

CELL Final Feedback

Thoughts from Residents, Funded Projects
and Partnership Members

February 2022





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Introducing this Feedback

**This report presents
final feedback from
CELL Big Local
residents, funded
projects and
Partnership Members**

Collected in December 2021, at the latter stages of CELL Big Local, the research reached out to a number of different stakeholders.

Designed to obtain their views on the process and its impact, the research extended an open invitation to ALL residents via a number of locally held drop-in sessions and an online survey, whilst also inviting the views of a number of funded projects and Partnership Members (online).

Grateful acknowledgements are extended to all those who participated, giving their candid views and sharing their experiences of CELL Big Local since it began.

Read on for the detail of what the research found...

7 Key Messages





1

THE COLLECTED FEEDBACK REPRESENTS A VERY SMALL SLICE OF RESIDENT OPINION

While all CELL residents had the opportunity to give final feedback on CELL Big Local, few took the opportunity to do so. However - those who did were notably complimentary about the difference they felt the programme had made to the area.

2

RESIDENTS DESCRIBED A RAFT OF IMPROVEMENTS THEY HAD OBSERVED AND BENEFITTED FROM

These ranged from the provision of community facilities, events and activities, to the provision of support and information - the latter particularly appreciated during the context of the Covid pandemic.

3

THE VERY BEST OF CELL BIG LOCAL WAS FELT TO INCLUDE AREA FOCUS, INVESTMENT AND SUPPORT

Weaving through this, residents identified a real sense of collaboration and community spirit, engendered as a result of a friendly and helpful ethos, and strong communication. Not forgetting the aforementioned facilities, events and activities provision.

4

FUNDED PROJECTS WERE HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT THE CELL BIG LOCAL FUNDING PROCESS

Describing every stage of the process as easy, prompt and effective, funded projects were clearly satisfied with both application and communication, applauding the smooth and effective passage of their route to funding.

5

ALL FUNDED PROJECTS WERE KEEN TO DETAIL THE IMPACT OF CELL BIG LOCAL

Unanimously feeling that the community had come together to build a greater sense of community, there was also the frequent opinion that community skills and confidence had increased in terms of identifying future local needs and subsequently being able to respond to and act upon these needs.

6

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS OBJECTIVELY CONSIDERED CELL BIG LOCAL EFFECTIVENESS IN TERMS OF PROCESS

Whilst frequently underlining the strengths and highlights of the process of CELL Big Local - of which there were felt to be many - Partnership Members were equally candid in their appraisal of those elements which they felt could have been *more* successful. These included the challenges of working within different community boundaries, power management and getting people involved/sustaining this involvement longitudinally.

7

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS CLEARLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPACT OF CELL BIG LOCAL

In overall terms, 90% felt that the programme had made a positive difference to the quality of residents' lives - a view underpinned by independent surveys, anecdotal evidence, and the many projects initiated, improved and completed.

Resident Feedback

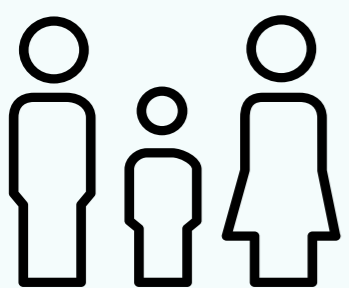




residents provided final feedback on CELL Big Local

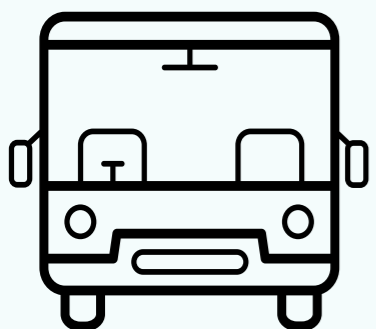
Area Improvements

Residents from across the four villages detailed what they felt had been wide-ranging and notable area improvements via Cell Big Local:



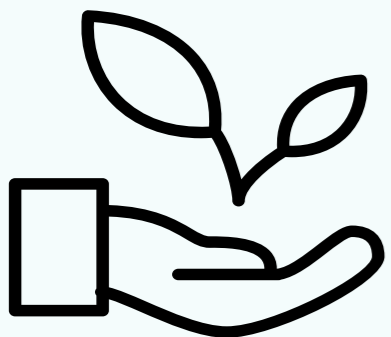
Activities for children and young people

- Increased activities
- Holiday clubs
- Play areas/parks
- 1st CELL Scout Group



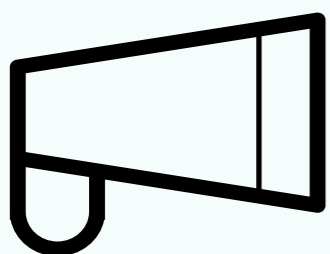
Travel & Transport

- WAT Bus



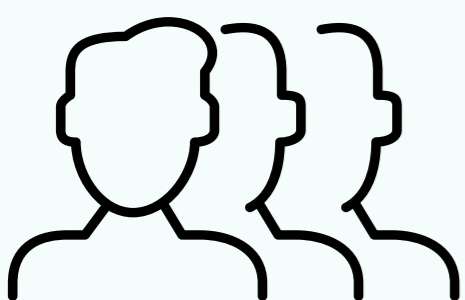
Environmental improvements

- Pele Tower restoration
- Lynemouth 'Friends of the Dene' improvements
- Linton Park
- Litter collections



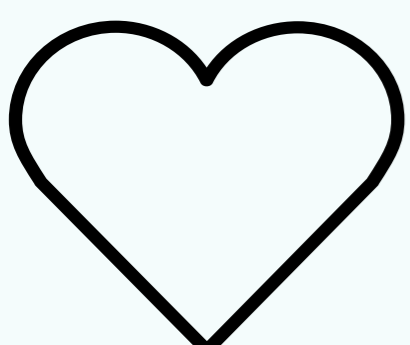
Communication & Information

- Inter-village communication
- CELL Life newsletter/booklets
- Covid information



Local activities & facilities

- Organised community events
- New kitchen at Institute
- Food bank
- Ellington lights



Community support

- To community organisations and residents
- Covid support
- Bacmans Community funding

Thoughts on Area Improvements

"The 1st CELL Scout Group has been a huge improvement to facilities for young people in the area."



