Local Trust
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Promoting inclusion: Tackling discrimination through place-based action

Research by brap for Local Trust
March 2022

Local Trust

About Local Trust
Local Trust is a place-based funder supporting communities to transform and improve their lives and the places where they live. We believe there is a need to put more power, resources and decision-making into the hands of local communities, to enable them to transform and improve their lives and the places in which they live.

About this report
Local Trust commissioned brap to research and write this report to investigate the potential of place-based action to promote inclusion and address issues of disadvantage and discrimination, with a particular focus on tackling racism and promoting racial inclusion. This report was written by Asif Afridi, Dega Rutherford, Ghiyas Somra and Joy Warmington.

About brap
Established in 1999, brap is an independent, transformative force in the equalities sector. The charity supports organisations, communities and cities with innovative approaches to learning, change, research and engagement. It has changed the way we think and do equality. For more information, visit www.brap.org.uk.

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Cover photo: Volunteers working on the worlds foods section where residents of Elthorne Pride Big Local distribute 'complimentary store cupboard basics' to members of the community at St Johns Community Centre on the Elthorne Estate in N19, London, June 2020. Photographer: Zute Lightfoot

COMMUNITY FUND

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Foreword

The idea of 'community power' – that people in local neighbourhoods should be given a greater role in making the decisions that affect them, with the resource to back it up – is coming to the fore.

It is fundamental to any project to level up and tackle geographical inequalities, as described at length in the government's recent Levelling Up White Paper (DLUHC, 2022).

It is also key to tackling other social and economic challenges, from health inequalities to the climate crisis.

Indeed, at Local Trust we see close up what communities can achieve.

Through the Big Local programme, 150 neighbourhoods across England were given £1.15m to spend over a period of 10-15 years to improve their communities, with local residents in the lead, and with minimal centrally-imposed strategies, reporting frameworks or strings attached.

With light-touch, on-demand support from Local Trust, Big Local partnerships have taken on or even built new community centres, so the community has a place to come together. They have upgraded green space and planted community-owned woodlands, built or renovated old housing, and created opportunities for new businesses and jobs. Across the Big Local programme, the volume of activity, and the positive outcomes that result, are astonishing.

When it comes to tackling inequality and discrimination, in particular racism, there is a lot that communities can do. This report describes projects taken on by Big Local partnerships, as well as a number of the ground-breaking, community-led projects taking place elsewhere.

But despite best intentions and often huge dedication, efforts too often end up leading to small incremental gains, minor improvements or temporary changes.

This report, we hope, can make a useful contribution to addressing this, and creating the conditions that can lead to transformational change.

It draws together learning from the evaluations of place-based funding programmes from the past few decades in the UK, and proposes design principles for future programmes, so that they can be as inclusive as possible, help disassemble the barriers to effective participation and tackle the systemic drivers of racism.

The observation that place-based programmes have tended not to place enough emphasis on individuals is particularly interesting and is one reason why Local Trust has created the Community Leadership Academy to foster emerging leaderships skills in the communities we support.

The report also sets out insightful and useful suggestions for how community groups and organisations working to tackle racism and other forms of discrimination can reflect on their activities and shift them to support long-term, transformational change.

We commissioned this piece of work because we wanted to contribute to an urgent conversation, and show that community-led change, under the right conditions, could play an important role. We hope that it provides useful guidance and inspiration for others and will be taking forward many of the ideas and suggestions presented here ourselves.

Executive summary

This report is an independent review, commissioned by Local Trust and undertaken by brap, to explore the potential of place-based action to promote inclusion and address issues of disadvantage and discrimination, with a particular focus on tackling racism and promoting racial inclusion.

Findings and recommendations

Previous impact at a programme level and in communities has tended to be surface-level and led to incremental change at best, and more fundamental change is required. The evidence suggests that recreating previous approaches to tackling racism used in many previous neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives previously is unlikely to yield significant long-term impact. These previous approaches may address, in the short-term, the needs of some people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds who can engage with an initiative. Yet, they are unlikely to tackle the 'systemic', institutional nature of racism and the way it operates within particular neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

In short, we need greater ambition in future place-based action.

There are three key areas where opportunities exist to tackle racism more effectively through place-based action in the future. All three elements are needed and help to reinforce and support each other.

- **Programme design:** Effective programme design is required to create the enabling conditions, resources and structures necessary to impact on systemic discrimination in a place. Also, funders and programme-designers need to commit to their own learning on anti-racism and sharing power with residents in place-based initiatives.
- **Programme support:** This is required to promote learning and accountability for action on tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion within place-based sites. Programmatic support is also required to help place-based initiatives to engage partners and influence others in the area to support their efforts.
- **Place-based practice:** Effective practice is needed 'on the ground' amongst those involved in day-to-day running and coordinating place-based initiatives.

The report outlines practical actions that can be taken to improve impact in these three areas. These actions are summarised in the remainder of this summary, with a particular focus on 'place-based practice' issues.

Programme Design

The findings from the review outlined indicate that equality, diversity and inclusion issues need to be considered front and centre in the early design of such place-based initiatives. Eight key design features that support impact on tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion are summarised below:

1. **Systemic focus:** Combining 'spatially-based' and 'people-based' approaches (focusing on specific geographical areas as well as people who are traditionally excluded within them). Involving communities as partners to support collaborative learning and systems change. Responding to root causes of structural discrimination. Equality, diversity and inclusion as central focus.
2. **Long-term and well-resourced**: Long-term, multi-agency approach. Investment in building capacity and community leadership of traditionally marginalised groups. Commitment to achieve impact at a scale commensurate with the problem.
3. **Inclusive engagement practice:** Investment in targeted engagement practice. Community-defined boundaries for place-based action.
4. **Power-building:** Strong governance. Accountability for equality, diversity and inclusion. Addressing internal power dynamics that can limit some voices.
5. **Partnerships and relationship-building:** Developing shared understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. Building trusting relationships between partners.
6. **Equalities practice of coordinators:** Reviewing impact and developing skills and knowledge (see above on 'programme support').
7. **Framing and narrative-building:** Connecting place-based action to well-evidenced analysis of structural causes of discrimination in a place. Strategic communication to help build support for action across a range of partners/communities.
8. **Evaluation:** Investment in high quality data disaggregated by protected characteristic (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age). Using experimental, long-term methods to test impact of different strategies on equality. Monitoring changes in beliefs, capacity, agency and behaviour of partners to assess 'systems-level' change.

Programme Support

'Systemic' racism refers to the ways in which racism is embedded through laws, policies and beliefs and ways of acting within society and in organisations – which are often difficult to notice because they are so common-place. If a place-based initiative is to adopt a more 'systemic' approach to tackling discrimination in its local area – then the change needs to start internally with those that design, set up and run the programme. In the UK we still often shy away from these debates. Programme coordinators need to develop a level of fluency and comfort with discussing issues of discrimination if we are to consciously tackle it and evaluate progress on it in future place-based programmes.

Place-based practice

Available evidence suggests that the six following areas of practice can support place-based efforts to tackle racism:

1. Community goal setting

Laying the groundwork: Using a 'year zero' to set up a place-based initiative, developing community goals and exploring who else needs to be at the table to inform decisions. Taking time to explore local data and investing in capacity building work with traditionally marginalised groups.

Critically reflecting upon goals and outcomes: Addressing the immediate needs of disadvantaged communities is important. It is also useful to think about and address the *causes* of inequality and discrimination in an area as well as responding to the symptoms.

2. Capacity building and engagement

Flexible engagement/volunteering opportunities: Offering flexible, informal and varied opportunities for participation. Regularly reviewing who is involved in place-based initiatives. Offering financial support and creating opportunities for residents to develop skills and capacity that may be useful for them in their careers / personal development.

