

Method Paper

Client: Doncaster Council
Project: Evaluation of the Doncaster Local Delivery Pilot
Date: September 2019

The paper summarises the proposed method for the main stage of CFE Research's evaluation of the Doncaster Local Delivery Pilot (LDP). It is submitted to the LDP Core Team for consideration prior to implementation.

Introduction

This paper summarises the proposed method for the main stage of CFE Research's evaluation of the Doncaster LDP. It remains largely as outlined within our original proposal; however, with revisions to several aspects to ensure stronger alignment with the strategic objectives of the LDP and Investment Plan now that further information is known. Specifically the revisions are intended to ensure the method affords Doncaster Council:

- *Value for money by focusing data collection on those aspects which are not being captured elsewhere either internally (via the Strategy and Performance Unit) or externally (via other external partners commissioned to deliver discrete aspects of the Investment Plan).*
- *Alignment with the intended outcomes and impacts of the LDP as articulated within the Theory of Change and Indicator Framework to ensure coverage of all aspects of interest to Doncaster Council.*
- *Compliance with the national evaluation requirements, including provision of data in accordance with the processes established and cascaded to local evaluation teams.*

Method

The following section summarises our proposed method. Any changes to the original method are highlighted with additional information provided for aspects where further information to inform the research design has since become known. Some aspects of the method will remain unspecified at this stage and subject to further discussion with the LDP Core Team.

Activity will encompass consideration of both processes (how it is being implemented) and impact (did it contribute to the intended outcomes). The Theory of Change and accompanying Indicator Framework will provide the focus for the latter, with key research questions for the

process evaluation based on the national evaluation requirements as specified by IFF and the tender specification.

The method will be delivered through four complementary strands:

Strand 1: Primary quantitative research

Data will be collected in three main ways:

Annual partner survey including Social Network Analysis *[as original]*

An initial survey was undertaken with representatives from DMBC and identified external partners in July 2019, and included a series of questions to i) explore attitudes and perceptions in relation to the current physical activity system within Doncaster; and ii) baseline professional networks. This will be repeated on **two** further occasions to measure progress. The survey content will evolve to ensure it is tailored to priorities at that point in time, and therefore presents an opportunity to capture data in relation to both emerging developments alongside core metrics. The timings of the survey will be agreed with the LDP Core Team but we propose January 2020 and January 2021. Both sampling points are designed to measure systems outcomes immediately prior to the reporting of evaluation findings.

Residents' Panel *[revised]*

A panel of **300** Doncaster residents will be recruited to respond to pulse and ad hoc surveys throughout the period of the evaluation. The Theory of Change has identified the importance of measuring attitudes and perceptions towards physical activity in order to evidence cultural change. We intend to increase the total number of residents on the panel and boost representation within the four target communities (Bentley, Edlington, Stainforth, and Balby & Central) and three priority groups (physically inactive, low income, and families and children) to ensure target audiences are adequately represented. Panel members will be incentivised through the provision of a cumulative financial reward for each poll or survey in which they participate. Monitoring data *[new]*

We will seek to work with those responsible for the delivery of discrete aspects of the Investment Plan to capture monitoring data where it is appropriate to do so, although as the specific nature of delivery is not yet known for several strands it will evolve iteratively. This did not feature as part of our original proposal but the potential to capture data through those funded to offer potential efficiencies has been identified through scoping discussions. Monitoring data will be captured for a limited **number of key measures** (including both output and short-term outcomes) to be agreed with the LDP Team Core. It is important that the monitoring and evaluation requirements proposed are reflective of the scale of the investment and will therefore vary accordingly. It is not possible to provide more detailed information at this time; however, this is likely to include activity to design measures and

accompanying guidance for those responsible for implementation, data collection tools and processes, ongoing guidance throughout the period of implementation where required, and analysis and reporting of data. An indicative budget is ring-fenced for this activity which will be reviewed with the LDP Core Team on an ongoing basis to ensure it represents value for money.

Strand 2: Primary qualitative research

Qualitative data will be captured to supplement that obtained through Strand 1 through:

Depth interviews with strategic leads/partners *[as original]*

Up to **40 depth interviews** with a cross-section of strategic leads and partners will be undertaken throughout the course of the evaluation. The LDP Core Team will be consulted separately via engagement in specified deep dive sessions. It is anticipated that the findings will help inform the six monthly process learning reports to be compiled by CFE alongside broader evaluation objectives.

Attendance at Deep Dives *[new]*

Our original proposal included provision to undertake ethnographic observation at up to five governance and operational meetings to directly observe practice relevant to systems outcomes. We instead intend to utilise this resource to fund our attendance **at up to four deep dive sessions** throughout the evaluation which we deem will contribute more significantly to our understanding of the progress being made by the LDP. We will work with the LDP Core Team to identify those most appropriate to our strategic objectives. The intention is that CFE will observe these sessions rather than contribute to their facilitation although we are happy to review this as the topics for discussion are finalised. To date the ethnographic observation has provided an adaptable resource which has allowed CFE to attend several additional meetings for which no budget was originally allocated. We are keen not to lose the flexibility that this has afforded the evaluation and so in addition have included provision for attendance at up to **four additional meetings** to engage in discussion.