"I moved into Lynemouth within the 7 years of funding. I have been very impressed with the use of CELL money to improve the everyday lives of the residents."



"There are too many improvements to name. CELL has helped numerous people and many organisations."



"Many people, especially those living alone in the CELL Big Local area, have benefited due to their inclusion within the Community, where if CELL had not occurred they would still be in an isolated position. From achieving funding to putting their projects, visits and events into progress. All very thankful at being included."



"I was not in the area before CELL, but have been massively impressed by the range of activity and the availability of small scale funding for individual events / projects and the way CELL responds to / generates community activity and ethos."



The Very Best of CELL Big Local

In defining the very best of CELL, residents described what they felt to be a previously 'forgotten' area, benefitting from much needed investment. Thereafter, note that there was felt to be a real sense of collaboration and community spirit, spurred by a friendly and helpful ethos, great communication and support, and the delivery of a number of key improvements throughout the area.



Brought investment and focus to a 'forgotten' area

Adopted an ethos of friendliness & helpfulness

Strengthened community collaboration/ joint-working/spirit

Provided support for community organisations, families and individuals

Strengthened communication

Provided a raft of activities, facilities and improvements

Thoughts on the Very Best of CELL Big Local

"CELL provided a central voice for the community."



"The community came together on shared projects."



"Residents gained a sense of belonging and were given great support, especially during Covid."



"It's local reference. We are four small, insignificant communities and easily overlooked. These funds were just for us and their spending addressed local need."

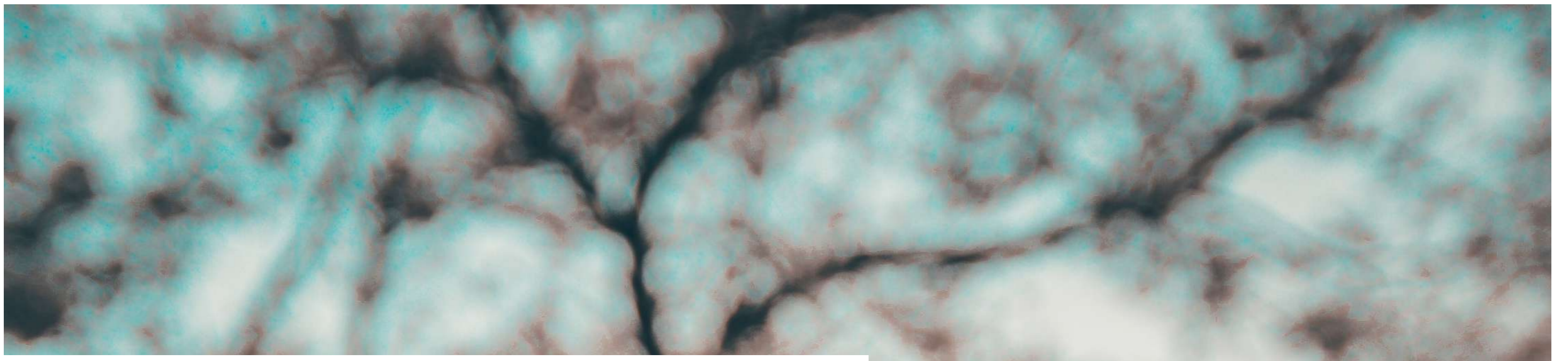


"Activities which offered opportunities to groups of residents, such as holiday activities for children, the environmental focus and skills enhancements for adults."



"The best things have been achieving funding to put projects, events and visits into progress. Also inclusion within the community has enabled people to achieve care and friendships not previously available."