Tailored engagement practices: Undertaking outreach, using locally embedded mentors, providing holistic, neighbourhood-based facilities. Working with trusted local community groups. Recognising the limitations of assuming somebody's engagement needs based on one aspect of their identity alone.

Promoting community leadership: Providing capacity building and leadership development support for those most affected by inequality. Considering the type of expertise that is valued when making decisions. Funding grass roots activity that focuses on issues of anti-racism to build a pipeline of future community leaders in an area.

Movement building and influencing systemic change: Running engagement activities to build common values and perspectives on anti-racism between different residents and partners – those with traditional forms of power and resources and those without.

3. Working with diversity and conflict

Confronting racial stereotypes: Not expecting residents to 'represent' one aspect of their identity alone (such as their ethnicity). Calling out discriminatory or inappropriate comments and making it clear what is accepted and respectful behaviour.

Fostering inclusion: Thinking about the culture of meetings and decision-making. Noticing whose voices are heard more than others, whose are interrupted, and whose opinions are frequently overlooked or misattributed to others. Gathering feedback on inclusion issues.

Working with conflict: The consequences of disagreement often weigh more heavily on those who are already marginalised. Creating an atmosphere that welcomes debate and disagreement as a constructive and creative process is important. This requires the knowledge and confidence to raise difficult topics, including racism.

4. Using evidence

Exploring the structural causes of race inequality in a place: Identifying interrelated root causes of poverty and racism in an area. Considering whether inequalities associated with the local environment (e.g. availability of affordable housing, access to shops and healthy food, access to quality green spaces) are patterned along racial lines.

Using a range of evidence: Building the capacity of community groups to understand and analyse different types of evidence about inequality. Valuing accounts of first-hand experience of inequality. For initiatives interested in addressing underlying structural causes of racism and influencing the local 'system', then measuring changes in relationships between partners within that 'system' can also help with assessing progress.

5. Narrative building

Framing messages to include a range of audiences: Acknowledging that partner agencies may have different perspectives and attitudes and may not be as far along on their journey to understand and promote anti-racism. It can help to share examples of real change that has been achieved. It can also help to show how action on racism aligns with other 'public-spirited' values people may hold.

6. Equalities practice of coordinators

Coordinating organisations developing the skills needed to progress anti-racism: Developing a strong awareness of how power and inequality operate within a 'place'. Building skills to hold difficult discussions about 'race' and racism. Becoming aware of the biases we hold and building trust and empathy with a range of individuals and communities, acknowledging the impact that racism can have on us all.

Approach and methodology

The review examined what available evidence tells us about the impact of neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives in tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion. It also examined where there are opportunities to create more sustainable impact through place-based action in the future, with a particular focus on tackling racism and promoting racial inclusion. Research was undertaken between April – June 2021 through a mixture of literature review, interviews and focus groups with Big Local partnership members and workers as well as national experts in this field.

Introduction

This research report is the result of an independent review, undertaken by brap, which explored the potential of place-based action to promote inclusion and address issues of disadvantage and discrimination, with a particular focus on tackling racism and promoting racial inclusion. The review explored community-level practice and sought to provide insights to help Big Local partnerships and other community groups take practical steps to promote inclusion and tackle discrimination in their areas. The report also offers recommendations to help Local Trust support Big Local partnerships wishing to actively promote inclusion and tackle discrimination.

Local Trust is committed to putting more power and resources into the hands of communities, enabling everyone to participate on an equal footing regardless of background. The organisation has recently run a series of diversity and inclusion learning events for Big Local partnerships and hosted learning workshops internally for staff and contractors. In addition, a recently commissioned review of eight Big Local areas examined the appetite, aptitude and attitude of local groups to progressing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) (Afridi et al., 2021). This subsequent research report was commissioned to complement the work undertaken by Local Trust so far and to provide further insight into the potential of place-based communities to take action to tackle discrimination.

2.1 Aims of the work

Local Trust contracted brap to undertake the review for three primary purposes:

- To inspire and support Big Local partnerships (and other communities) to take action by sharing practical examples of local action addressing racism and racial inclusion.
- To provide Local Trust with recommendations on how to support Big Local partnerships wishing to take action to promote inclusion and tackle discrimination.
- To inform Local Trust's policy work to influence policymakers and practitioners to engage with place-based action to promote inclusion and tackle discrimination, particularly in relation to racism.

In order to achieve this, the review had the following research objectives:

- To examine the impact of neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives in promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination, with a particular focus on racism, and to understand the design features supporting or undermining that impact.
- To explore the extent to which Big Local partnerships are seeking to promote racial inclusion and tackle racial discrimination in the community.
- To examine important elements of, and learnings from, successful place-based action to promote racial inclusion and tackle racial discrimination in the community.
- To identify how communities participating in place-based initiatives can be effectively supported to benefit from the findings of the research to help them promote inclusion and tackle discrimination, with a particular focus on racism.

2.2 Definitions and place-based initiatives considered in the review

A number of the terms used to help frame and determine the scope of the work are potentially quite wide and are certainly contested. A list of definitions is provided in appendix 1.

A short summary of the place-based initiatives considered in this review is included in appendix 2.

2.3 About brap

Established in 1999, brap is an independent, transformative force in the equalities sector. The charity supports organisations, communities and cities with innovative approaches to learning, change, research and engagement. It has changed the way we think and do equality. For more information, visit www.brap.org.uk.

About Big Local

Funded by the largest single endowment ever made by the National Lottery Community Fund, Big Local is a £200m programme that puts communities in control of decisions about their own lives and neighbourhoods.

Big Local is a resident-led funding programme providing groups of people in 150 areas in England with £1.15m each to spend across 10–15 years to create lasting change in their neighbourhoods.

A key goal of the Big Local programme is for communities to build confidence and capacity for the longer term. In Big Local areas, resident-led partnerships – a group made up of at least 8 local people – guide the overall direction of Big Local in their area.

2.4 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

Section 1	**Executive summary**
Section 2	**Introduction**
Section 3	**Approach and methodology**
Section 4	**Review findings:** • results of a literature review to explore the impact of neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives on tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion, as well as design features that support or undermine impact • results of a review which examined the extent to which Big Local partnerships are seeking to tackle racism in the community • implications of the review for future efforts to create sustainable impact on tackling racism.
Section 5	**Opportunities to improve place-based action:** • community-based practice • programme support • programme design and creating an enabling environment for change.
Section 6	**Conclusions**

2.5 A note on the scale of the challenge

Dismantling and unpacking the concept of 'race' and racism in our society is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. It is particularly challenging because the engrained and systemic nature of racism can make it difficult to notice when the ideology of racism is showing up in our work and our day-to-day lives. This can mean that, despite our best efforts, the things we do to address racism may inadvertently end up propping up the system. This challenge of knowing 'what works' still looms large for big charities and public sector organisations with dedicated EDI departments. It can also be a challenge for Big Local partnership members who operate as volunteers and may have limited experience of designing projects and interventions to address racism.

This report offers an insight into what the available evidence tells us about the impact of place-based initiatives in tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion. It also lays out opportunities to create more sustainable impact in the future.

In some cases, it was challenging to obtain examples of community-led practice supporting movement towards greater impact because activities had not yet happened, or they had not been written down, particularly in a UK context. Where this was the case, we have made suggestions about what those running place-based initiatives might need to do to get closer to anti-racist practice. Through conversations with Big Local partnerships, we noted a real desire to improve the impact of efforts to tackle racism, both in the locality and in how the partnership operates. There is a similar appetite in other community groups across the country. This is a fertile environment in which to test and pioneer new approaches in the coming years and we hope this report will support that work.

