasing because of limited resource and an over-reliance upon volunteer activity. Loss of institutional memory, expertise and experience. Perceptions of Council support for district centres decline.

10.3 Recommendations

Our key recommendations for future district centre activity are as follows:

- SCC needs to maintain an ongoing focus on district centres showing tangible signs of Council attention and activity to residents and businesses.
- There needs to be an ongoing awareness regarding the varying levels of community and local business capacity and resources ensuring that ongoing support to areas where this is restricted to avoid increased disparities between localities.
- Formal mechanisms are required to ensure that the institutional memory, resources and momentum built from ERF activity is not lost.
- There needs to be continued efforts to develop the local business infrastructure across the city. The areas where it currently exists have a clear foundation for future district centre improvement activity. Ongoing dialogue and communication with local businesses can be key to their long-term survival and to improving their perceptions of Sheffield City Council support.
- Every opportunity should be taken to increase the amount of available up-to-date district centre data.
- For these reasons we recommend that the Council pursue Option Two for taking forward ERF's impact and legacy.

Annex One: ERF Round 1 Outputs

ERF Round 1 were collated following project close using Project Completion forms completed by project leads. As explained in the report narrative, outputs have been assessed differently across Rounds 1 and 2 of ERF.

Project	Output type	Target	Outputs achieved	% achieved
Abbeydale Street Parklet	No of events	1	1	100%
	Parklet	1	1	100%
Bears of Sheffield	Large bears installed in district centre areas	4	4	100%
	Small bears installed in district	4	4	100%
	Increased school participation	10	10	100%
	Increased footfall	5,000	5,711	114%
Broomhill	Green Wall Installed	1	NA	NA
	Events Delivered	1	NA	NA
	Public Spaces Refreshed and Revitalised	2	NA	NA
	Number of Christmas Trees Installed	45	NA	NA
Castlegate Festival	Number of attendees	2000	Exceeded	Exceeded
	Local artists and musicians supported	19	45+	237%
	Local businesses supported/market traders	20	Exceeded	Exceeded
	Job opportunities created	20	Exceeded	Exceeded
	Volunteer opportunities created	10	Exceeded	Exceeded
Choose Chapeltown	Events Delivered	6	5	83%
	Public Spaces Updated & Refreshed	7	7	100%
	Physical Assets Installed	40	43	108%
Family Friendly Firth Park	Web & Social Media Sites Created	2	2	100%
	New Infrastructure Installed	17	18	106%
	Events Delivered	10	10	100%
	Public Space Refrshed and Revitalised	21	21	100%
	Increased High Street Footfall	2,500	2,500	100%
Game City Adventures	Number of engagements	10,000-30,000	22,055	221% of lower boundary
	Event stalls delivered	5	3	60%
	Venues Supported	20	15	75%
	Businesses Supported	5	6	120%
	Paid employment opportunities	3	23	767%
Hillsborough Together	New Street Furniture	13	13	100%
	Traders Association Established	1	1	100%
	Numbers of Traders Association Meetings	4	5	125%
	Events Delivered	6	7	117%
	Shop Fronts Refreshed	15	25	167%
Nether Edge	Business Utilising Technology / Creation of Social Media Profiles	1	1	1
	Existing Businesses Saved / Continuing to Trade	20	22	110%
	Public Space Refrshed and Revitalised	24	24	100%
Page Hall	New Infrastructure Installed	3	2	67%
	Business Forum Established	1	NA	NA

	Public Spaces Updated & Refreshed	1	NA	NA
Pollen Flower Market	Number of events	9	9	100%
	Jobs safeguarded	6	6	100%
	Trading Opportunities for small businesses	275	318	116%
	Volunteering opportunities	10	13	130%
Revive Woodhouse	Events Delivered	12	12	100%
	Public Spaces Updated & Refreshed	1	1	100%
	Litter Picks Delivered	24	24	100%
Summer in the CIQ	Events Delivered	30	60	200%
	Businesses Supported	20	17	85%
	Artists Supported	20	94	470%
The Heart of Manor Park	Project Steering Group	1	1	100%
	Physical Improvements	4	5	125%
	Community Events	3	3	100%
	Markets	3	3	100%
Walkley	Increased High Street Footfall	10%	10%	100%
	Events Hosted	4	4	100%
	Increased Café/Restaurant Covers	10	18	180%
	Business Pivoting to Sell New Products/Services	10	10	100%
	Business Growing	20	4	20%

Annex Two: Social Value Assessment – workings and assumptions

The table below provides detail on the proxies used to model the social value impact of outcomes resulting from ERF2 activity, as well as the persistence and gross to net assumptions applied.

ERF2 impact overview

Theme	Social value outcome	Proxy description	Proxy Value	Proxy source	Data input	Persistence	Leakage	Attrib'tn	Ddw'ght	Displ- mnt	Drop- Off	Impact
Community organisations	Building a strong voluntary and community centre and strengthening of community organisations/projects	Improved governance leading to time efficiencies	£2,212	Source	27 organisations	5 years	10%	10%	10%	10%	25%	£39,185
	Increasing the capability of people to have say over decisions through meetings with council officials	Average cost of a meeting with a council official	£9	Source	552 meetings	2 years	10%	10%	10%	10%	100%	£3,260
Individuals	People enabled to fully participate in their community	Value of regular attendance at a local organisation	£2,334	Source	1,104 people	2 years	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	£1,690,597
Neighbourhoods	Residents value living in a good place/neighbourhood	Value ascribed to living in a good place	£1,380	Source	225,546	2 years	10%	75%	10%	10%	10%	£5,670,432
Total											£7,403,474	

Source: Kada Research

Data inputs and assumptions

The table below outlines the workings/calculations behind the data inputted into the Social Value Engine which has been used to model the social value impact of ERF2 activity.

ERF2 impact overview

Data input	Workings	
27 organisations	Through data collection as part of our primary research, we collected the number of organisations established and functioning as a result of ERF2 activity. Generally, each project area (23) established one project team, with some areas establishing additional groups.	23 organisations plus 4 extra groups
552 meetings	The two SCC project officers met with ERF2 project leads and/or groups at least once a month throughout the duration of delivery. At each meeting, 2 council officials would have been in attendance.	2 council officers by 23 ERF2 projects meeting once a month ²⁰ .
1,104 people	Across the 23 ERF2 project areas, it was assumed that monthly meetings were held with an average number of 4 attendees.	4 meeting attendees by 23 ERF2 projects meeting once a month ²¹ .
22,546 residents	Resident numbers have been targeted	<p>Resident numbers were totalled across each of the ERF2 district areas to find a total number of residents across all ERF2 areas. Of these residents, it was assumed that 10% directly benefitted from ERF2 activity in their local district. The resident survey data found that 65% of residents cited an improved perception of their local area. This proportion was applied to the number of residents directly benefiting from ERF activity²².</p>

Source: Kada Research

²⁰ 2 x 23 x 12

²¹ 4 x 23 x 12

²² 346,866 x 0.1 x 0.65



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