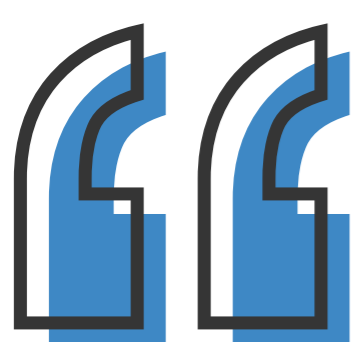
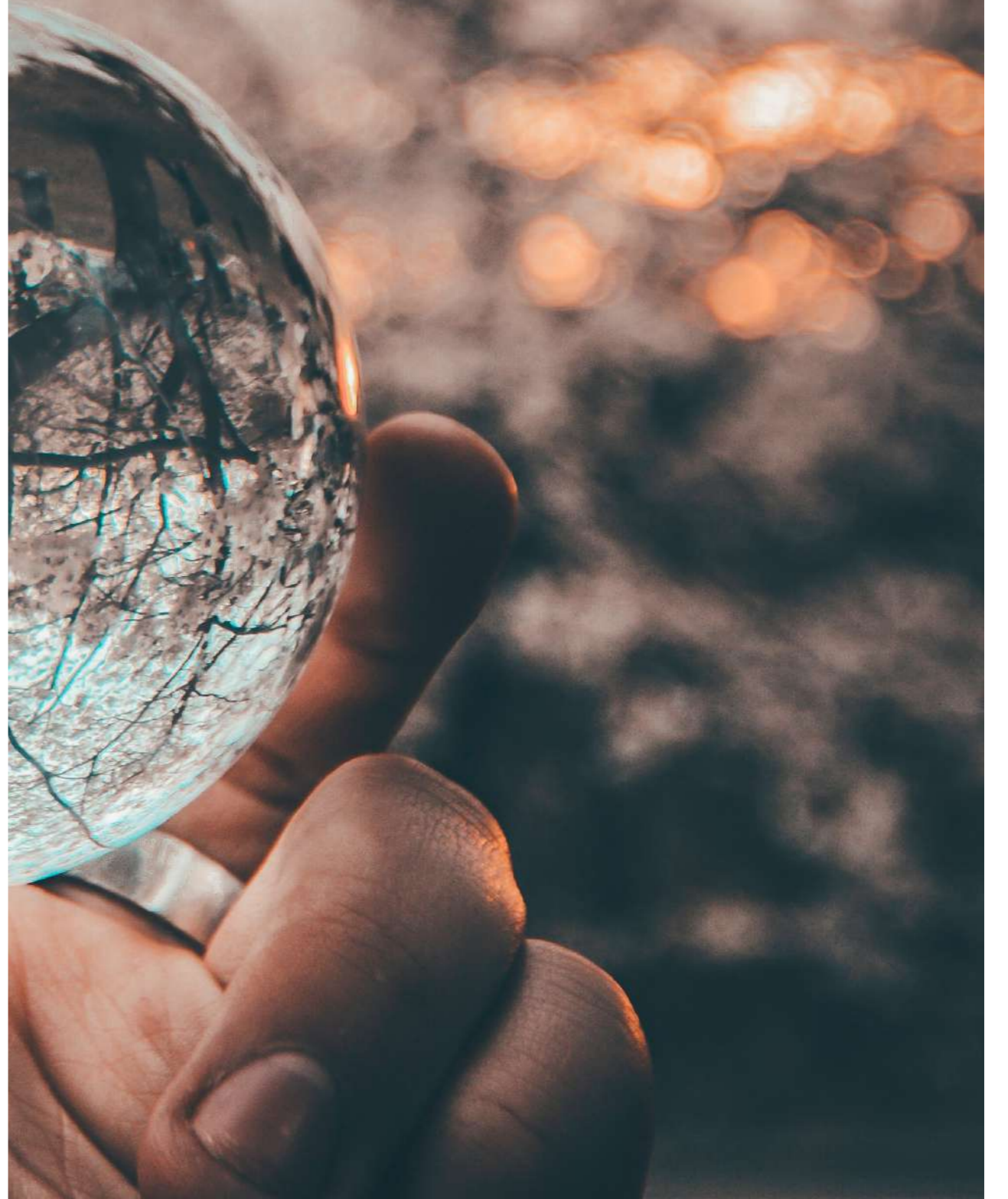




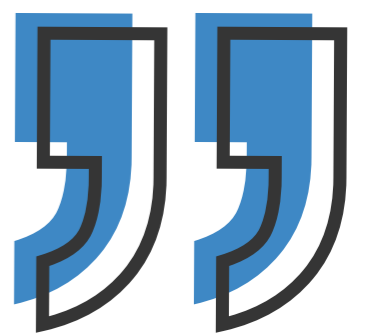
Doing it Differently?

Considering what could have been improved during the CELL Big Local process, a handful of residents offered the following suggestions:

- Increased promotion, explanation and advertising of CELL aims and outputs.
- Increased communication about community events and activities.
- Broadened communication channels outside of social media.
- Increased number of activities for children and young people.
- Active encouragement of residents to ensure the project is self-sustained.
- Increased investment in Linton.



I felt the funding was used wisely and carefully. I don't think it's easy to identify improvements - increased funding would have enabled more, but that was not in CELL's hands.