Approach and methodology

The research questions were:

- **Question 1:** What impact have neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives had on tackling discrimination and addressing inclusion issues (with a particular focus on tackling racial discrimination and promoting racial inclusion)?
- **Question 2:** Which design features of neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives support inclusion and tackling discrimination, and which undermine it?
- **Question 3:** To what extent are Big Local partnerships seeking to promote racial inclusion and tackle racial discrimination in the community?
- **Question 4:** What are the important elements of, and learnings from, successful place-based action to promote racial inclusion and tackle racial discrimination in the community?
- **Question 5:** How can communities participating in place-based initiatives effectively be supported to benefit from the findings of this research to help them address issues of inclusion and tackling discrimination, especially in relation to racism?

We adopted a four-phase approach to respond to these five research questions. The research design is summarised below:

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Literature review (Q1 and Q2)	Exploring Big Local approaches (focus groups, interviews, desk-based review) (Q3)	Desk-based review of successful place-based action to tackle racism (Q4)	Writing report, identifying opportunities for improving practice (Q5)

Researchers adopted a mixed-methods approach, gathering secondary and primary data to respond to these diverse (but linked) research questions. An overview of the methodology and a more detailed description of the literature review methodology is provided in appendix 3.

Review findings

This section comprises three parts:

- Literature review
- Review of Big Local practice
- Implications of the review for creating more sustainable impact in tackling racial discrimination and promoting racial inclusion

4.1 Literature review

4.1.1 Impact of place-based action and neighbourhood regeneration activities on promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination

A key theme that emerged through this review is the limited evidence of previous neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives on more systemic issues of inequality in the UK. **Impacts at a programme level and in communities have tended to be surface-level and led to incremental change at best.** There is evidence of limited impact on the discrimination and exclusion felt by people with a wide range of protected characteristics living in the areas of the studies we reviewed.

Where evidence disaggregated by protected characteristic is available, the principal focus is placed on measuring the direct engagement of particular groups with neighbourhood regeneration or place-based activities (such as BME representation on boards or participation in events and take-up of services). But evidence would also suggest that these experiences are marginalised from mainstream decision-making. Unfortunately, the evaluative data suggests that some of the most marginalised people in communities (such as young NEETS, BME people and disabled people) have not changed their overall employment or wellbeing prospects as a result of these initiatives. And when traditionally marginalised groups do benefit from neighbourhood regeneration, the outcomes are only felt by those who directly participate in projects. **These outcomes are also often temporary. They can pale in comparison to the larger structural inequalities associated with labour markets or education systems that discriminate along the lines of race, class, gender, disability, and so on.**

A more detailed overview of evidence of the impact of place-based action in relation to people with particular protected characteristics is provided in appendix 4.

4.1.2 Design features that undermine impact in promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination

Limits of purely spatially based approaches

Taking only a spatially targeted approach to place-based initiatives does not guarantee that groups of people who experience inequality within that geographical location will benefit from them.

- There is evidence that certain ethnic groups and young people can gain specific benefits from place-based programmes when they are targeted at ethnically diverse neighbourhoods (Matthews et al., 2012; Clark & Drinkwater, 2007). These benefits are derived for particular groups "by virtue of their location and proximity" (Ecotec, 2010, p. 87).

- Yet, the spatial emphasis of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy also acted as a "disincentive towards engaging, targeting and tackling the needs of different groups living within deprived neighbourhoods" (Ecotec, 2010, p. 104). Adopting a blunt, spatially targeted approach does not automatically result in improved individual outcomes for people from protected groups within those neighbourhoods on issues like employment, health and wellbeing (Matthews et al., 2012).
- As an example, the ten neighbourhoods that achieved the greatest improvement in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme between 2002 and 2010 were the most ethnically diverse (Beatty et al., 2010). However, this appears to be more relevant for place-based outcomes (such as changes in experiences of and attitudes to the community and physical environment), as opposed to changes in people-based outcomes (such as improvements in individual health or employment outcomes) (Beatty et al., 2010; Amion Consulting, 2010).

Limits of people-based approaches

Taking only a people-based approach within a place (where particular groups are supported through particular services, projects and activities) may only benefit those who participate and only in the short term.

- The NDC evaluation provides examples of targeted people-based projects for protected groups within the wider NDC programme (such as projects involving young people and disabled people in employment opportunities) (Ecotec, 2010). When not also responding to wider structural determinants of inequality, the impact of people-based projects of this type can be short term.
- The sheer level of disadvantage and inequality faced by marginalised groups in deprived areas can be a barrier to people-based approaches of this type. As NDC evaluative data indicates, only about a fifth of residents were involved in any NDC activity between 2002 and 2008 (Lawless, 2012). Of those who did participate, it was mainly those marginalised groups who participated in NDC projects or on NDC boards who benefited (Batty et al., 2010a; Lawless, 2012).
- Neighbourhood regeneration activities, such as skills and employment activities, may lead to some identifiable individual-level outcomes, but these can appear insignificant when compared with wider labour market forces affecting others with protected characteristics in the area (Beatty et al., 2010). Ultimately, a mix of area and individual-level targeting over a long-term period is required in order to respond to more engrained types of inequality within an area (Thomson, 2008).

Impact of prevailing values and beliefs of leaders

The prevailing values and beliefs of those with power in a place (such as policymakers and funders) can limit the focus and scope of work on discrimination and inclusion.

- Place-based initiatives reflect the political values and ideologies of the time. In the context of neighbourhood regeneration activities for young people (Ecotec, 2010) and disabled people (Edwards, 2009), this is associated with a particular focus on improving individual skills and 'work readiness', as opposed to efforts to address the broader forms of discrimination these groups may face in the labour market and in wider society.

- Neighbourhood regeneration strategies have not responded effectively to the gendered nature of poverty (Jupp, 2014; Matthews et al., 2012).
- In the context of race, there is a tendency for local policymakers to move away from a focus on BME groups to avoid the suggestion of preferential treatment (Ecotec, 2010) and to reflect the policy language (Brownhill & Darke, 1998) and preferences of majority white voters (Lawless, 2012; Ford & Kootstra, 2017). Using 'universal targets' to defuse this potential conflict can mean that efforts to reach groups who suffer racism are watered down.
- There is some evidence that limited personal development of leaders on the topic of anti-racism may also restrict impact. Interviewees in a study of place-based initiatives in the US said they had seen decision-makers adopt the concept of racial equity as a surface-level talking point, rather than taking on more transformative, anti-racist work (Scally et al., 2020, p. 21).

Engagement practice

The quality and impact of the engagement of groups with particular protected characteristics is rarely measured. A lack of attention to inclusion and power within place-based decision-making processes can mean that power dynamics within wider society (along the lines of sexism, racism and so on) may continue to operate within community-led activities.