Community site visits *[new]*

Day long site visits will be undertaken **to each of the four target communities** on up to **three separate occasions** throughout the evaluation (up to 12 visits in total) to engage both delivery staff and community residents in discussion about the work of the LDP. Individuals to be consulted will vary reflecting local differences. The Well Doncaster Programme Manager and Well Doncaster Project Officers will be consulted as part of depth interviews with strategic leads and partners. Visits measure progress, identify facilitators and barriers to implementation, and perceptions of impact (both directly and indirectly).

Consultation with residents *[revised]*

Up to 20 supplementary depth telephone interviews with residents will be undertaken to bolster the sample and ensure representation beyond the target communities and direct beneficiaries engaged through Active Communities. Individuals will be recruited via the Residents' Panel as well as direct communication with community groups identified to CFE by partners. The focus groups proposed as part of this phase in our original proposal will be delivered as part of the community site visits albeit on a smaller scale.

Community Researcher fieldwork *[as original]*

Previously referred to as Community Explorers, we will recruit up to **30 residents** from across Doncaster to undertake ethnographic data gathering via a mobile app. Community Researchers will be recruited via three complementary strands: i) the Residents' Panel; ii) existing partners and projects (e.g. Community Explorers deployed on other projects such as the work undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University; and iii) members of the Community Explorer Network. Individuals will be appropriately trained and supported in the execution of their role, and rewarded for their participation.

Strand 3: Desk research and data analysis

This strand will involve desk-research drawing upon documentation and secondary datasets in support of the primary evaluation findings obtained through Strands 1 and 2:

Collation of output data *[new]*

Our Indicator Framework requires the collection and analysis of various output measures. Some of these will be captured by the evaluation team on an ongoing basis (e.g. number of stakeholders engaged in discussions via the partner survey); others will be collected by the LDP Core Team and then shared with CFE for reporting (e.g. number of national LDP meetings attended). It is therefore necessary for the evaluation team to support the LDP Core Team in the collection of this data through the **development of a series of templates and reporting frameworks**. The extent of the task will be determined following discussion but it is not anticipated that this will be an onerous requirement for DMBC or CFE.

Document review *[as original]*

An initial review of various documentation has been undertaken as part of our scoping work and to inform the baseline of our policy audit. This activity will be repeated throughout the evaluation to ensure any documentation created as part of the various strands (particularly those currently being procured) feature as part of our work. This will include a repeat of our **policy audit in early 2021** as we near reporting to measure change since the baseline.

Analysis of Active Lives data *[revised]*

Analysis of the boosted Actives Lives data will be undertaken in early 2021 in order to elicit data on both physical activity levels in Doncaster and within the comparator group identified. Analysis of young people’s physical activity levels will be undertaken through the Pupil Lifestyle Survey; however, as this is specific to Doncaster no comparator will be possible.

Secondary data analysis *[revised]*

DMBC accesses have large range of datasets of direct relevance of the LDP evaluation. We will work closely with the Strategy and Performance Unit who will compile and share data with CFE in relation to outcomes and impacts. Budget is therefore allocated to support these conversations and report on and present the data rather than obtain this ourselves. It is recognised that the data will provide only an aggregate area-based analysis rather than longitudinal tracking of individuals which places some limitations in terms of attribution.

Strand 4: Analysis and reporting

This strand includes ongoing analysis and reporting, as well as engagement in activity to share the learning from the evaluation more broadly including local and national LDP events. To offer maximum value for money, we have sought to ensure alignment between national and local requirements. In this context, outputs will fulfil a variety of purposes.

Meeting the objectives of the evaluation

The figure below summarises the key methods and how these align with the objectives of the evaluation to measure system and population outcomes alongside process learning.

		Process learning	System outcomes	Population outcomes	
Partner survey including Social Network Analysis x2		✓	✓		
	Depth interviews with strategic leads/partners x40	✓	✓	✓	
	Attend Deep Dives and other meetings	✓	✓		
Secondary data and document review	Collation of output data		✓		
	Policy audit		✓		
	Review of secondary data and documents	✓		✓	
	Data analysis of Active Lives Survey			✓	
Residents' Panel x300 members	5 polls		✓	✓	
	3 surveys	✓	✓	✓	
	20 depth interviews	✓	✓	✓	
Community Researcher fieldwork x30	Receive training				
	Undertake research		✓	✓	
	Co-write 15 case studies	✓	✓	✓	
Site visits to community projects x12	Community officers	✓	✓	✓	Quantitative fieldwork
	Community Activators and Explorers	✓	✓	✓	Qualitative fieldwork
	Residents	✓	✓	✓	Secondary research