Funded Project Feedback





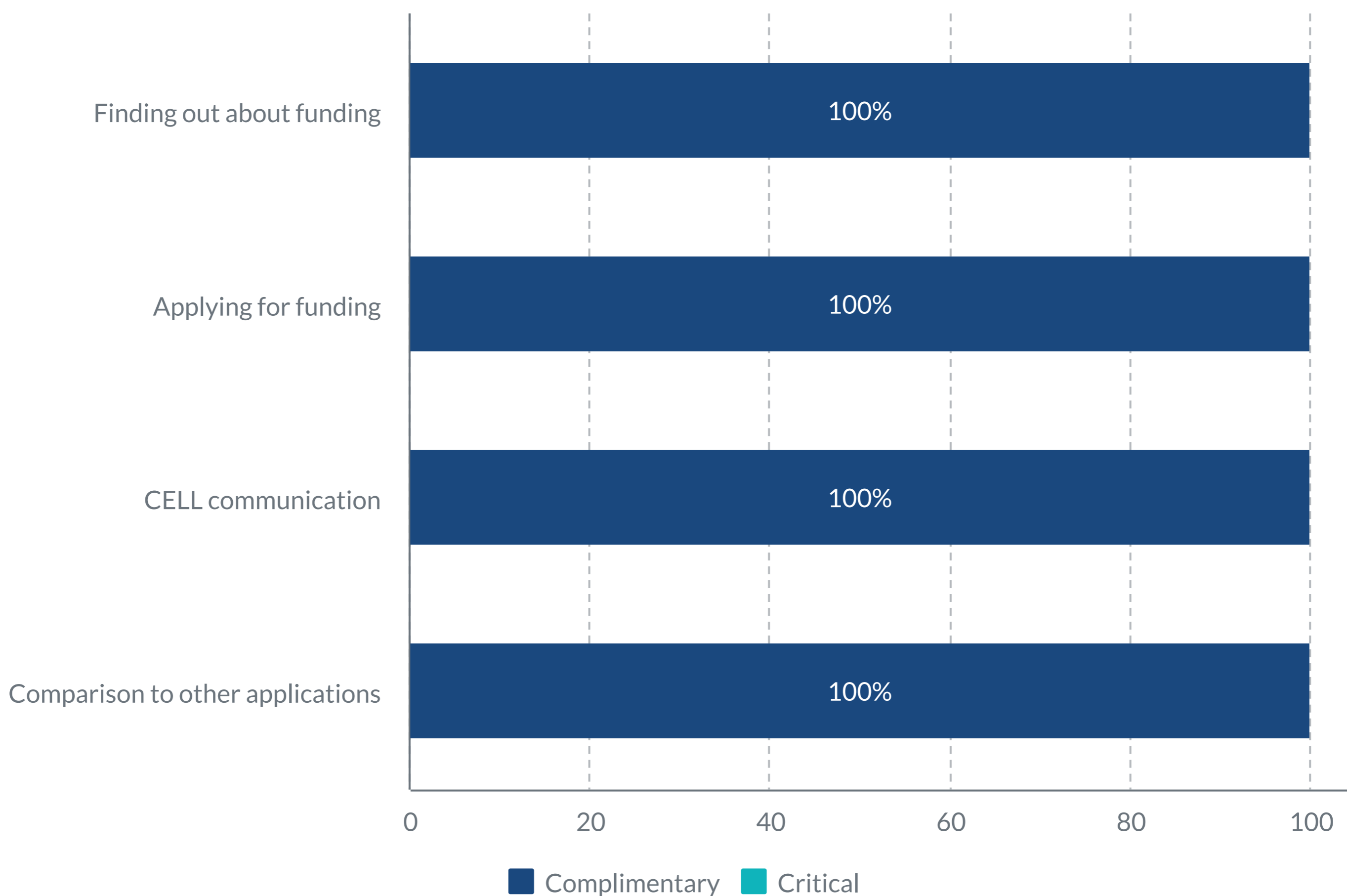
6 funded projects provided final feedback on CELL Big Local

The CELL Funding Process

There was consistently complimentary feedback about the process of applying for CELL funding, with funded projects unanimously describing their ease in finding about the funding, applying for it thereafter, and the communication with CELL which accompanied this process.

All projects also felt that, compared to other funding applications they had completed, the CELL process was better and easier.

CELL Funding Applications



Thoughts on the CELL Funding Process

"Once I made contact with people who were involved with CELL Big Local, they were very helpful in ensuring we knew about the funds that were available."



"Sometimes forms for applying for funds can be very lengthy and confusing. The forms used by CELL Big Local were a lot easier to follow and complete."



"It was very well organised by CELL admin. Funding applications were speedily acknowledged and decisions made pretty quickly."



"I've done a considerable number of funding applications to a variety of organisations such as The Heritage Lottery Fund, Community Foundation, charitable trusts, etc. and I found the CELL application process straightforward."



"Someone always got back to us on calls/emails quickly. Even during Covid, communication was upheld."



"CELL kept us informed on the status of our application throughout the process."