- Where evaluative data disaggregated by protected characteristic was available, it focused largely on outputs: numbers of people attending events, using services or sitting on decision-making boards. There was little analysis of the impact that participation by traditionally marginalised groups was having on wider inequalities in the area. As Crisp et al. (2014) note, much of the empirical literature examining the effectiveness of community engagement focuses on the strengths and limitations of structures and mechanisms. There is little evidence on the impact of community engagement on individuals and areas.
- Even when people with protected characteristics get a seat at the decision-making table they can still face exclusion and a lack of power. Young people felt frustrated when they were not heard and did not receive feedback from consultation activities (Barnes et al., 2008). BME people who participated on boards were less likely to be in charge of allocating resources or to become chair compared to white people (Batty et al., 2010a).
- Lack of attention to levels and types of power people have within decision-making processes can mean that power dynamics within wider society, fuelled by sexism, racism and so on, can continue to operate within community-led activities (Popay et al., 2020; Stevenson, 2020).
- There is a tendency towards short periods of consultation and programmatic concerns to deliver targets quickly in neighbourhood regeneration programmes (Beatty et al., 2009). A habit of rapid set-up and bid-writing phases of place-based initiatives restricts the full engagement of some groups. There is also a tendency to rely on experienced activists or volunteers who can 'hit the ground running' when initiatives begin (McCabe et al., 2019, p. 2).
- Those responsible for co-ordinating regeneration activities may use a deficit model to understand barriers to engaging some groups. As an example, groups with protected characteristics may be seen as being too dispersed in some areas, or too insular, with a preference for solving their own problems rather than engaging with wider partnerships (Ecotec, 2010, p. 92).

Evaluation

We identified few examples of evaluations used to judge progress on promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination. This is compounded by a lack of good-quality data on outcomes disaggregated by protected characteristic.

- Evaluation is not often considered early in the process of programme design (Judge & Bauld, 2010) and impact on inequality is also not often considered (Reynolds, 2015).
- Methods employed and the complex range of factors that affect success pose significant challenges for attribution (Foell & Pitzer, 2020; Griggs et al., 2008). Evaluation is often only conducted internally (Dyson et al., 2012).
- There is significant variation in evaluation methodologies used across the literature and this raises challenges for establishing the efficacy of place-based initiatives compared to one another (Griggs et al., 2008; Moore & West, 2014).
- The absence of data disaggregated by protected characteristic makes it harder to understand trends and impact in relation to promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination (Gill et al., 2017; McKane et al., 2018). This can restrict learning relating to impact and make it harder to adjust initiatives to improve reach and impact on issues of inequality in a place.

4.1.3 Design features that support impact in promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination

Systemic focus: Combining a spatially based and people-based approach focused on systemic change

Communities within a place-based initiative should be seen as more than just a target population. They should be seen as partners who can support collaborative learning and contribute to change in larger-scale systems that perpetuate inequality.

- Much of the literature argues that previous place-based programmes have failed to address the structural causes of poverty (Taylor & Buckley, 2017). Change cannot be achieved at only neighbourhood level – local action needs to connect with what is going on elsewhere in the system, such as in regional and national policy.
- Some US foundations have moved towards seeing place-based initiatives as spaces for "collaborative learning, improving alignment and introducing changes in larger scale systems" (Taylor & Buckley, 2017, p. 23), particularly when those initiatives are consciously designed in a way that connects systems and structures beyond the neighbourhood level.
- Some UK studies do make the case for a greater focus on identifying how social disadvantage and inequality works in distinctively local contexts (Griggs et al., 2008; Dyson et al., 2012). We identified some relatively recent examples of place-based approaches to tackling inequality adopting a similar 'systems lens', though none of them had yet been publicly evaluated (see: Black Thrive, 2021; Nottingham City Council, 2020). Most examples, as Taylor & Buckley (2017) indicate, are supported by US foundations.

- Most empirical examples of taking a systemic approach to tackling racism in a place we found were from the US (where this approach is most well established). We identified three key design features for success:
    - First, being open about the histories of a place and acknowledging that these are interwoven with histories of racialisation. This can provide a shared narrative to challenge historic and structural factors that have limited outcomes for BME backgrounds in a place. Good (2017) describes how a community-led campaign to challenge school closures in Philadelphia aimed to unmask histories of marginalisation, disinvestment and displacement that particularly affect people of colour. Engaging with these histories of place brought schools and local communities together and helped develop a shared narrative to challenge historic and structural factors that disadvantaged school pupils from particular communities.
    - Second, understanding the interrelated root causes of poverty and racism in an area and taking steps to address immediate needs (Williams et al., 2019). But also paying attention to more structural and long-term causes of inequality. As an example, in East Harlem, an Eat Healthy programme provided healthy food for local residents. Yet, at the same time, they gathered evidence to challenge policies and seek investment to address neighbourhood access to places to buy healthy food and financial resources to buy that food on a consistent basis (Nieves et al., 2021). Efforts to address the structural causes of inequality may require strategies to influence at a wider geographical level through relationship building with a broader range of partners (Whittaker et al., 2020; Schensul & Trickett, 2009).
    - Third, focusing on issues of equality at the start of an initiative and seeing it as a foundational element of improving a place (Scally et al., 2020; Ferris & Hopkins, 2015). This can ensure that equality-related objectives do not get subsumed in the language of broader, universal, spatially focused targets for the whole population.

Long term and well resourced

Initiatives to address systemic, society-wide inequalities need to have the ambition and commitment to achieve impact at a scale commensurate with the problem.

- Evidence of the impact of short-term neighbourhood regeneration projects to address inequalities in worklessness in the UK suggests that those projects – whilst having a moderate impact on those directly involved – did not always address the underlying systemic causes of inequality (Beatty et al., 2009; Beatty et al., 2010).
- The (largely US-based) examples of place-based programmes to progress systemic change on racial inequity considered in this review involve longer-term work to build relationships and a shared understanding of systemic inequality between partners (Farrow et al., ND). They involve efforts to explore and respond to the structural causes of inequality in a place and to change policy and law to promote racial equity (Scally et al., 2020). They also involve long-term efforts to support the capacity and community leadership of traditionally marginalised groups, so that those who are most affected by inequality have a say in how it should be tackled (Scally et al., 2020).

- Achieving outcomes of this type requires a substantial length of time to build necessary relationships, to build trust between partners and to build capacity and promote learning amongst the different communities and partners involved. As an example, a US-based initiative, Building Healthy Communities, is a 10-year, $1 billion community initiative launched by The California Endowment in 2010 to advance state-wide policy and change the narrative on racial equity. It aims to transform 14 of California's communities most devastated by health inequities into places where all people have an opportunity to thrive. A review of 10 years of impact of the Building Healthy Communities initiative describes the importance of building "cumulative capacity" for campaigning over a long period of time (Farrow et al., ND). A review of place-based racial equity initiatives similarly found that a common factor across successful initiatives has been "ambition and commitment to achieve impact at a scale commensurate with the problem" (McAfee et al., 2015, p. 3).

Inclusive engagement practice

Sufficient time needs to be provided to build the capacity and trust of communities traditionally excluded from the design of place-based initiatives. This could include offering a range of flexible engagement opportunities and letting residents lead and define what is 'community'.

- Provision for 'year zero' funding and time to identify changes that a community wants to achieve is important. It can help lay the groundwork in engaging communities who may typically be excluded from consultation (Russell, 2008; Local Trust, 2020).
- The establishing of health action zones, which adopted a more emergent strategy, responsive to the needs of the community as they developed, meant that equivalent attention was paid to communities of geography, interest and identity (Sullivan et al., 2006).
- It is also important to allow resources and time for trust-building activities with people who may have experienced previous harm in their engagement with communities or public authorities (Roma Support Group, 2011; Marais, 2007).
- Opportunities for participation need to be varied and flexible, responding to local context and recognising that only a minority of residents are likely to engage in formal decision-making processes (Batty et al., 2010a).

- Some evaluations and best practice guides drawn from neighbourhood regeneration work identify specific engagement practices that can support particular people with particular protected characteristics (Russell, 2008). However, studies also warn against assuming the engagement needs of an individual are based on one aspect of their identity (Edmans & Taket, 2003; Barnes et al., 2008). There should be an assumption that experiences of inequality and prejudice within a place are intersectional in nature and may differ within particular identity groups (Valentine, 2010).