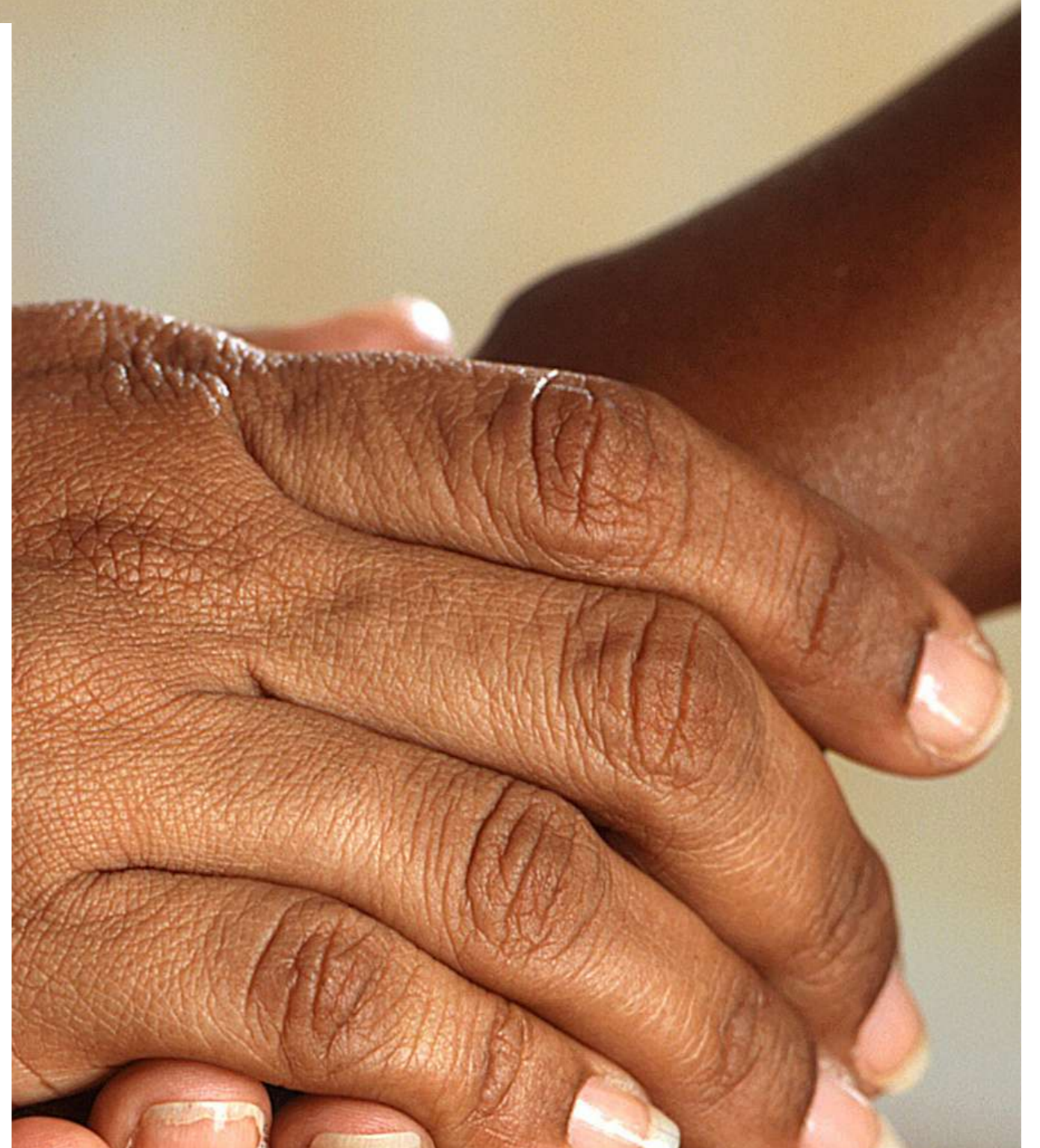


The CELL Big Local Difference

ALL

funded projects felt that CELL Big Local funding had made a difference to their project and to the local community as a whole.

Funded projects described a number of community opportunities, activities, relationships and improvements as a result of their successful funding applications.



These included:

- Enabling the start-up of a local project - via the 1St CELL Scout Group Project
- The improvement of Ellington Juniors Home Ground
- Archaeological learning/excavations sessions for local school children via the Pele Tower Restoration Project
- Volunteering sessions for local people - also via the Pele Tower Restoration Project
- Relationship building across all areas
- Increased opportunities with young people
- Promotion of self-sufficiency among community groups
- Environmental improvements including wall murals
- Family trips to local attractions
- The Childrens' University project.

Thoughts on the CELL Big Local Difference

"CELL funding has helped us save an historic, 14th century tower which is of national heritage significance.

The project enabled us to engage with schoolchildren in Ellington, Linton, Lynemouth & Widdrington, through visits to these schools to conduct hands-on archaeology sessions. The same schools were invited to participate in archaeological excavations around the tower as well as field walking sessions. This gave local children the opportunity to uncover their very own heritage, including discovering artefacts that were up to 8,000 years old. The project also offered many volunteering opportunities for local people, particularly by participating in a number of community archaeology excavations and field walking sessions. Some of those volunteers now help with the running of the tower as a visitor attraction and are helping with the restoration of the adjacent walled garden."

"CELL Big Local was instrumental in us being able to start up. They covered the majority of our start up costs. This took a lot of stress away from us, so we could continue to concentrate on getting everything organised to benefit the community from day one.

We would not have been able to start as quickly as we did or offer all the experiences we have been able to to the youth in the area without the help of CELL Big Local. It was not just the financial help, but also the enthusiasm they had for the project."

"Ellington Juniors now have a home ground in the area that will be here years after CELL has been completed. This is used by many other community groups every day of the week."

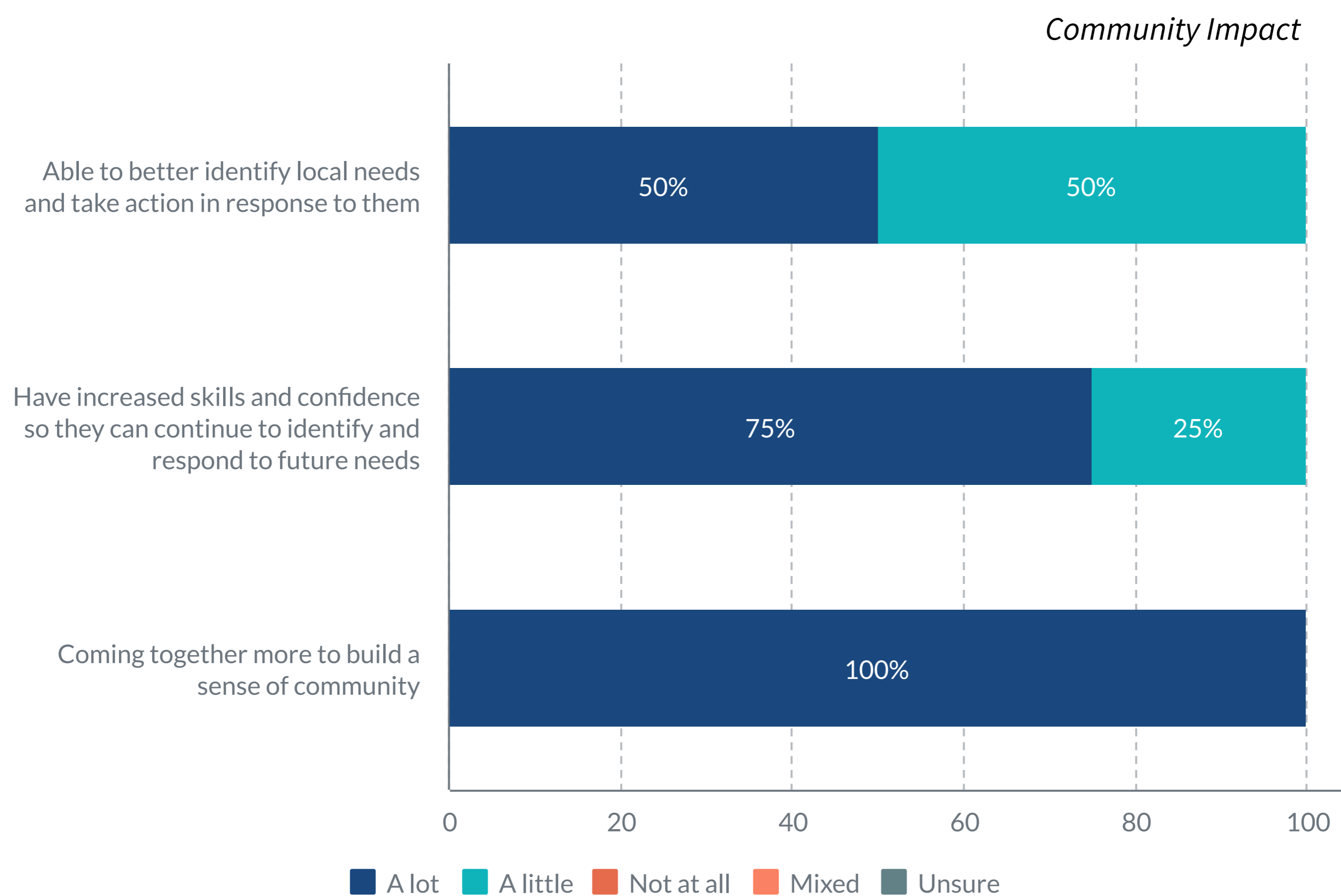
"Relationships developed across all areas."