- The boundaries of place-based initiatives are not always natural communities. Some communities of interest and identity may feel more connected to communities wider than the local area and may see themselves as part of a struggle for social justice that stretches beyond the immediate locality (Bailey, 2010). It is important to take a flexible approach to defining 'community' (Flint & Robinson, 2008; Longan, 2002). As an example, young people with learning disabilities may travel beyond their own locale to find a place that feels safe to share their views (Edwards, 2009).

Photographer: Zufe Lightfoot/Local Trust.

Daniel Anderson of Rights of Passage Productions introduces the film, *Young Voices* at a Black Lives Matter workshop in St Michaels Church, White City Estate, W12 Together Big Local in August 2020.

Power building

Governance structures and accountability mechanisms can help to ensure that issues of inequality are routinely considered. It is important to pay attention to interpersonal dynamics within community-led initiatives that maintain existing power relationships (based on class, gender, race and so on). Cultivating an outward as well as an inward gaze for place-based initiatives can help to build the power of communities to influence their wider environment.

Governance and accountability

- Clear neighbourhood governance structures can ensure that mainstream service providers are accountable to a diverse range of local residents (Sullivan et al., 2006; Ecotec, 2010).
- It is important to ensure attention is paid to power dynamics within local grant-making discussions and decisions by noticing how discourses of sexism and racism may affect what is funded (Su, 2017), and by using mechanisms associated with equalities law to ensure funding decisions are reviewed and resources distributed fairly (O'Hagan et al., 2020; Commission for Racial Equality, 2007). The Oakland Healthy Start initiative (a US place-based initiative addressing racial disparities in infant mortality) made a positive impact by tracking racial equity in practice across partners and through "accountable service delivery and the use of data to track results" (McAfee et al., 2015).

Power building within initiatives and supporting community leadership

- It is important to pay attention to more subtle and interpersonal dynamics within place-based initiatives that maintain existing power relationships (on the basis of class, gender, race, sexual orientation and so on), as these can undermine a community's ability to change their environment or their health (Stewart & Taylor, 1995; Cornwall, 2004; Egan et al., 2021; Popay et al., 2020).
- Practice-based examples from the US describe two key design features for positive impact on power building to progress racial equity in this regard.
    - First, promoting community leadership. Letting those most affected by the issue lead, and building capacity to do so; also, prioritising balancing power over blanket support for community-setting goals. This approach recognises that community goal setting can be dominated by community groups or partner agencies with more power and influence in a way that drowns out the voices of emerging leaders from traditionally marginalised groups (Scally et al., 2020).
    - Second, consciously elevating expertise based on experience over academic or technical expertise in order to challenge conventional thinking in community decision-making processes. It is important to budget for capacity building of this type and to help nourish grassroots activity in order to create a pipeline of future community leaders (Farrow et al., ND).

Power building to influence the wider environment

- Whilst balancing power within place-based initiatives is important, the gaze should not only be inward (on the capacity and agency of community members within place-based initiative decision making). The gaze should also be outward, focusing on what the community can do to transform the political and social environment around it to achieve greater equity (Popay et al., 2020, p. 2).
- In order to achieve greater focus on political and social transformation in place-based initiatives, there needs to be greater emphasis on the end goal of those with less power exercising collective control (rather than only measuring changes in the internal capabilities of those involved). There also needs to be greater recognition of power dynamics within community settings when designing, delivering and evaluating empowerment initiatives (Popay et al., 2020).
- A strategy adopted by place-based racial equity initiatives in the US has involved bringing together two groups: 'context experts' and 'content experts'. Context experts have lived experience of inequality in a place with transformative ideas for change. Content experts have the power and technical know-how to change local policies and legal frameworks (Raderstrong & Boyea-Robinson, 2016, cited in Smart, 2017). This approach can be particularly useful in challenging and disrupting local policymakers, who may be invested in existing systems and seek systemic improvement rather than radical change (Smart, 2017).

Partnerships and relationship building

It is important for different partners in a place-based initiative to acknowledge the conflict and mistrust felt by those who have experienced discrimination in the past. This can help to build trust, but is also an important part of developing a shared understanding of inequality in a place.

- It is important for different partners in a place-based initiative to acknowledge the conflict and mistrust felt by those who have experienced discrimination in the past. As an example, this was important for a Community Land Trust in Granby (an ethnically diverse area of Liverpool) because of the area's history of connections to the slave trade and, within living memory, riots against institutional racism that were violently repressed (Thompson, 2015).
- Building in activities and structures that increase funding security and funding predictability can help with managing risk, as partners identify aligned interests and similarities and build a long-term commitment together (Scally et al., 2020). This is particularly important when undertaking challenging systems-level place-based action on inequality, which can be unpredictable and fast-changing in nature.
- It is important to create a space for learning and shared language between partners on issues of inequality. A review of the Communities that Care programme found that there were benefits in community sites being able to contact other sites across the UK and in using the same terminology and process for sharing experiences and learning about inequalities faced by young people (Fairnington, 2004).

Equalities practice of co-ordinators

Those responsible for co-ordinating and working on place-based initiatives require particular skills and mindsets to make a positive impact in promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination.

- Those responsible for co-ordinating and working on place-based initiatives require certain mindsets, including the ability to apply systems thinking to make an impact on inequality within a local area (Turner et al., 2012).
    - Co-ordinating agencies need to invest in building their fluency and knowledge of the different dimensions of inequality (Strive Together, 2017).
    - Leaders need the appropriate skills to involve diverse stakeholders in collectively identifying the root causes of structural inequalities and setting a shared direction for how to respond to them (Moore & West, 2014).
- In UK-based neighbourhood regeneration initiatives, visionary leadership in co-ordinating agencies was found to be an important factor in shaping whether or not areas chose to focus on issues faced by specific marginalised groups and whether they used multi-agency approaches to achieve this (Ecotec, 2010).
- UK-based studies stress the importance of regeneration practitioners avoiding stereotypes and blanket approaches that categorise people with particular protected characteristics and assume they all have the same needs and interests (Beebejaun & Grimshaw, 2011; Pemberton et al., 2006). Phillips et al. (2014) also note the importance of local community workers having the skills to support mutual learning within communities that "unsettles and confronts" racialised, gendered and class-based understandings of self and other (p. 56).

Framing and narrative building

Place-based action needs to be connected to well-evidenced analysis of the structural causes of discrimination within a specific place. This analysis needs to be strategically communicated to local people, groups and organisations to make the most impact.

- Place-based action needs to be connected to well-evidenced analysis of the structural causes of discrimination within a specific place (Thompson, 2015; Seamster & Purifoy, 2021).
- The way that accounts of inequality are framed and described to different groups is particularly important as this can affect who feels included and who feels excluded (Ford & Kootstra, 2017). In the context of race, for instance, issues of racism might not be seen as a relevant priority to White British people in majority White British areas (Afridi et al., 2021). There remains a challenge for place-based initiatives seeking to progress race equality in how to manage this tension to achieve their goals while not alienating partners who may not be as far along in their racial equity journey (Arias & Raderstrong, 2015).
- We identified a limited number of empirical examples of how to address this tension (again, mostly from the US and focused on race). Strategies include:
    - Framing issue-specific campaigns in a local area in ways that build alliances and connections, with efforts to promote equality outside those places. As an example, framing the closure of schools attended largely by BME pupils in Chicago as both a race and a neighbourhood problem helped to build a wider constituency of support for the campaign (Nuamah & Ogorzalek, 2021).
    - Using asset-based language to show how supporting some excluded groups will help increase economic and social opportunities for all (Arias & Raderstrong, 2015).

Evaluation

Improved data, disaggregated by protected characteristic, more consistent use of experimental methods across place-based initiatives and evaluating impact at a systems level would support tackling discrimination and inclusion.

- Data on impact disaggregated by protected characteristic can support ongoing formative evaluation and learning in a way that helps place-based initiatives to adapt and improve over time (Scally et al., 2020).
- Impact on issues of inequality needs to be evaluated at a system level (Egan et al., 2021). Evaluation needs to explore changes in beliefs amongst different stakeholders and changes in relationships between different groups within a place (Orton et al., 2019). Evaluation also needs to examine subtle shifts in partner behaviour and capacity (Henderson, 2012). This is because belief systems (such as sexism or disablism) and associated inequalities between groups can show up at different levels. They can appear within community-led initiatives in the way residents engage with each other. And they can also come to light in relationships between community-led initiatives and other partner organisations such as local authorities or voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Scally et al. (2020) use a systemic lens of this type to evaluate the impact of place-based racial equity initiatives, drawing on an established framework (Kania et al., 2018) for examining systems change at the following three levels:
    - 'explicit'/structural change (e.g. policies, practices and resource flows)
    - 'semi-explicit'/relational change (e.g. relationships and connections and power dynamics)
    - 'implicit'/transformative change (e.g. biases and beliefs about race and racism).
- Paying attention to all three of these levels in evaluation is important. For instance, the Building Healthy Communities initiative sought to change the relationships between different stakeholders in the area in order to change how people thought about race and school exclusions in California. A number of policy changes and changes in the flow of resources (explicit level) were associated with this strategy. However, the principal focus of changing relationships between powerful stakeholders in the area and racialised communities (semi-explicit level) and how people think about racialised school exclusion patterns as a public health and economic concern (implicit level) were also identified, evaluated and pursued as goals in their own right (Scally et al., 2020). This offers a clear route to measuring change in tackling discrimination and racialised understandings of school exclusion.

4.1.4 Summary

This section has provided a literature review to examine the impact of previous neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives aimed at tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion. The literature review also explored design features that may undermine or support that impact.

The section that follows provides an account of a subsequent review which examined practice in a small selection of Big Local areas. The review examines how Big Local areas are currently responding to tackling racism and also explores where there may be opportunities to increase the impact of Big Local efforts.

Photographer: Richard Richards/Local Trust.

Big Local residents attending a workshop titled, *Equality, diversity and inclusion in Big Locals* hosted by Asif Afridi from brap and Imrana Niazi from Palfrey Big Local at the Big Local Connects event in Nottingham in October 2021.

4.2 Review of Big Local practice

This section considers current approaches taken by Big Local areas to promote racial inclusion and tackle discrimination.

The Big Local programme is an opportunity for residents in 150 areas of England to use funds of at least £1 million each to make a massive and lasting difference to their communities. Big Local areas are run by local partnerships that bring together the talent, ambition, skills and energy of individuals, groups and organisations in an area who want to make it an even better place to live. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, Big Local is managed by Local Trust, which works nationally with a range of partners to provide expert advice and support to residents. An earlier review of Big Local approaches to progressing equality, diversity and inclusion (Afridi et al., 2021) found that:

- In some Big Local areas there is an interest in taking further steps to tackle racism.
- There were views from people with White British backgrounds who felt that race and racism did not affect them.
- Some interviewees felt that their Big Local partnership lacked ambition in responding to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Some felt that attitudes within partnerships and outside them in the local community could make it harder to address inequalities.

Building on the findings of this previous review, we sought to explore in more depth the following two questions:

- What are Big Local partnerships' current and future plans to tackle racial discrimination and promote racial inclusion?
- What support may Big Local partnerships need to achieve those ambitions?

In this section, we describe how Big Local partnerships are tackling racism and identify opportunities to increase the impact of their efforts in order to achieve their ambitions.

4.2.1 What are Big Local partnerships already doing to tackle racism and promote racial inclusion?

Through desk-based review and primary research, we heard about activities currently underway or in the planning stages within Big Local areas that have a particular focus on the topic of racism.

Projects with young people

We identified examples of Big Local partnerships that had engaged young people as part of Black History month. One Big Local partnership had run discussions about Black Lives Matter and produced a film to share the views of young people. We also identified an example of a project that was providing additional support to young people (many from BME backgrounds) to support their education and skills development.

Projects to support particular minority ethnic communities

We heard about an environmental project with the Polish community to improve the local environment so the community could come together, put on outdoor events and socialise in a local garden. Another Big Local partnership was working with the local Roma community to address challenges around integration and equality of access to local public services. This included welfare and immigration support, language classes, healthy lifestyle and safety support, dance and other wellbeing activities.

Providing services for a range of BME communities

Various Big Local partnerships have identified an increased interest in and determination to respond to racial inequalities, which have been amplified during the COVID-19 and are associated with Black Lives Matter movement. One partnership developed a programme to train community translators and ran an event to encourage vaccine take-up among BME communities. Another provided an emergency grant to support BME communities disproportionally affected by COVID-19. The grant covers bilingual and cultural support and signposting to other support mechanisms (such as food banks and emotional support). And a third partnership described running a community garden, engaging people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and providing an opportunity for them to learn about each other and break down divisions.

Photographer: Zute Lightfoot/Local Trust.

Daniel Anderson of Rights of Passage Productions discusses the film, *Young Voices* at a Black Lives Matter workshop with W12 Together Big Local in St Michaels Church, White City Estate, London, August 2020.

Learning and external partnership building

Some Big Local partnerships described a desire to learn more about issues of racism and were taking steps to work with others to improve their awareness. One partnership was thinking through their response to Black Lives Matter and were working with an external facilitator to do this. Another described how they had worked more closely with BME communities during the pandemic (for example, working with Sikh temples and mosques to ensure that support reached a range of different communities). Some Big Local partnerships described how they had made efforts to engage more BME residents as partnership members. Another described how they had included articles about Black Lives Matter in a local community newsletter produced by the Big Local partnership.

Though we did not have an opportunity to interrogate in detail the existing practices of Big Local partnerships, we noticed that activities were largely reacting to racial disparities and making efforts to address gaps in services or levels of representation. Obviously, many of these activities have merit in their own right. But some participants also professed a desire to go further than this. Some talked about how they were wary of 'ticking the box' with partnership activities on racism. Some felt activities did not go far enough and were keen to explore what a different approach might look like. There was an interest in examining further topics such as why racial inequalities persist in the local area. Questions were also raised by some participants about how their partnership may need to change its outlook and behaviour in order to make a greater impact.

4.2.2 Observations on awareness and comfort when discussing racism

As a project team, we spent time reflecting on our experience of running focus groups and analysing the contributions of participants. We reflected on two key topics: levels of comfort discussing issues of race and racism, and levels of awareness and understanding of race and racism. The mood meter diagram below offers the research team's perspectives on some of the different moods and emotions that appeared to be present during the conversations.

Figure 1: Mood meter from focus group discussions

As figure 1 suggests, when people have high levels of comfort discussing racism and high levels of awareness about racism and how it operates, this can manifest as determination. When people are highly comfortable discussing racism but have a lower level of awareness about racism and how it operates, this can show up as anger, incivility and distress. When comfort discussing racism is low and levels of awareness and understanding are low, this can present as silence and fear in the group. Finally, when comfort talking about racism is low and awareness is high, this can manifest as distress.

This brief analysis of the moods that we – as facilitators – noticed in two focus groups offers an insight into some of the facilitation/communication challenges that Big Local partnerships may face in their efforts to discuss and respond to racism in their areas in the future. This can apply to people from a range of ethnic backgrounds. There is sometimes an assumption that people from a BME background will have a high level of understanding and comfort discussing issues of anti-racism, but this may not always be the case.