"It was really good to have something so focused on a local patch."

The Impact of CELL Big Local

Considering the specific impact of CELL Big Local, funded projects unanimously agreed that residents had notably come together to build a stronger sense of community.

There was also a high level of agreement that residents had increased skills and confidence as a result of CELL Big Local, enabling them to continue to identify and respond to future needs. Finally, funded projects clearly also felt that residents were better able to identify local needs and take action in response to these needs.



Partnership Member Feedback

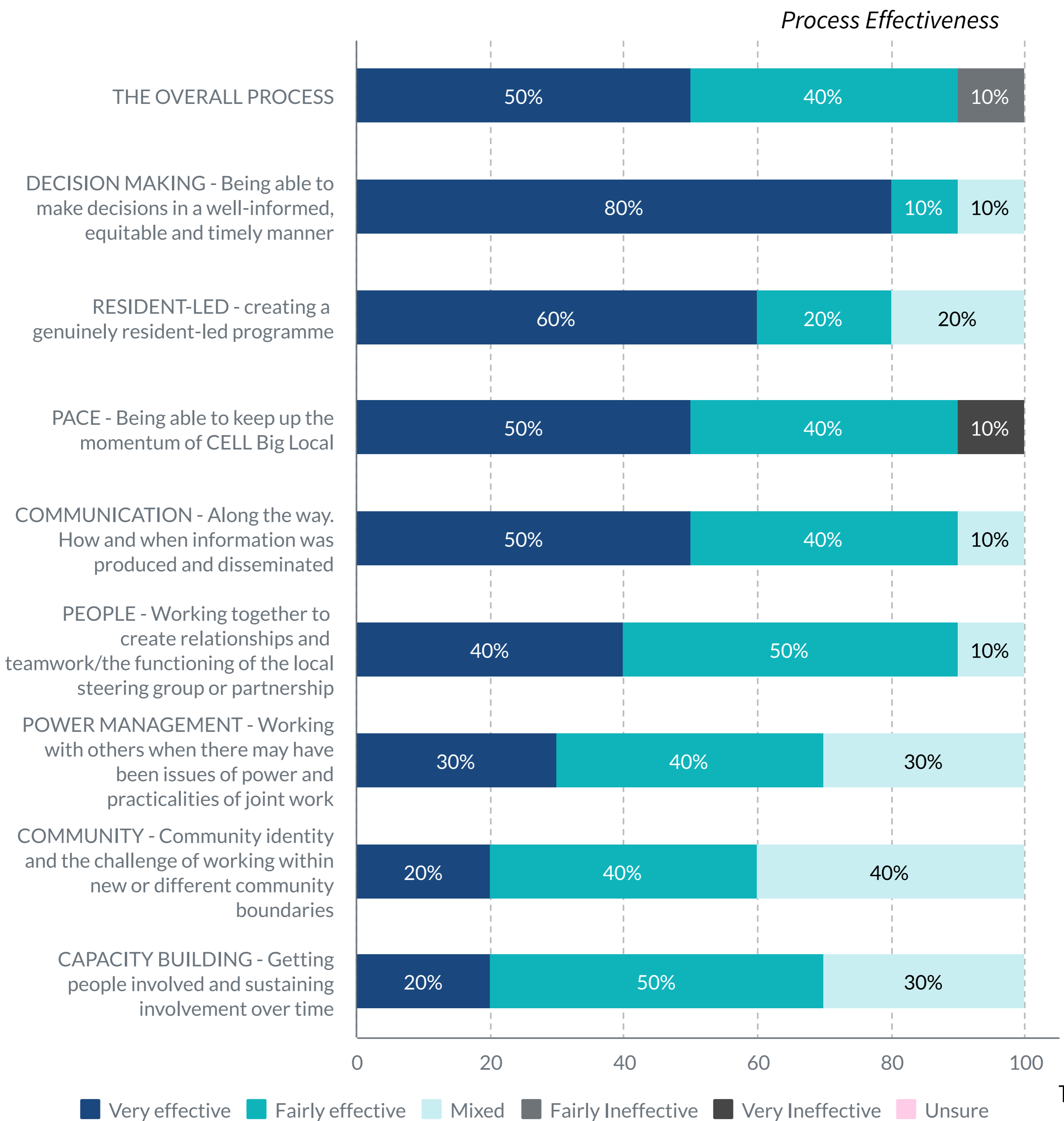




Partnership Members provided final feedback on CELL Big Local

CELL Big Local Process Effectiveness

Here, we see thoughts on the overall CELL Big Local process and its perceived effectiveness - with high levels of effectiveness identified by Partnership Members across a majority of indicators.



Perceptions of the CELL Big Local Process

We can also - over the next three pages - explore what Partnership Members regarded as the most successful components of the CELL Big Local process, together with those which were viewed more critically.

Capacity Building

- ✓ Initial data gathering via a survey available to all residents.
- ✓ Early public meetings held.
- ✓ Increasing resident involvement as the project evolved.
- ✓ Resident enthusiasm and commitment.

- ✗ Apathy and low interest among residents.
- ✗ Limited resident involvement across the lifetime of the process - engaging/reliant on a small proportion of the area's population and demography.
- ✗ The context of the Covid pandemic and accompanying restrictions.

Decision-Making

- ✓ All decisions consistently made by the resident-led Big Local Partnership.
- ✓ Professional input bolstered confidence in decision-making.
- ✓ Inclusive, consensual and democratic decisions based on priorities and concerns highlighted by residents highly knowledgeable about the area.
- ✓ Strong governance and controls.
- ✓ Timely decisions.
- ✓ Continuous opportunities for the wider community to comment, question or object to planned projects.

- ✗ Limited input from Lynemouth residents.
- ✗ Some early decisions made without all necessary information.

Perceptions of the CELL Big Local Process

Power Management

- ✓ A continuously level playing field of access and influence.
- ✓ Any issues resolved amicably.
- ✓ Demonstrable support from team and colleagues.

- ✗ Some (rare) frustrations due to over-dominance by some residents.
- ✗ Some tensions at a later stage in the programme.
- ✗ A need for greater awareness of power management.
- ✗ A need for increased mutual respect.

Community Identity

- ✓ A strong sense of identity across the four villages.
- ✓ Residents have an increased awareness and understanding of each village.
- ✓ Covid increased cross-village working in the context of increased support being provided.

- ✗ CELL was not initially a recognised single community.
- ✗ Each village has different challenges, interests and demographics.
- ✗ Some criticisms about the geographical allocation of funding.
- ✗ Still a need for residents to recognise CELL as one community.

People Working Together

- ✓ Residents from four demographically and geographically diverse villages brought together to work towards a common goal.

- ✗ Difficult not to treat each village as a separate entity, rather than holistically.
- ✗ Some partnership disagreements.

Perceptions of the CELL Big Local Process

Communication

- ✓ Awareness building re CELL Big Local, including open, public meetings, surveys, events, the CELL LIFE quarterly free newspaper, CELL website, and CELL Facebook page.
- ✓ Active communication of CELL Big Local's achievements, expenditure and pre and post Big Local quality of life.
- ✗ No initial communication channels covering all four villages prior to CELL Big Local.
- ✗ A proportion of area residents do not have digital access to communication.
- ✗ Some problems with CELL Life distribution.
- ✗ Covid hampered face-to-face communication.