Recognising and facilitating discussion about emotions is particularly important for programmes like Big Local, where face-to-face/video-conferencing partnership meetings between busy volunteers are one of the key places where business gets done. Supporting partnership members to recognise those emotions while staying in respectful and constructive dialogue appears to be an important foundation for building trust and learning to take steps towards anti-racism in Big Local partnerships.

4.2.3 What are the ongoing challenges?

Below we summarise ongoing challenges faced by Big Local partnerships that emerged through focus groups and interviews.

Covert not overt racism

Some participants described how more subtle forms of racism can damage people's sense of self-esteem and their wellbeing. Some felt the 'covert' nature of racism can make it harder to identify and name, but that Big Local partnerships have a responsibility to identify these hidden inequalities in their area. Similarly, some talked about how thinking associated with race and racism is normalised within our society, so it can be hard to notice when it is happening within the wider community and within partnership discussions. As an example, one participant talked about how whiteness is seen as 'the norm' and this is often unquestioned.

What is racism?

Focus group participants from a range of ethnic backgrounds did not always appear to have a clear understanding of what racism is. This comment is not about getting into academic definitions of racism, but about people being clear about what constitutes racial discrimination. Given our societal confusion, it is easy to see why people are challenged in understanding the complexity of this term.

Talking about race

Some identified the challenge of talking to white people about racism and the impact of emotions like guilt and shame, which can prevent white people sticking with the conversation and taking responsibility for action:

> **"People feel guilty, I don't want you to feel guilty, I want you to talk about it."**
>
> Research participant

Similarly, some participants said they did not feel able to share their own personal experiences of racism and did not feel heard by other partnership members. Some found it challenging for their personal experiences of racism to be accepted as legitimate. This resulted in racism not being raised as an issue.

Dealing with emotion

Although there was some appetite to talk in the focus groups, there was also a fair level of 'distress' and emotion generated. Clearly connected to the point above, talking about race – the capacity of individuals to discuss racism and the capacity of others to listen – can be hard to do without support and understanding.

Local demographics and focus on racism

Assumptions about local demographics can sometimes lead people in largely White British areas to perceive there are no challenges associated with racism in the area. Yet, in such areas, there may still be small and relatively isolated groups of residents from BME backgrounds who face racism. In some areas, the BME population may be rising but this may not be reflected in official statistics yet. In addition, incorrect assumptions can be made that highly ethnically diverse areas will already be proficient in responding to racism:

> **"You would think the area I am from is great at dealing with racism, but actually I experience more racism there than I would in another part of the country"**
>
> Research participant

Photographer: Richard Richards/Local Trust.

Big Local resident speaking at a workshop titled, *Equality, diversity and inclusion in Big Locals* hosted by Asif Afridi (right) from brap and Imrana Niazi from Palfrey Big Local at the Big Local Connects event in Nottingham in October 2021.

4.2.4 What are Big Local partnerships' aspirations for the future?

Plans to improve engagement and undertake the co-design of projects and services with BME residents

We heard about plans of Big Local partnerships to provide support for BME communities (for example, extra English language tuition for unaccompanied young asylum seekers). In particular, some partnerships recognised the impact of COVID-19 on certain people from BME backgrounds, as well as the disproportionate impact of violent crime and economic crisis on some communities during the pandemic. They expressed a desire to stay connected with those communities over the coming months and years. Overall, future plans reflected a desire to respond to gaps in existing provision for BME communities, to improve BME representation in the partnership and engage BME residents more closely in Big Local's work.

Desire to improve the skills and knowledge of partnership members

After experiencing a racist incident in their local area, one Big Local partnership expressed an interest in training on how they could deal with this in the future. This would not only include support to defuse such situations, but also on how to do it in a constructively challenging way. One research participant spoke about how they hoped their Big Local partnership would be able to talk about issues of race and racism more fluently and with more confidence in the future:

> **"Those who do talk about it, do it in a very indirect way, but it's not okay to just skim the surface. They are missing issues in the community that experience discrimination and racism. When that changes, it changes the way that people talk about it, people feel more free to say they have actually been racialised."**

Desire to improve relationships and communication within the Big Local partnership

A number of participants shared how they would like to see things improve within their partnership when discussing issues of race and racism in the future. They described an interest in having more discussions and recognised they needed to improve communication and work through differences of opinion on this topic.

Addressing divisions within the local community

Finally, some Big Local partnerships described a desire to bridge the divisions between different communities in their area. Some linked this directly to attracting a more diverse range of residents into the partnership in the future. Others also wanted to learn more about the needs and aspirations of different groups of residents in the area and to create opportunities for those residents to come together in future Big Local activities.

4.2.5 What does this mean for future learning and support?

We identified the following opportunities for further learning and support through our engagement with Big Local partnerships:

Learning and development

Some research participants focused on practical learning and development priorities for partnership members to support the planning and delivery of work (such as putting anti-racism into practice and measuring progress on anti-racism). Others talked more about improving fluency and confidence around discussing issues of race and racism. In particular, there was an interest in exploring the partnership's response to the Black Lives Matter movement and support for partnership members to talk about issues of race and racism.

Facilitation and improving communication between partnership members

There was a desire to respond to conflict and an interest in improving communication between partnership members from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Greater support role for reps and Local Trust

Some were concerned that not all reps were confident in responding to racism and Big Local partnerships were not held accountable for progress. One research participant suggested Big Local partnerships should be asked, "How often do you talk about race?" in Big Local work. They felt that Local Trust and Big Local partnerships could take accountability for lack of action on race and racism in the past and create more opportunities for tackling racism in the future. They described opportunities for Local Trust to bring Big Local areas together from urban and rural areas, "If we just leave it to individual partnerships, they may not talk about it as much… we shouldn't rely on big cities to lead this." Indeed, Local Trust is responding to this directly by providing learning and development support to reps on EDI. It is also creating a space for Big Local areas to discuss EDI through a dedicated learning cluster, where Big Local areas can meet each other.

Using evidence and critically reflecting on Big Local plans

As identified above, some Big Local areas are making plans to tackle racism in the future. However, there is also some evidence to suggest that Big Local plans may not reflect the level of aspiration of some partnership members and residents within the community. Some feel more could be done. There are opportunities to compare and contrast a wider range of views and different types of evidence to help Big Local partnerships make decisions.

Support for partnership members and workers who are racialised

Finally, some research participants talked about the personal impact of raising issues of race and racism within partnership meetings and other Big Local events, and how it can feel when their concerns are not heard. There may be opportunities to bring together 'affinity groups' of those who experience racism and would like a space to discuss how they can support each other and develop strategies to work with fellow partnership members on this agenda in future.

4.2.6 Summary

This section has provided a snapshot of current practice, as well as the views of a selection of Big Local partnership members and staff on the topic of tackling racism. Participants described a range of ambitions to achieve greater impact in tackling racism and also identified a number of key challenges that they would like to overcome.

The following section draws together the findings from this Big Local review and the findings of the literature review to examine where there may be gaps and where there may be opportunities to improve future place-based action.

Photographer: Zute Lightfoot/Local Trust.

Residents of W12Together Big Local, London listen to Daniel Anderson of Rights of Passage Productions introduce the film, *Young Voices* at a Black Lives Matter workshop in St Michaels Church, White City Estate, August 2020.

4.3 Implications of the review

In this section of the report, we consider what the literature review (section 3.1) and our review of Big Local practice (section 3.2) have told us so far and what they tell us about the place-based action that will be needed to support a sustainable impact on race equality. A picture of two possible futures to tackle racism emerges.