Pace

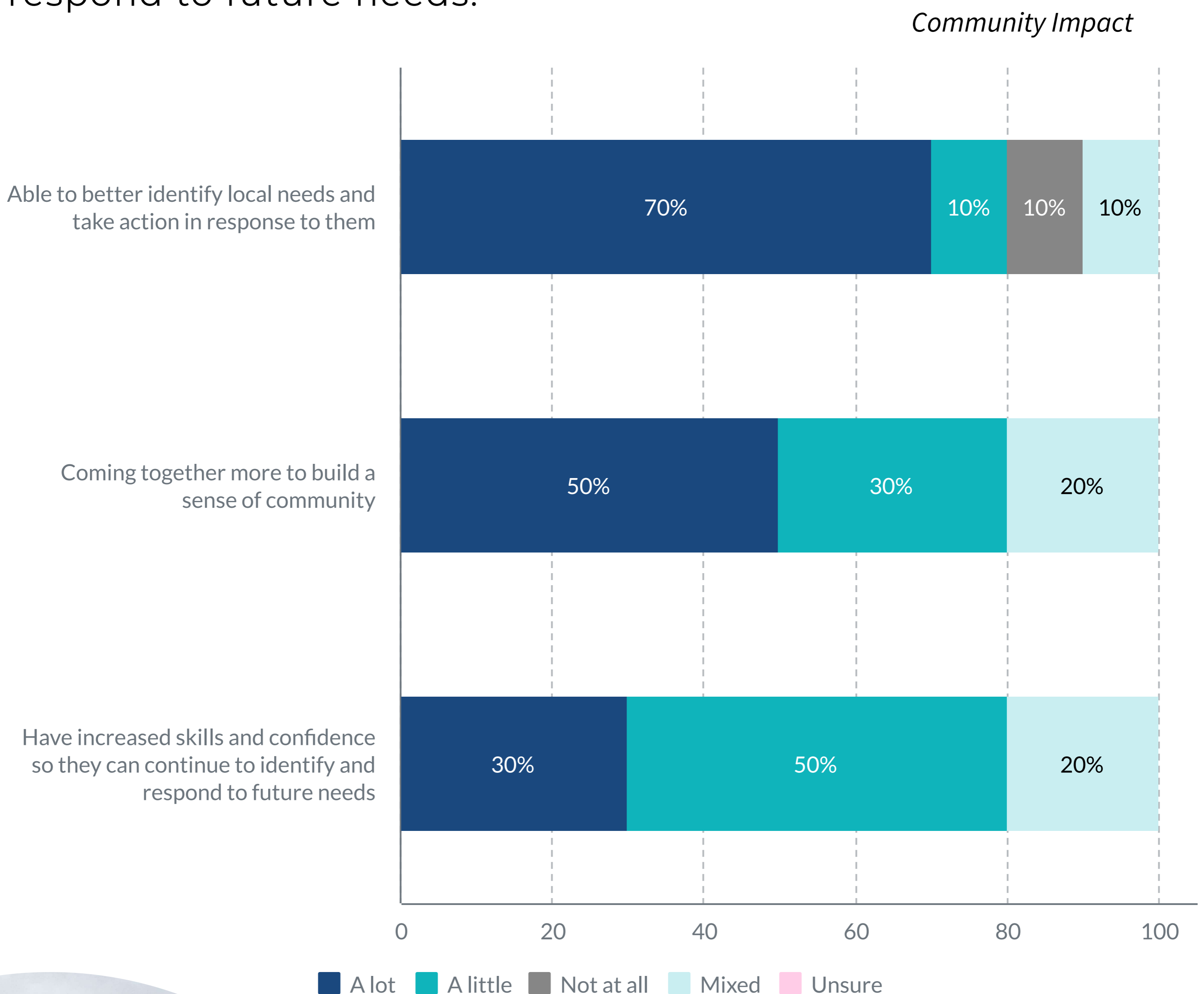
- ✓ A multitude of projects and services procured and delivered within a 5-year period.
- ✓ Funding allocation well within the intended spending timeframe.
- ✗ Covid slowed down momentum.
- ✗ An unwillingness to spend in the early stage of the programme, with a flourish of spending towards the latter stages.



The Impact of CELL Big Local

Considering the specific impact of CELL Big Local, a majority of Partnership Members felt that the residents were, as a result of CELL Big Local, significantly more able to identify local needs and take action in response to these needs.

Half of Partnership Members felt that residents had strongly come together to build a sense of community, while around a third felt that there had been a significant boost in skills and confidence to enable residents to continue to identify and respond to future needs.



The Impact of CELL Big Local

In overall terms:



of Partnership Members felt that CELL Big Local had made a **DIFFERENCE** to residents' quality of life in the area.

The vast majority felt that it had made **a lot of difference**. This was a view based on independent surveys and anecdotal feedback, together with observations of the breadth and variety of the many projects initiated, improved and completed.

Making a Bigger Impact?

While some Partnership Members felt that a bigger impact could have been achieved with:

- **Greater resident engagement and involvement**
- **No Covid pandemic**
- **The funding of fewer, large flagship projects**

others felt that an optimum, and praiseworthy level of impact was evident.

This was felt to be in the context of:

- **The funding available**
- **The identity of four separate villages**
- **The wishes of the community and its residents.**

The CELL Big Local Legacy

Three key legacy themes were identified by Partnership Members. These focused on:

· **New and improved sustainable facilities and interventions - including community space, cultural, historic and sport/leisure - via funded projects.**

· **Strengthened community awareness and cohesion with forged friendships and relationships.**

· **A forthcoming Community Land Trust.**



Final CELL Big Local Sound-Bites...

"Residents regained a real sense of belonging."

CELL Big Local Resident



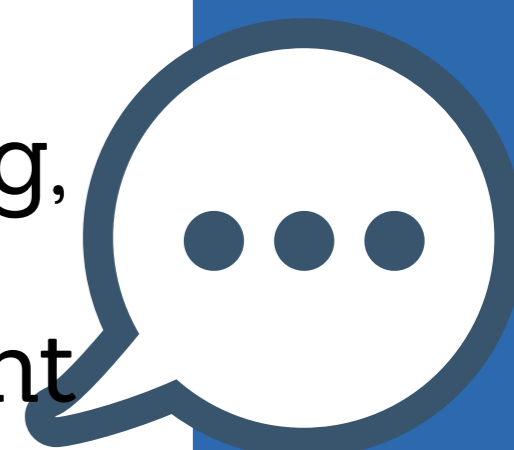
"It has been a unique opportunity for people within the CELL area to have a say and make a direct, positive impact on their own locality. It has certainly given me the opportunity to meet like-minded people and build up an excellent network of local contacts."

CELL Big Local Funded Project



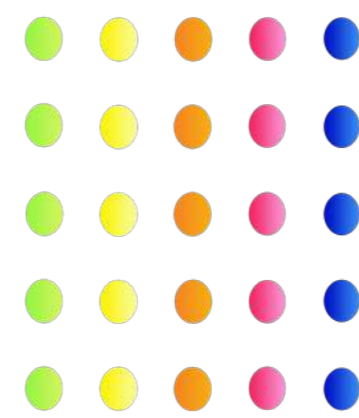
"All in all, a great success...due to the extremely hard-working, forward-looking, and community conscious individuals, and supported throughout by an excellent Project Coordinator."

CELL Big Local Partnership Member





Making a Difference
in Cresswell, Ellington, Linton and Lynemouth



eljay research