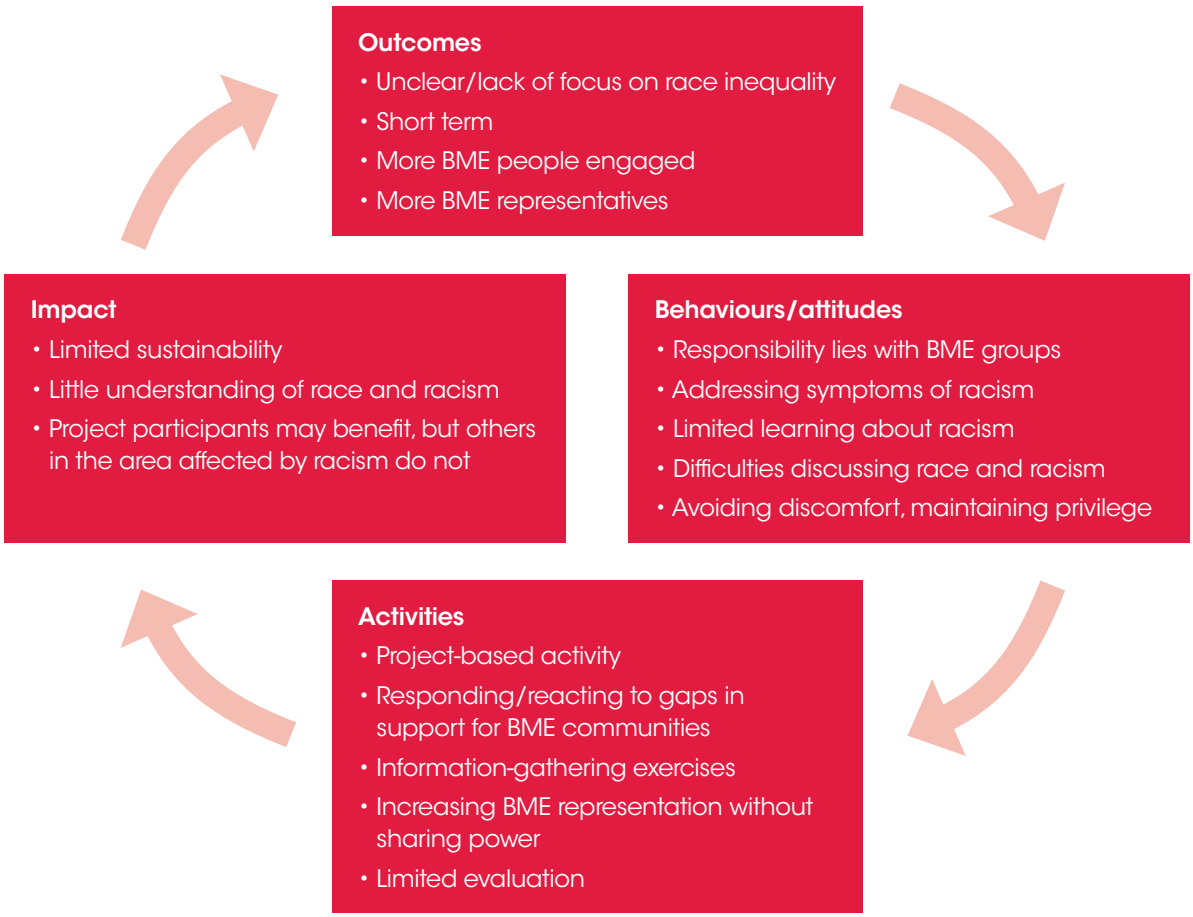
One possible future, while well-meaning and targeted at supporting BME people in some cases, is only likely to deliver incremental change. The literature review identifies the limited impact of previous neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives on more systemic issues of inequality in the UK.

Another possible future holds the potential for greater impact in challenging the larger structural inequalities associated with systems of racial discrimination and the exclusion associated with labour markets and education systems.

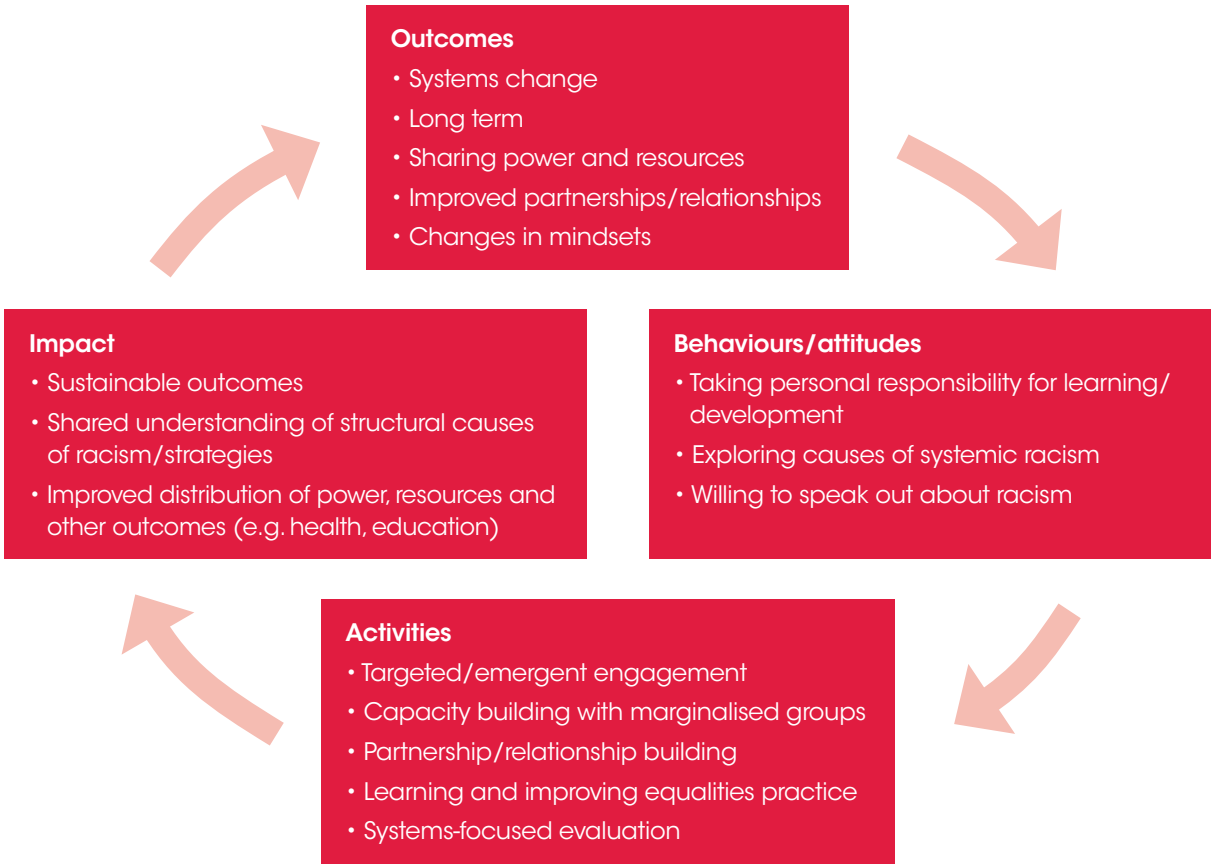
Based on the findings outlined in this report so far, we offer two models to summarise these two possible futures in figure 2:

Figure 2: Incremental change and transforming

Model 1: Incremental change



Model 2: Transforming



The challenge of improving practice

The practice challenge lies in recognising we are operating within mindsets that can maintain the impact of race and racism (model 1) and that, in order to change the impact we might want to have on race, we need to change our behaviours and attitudes (model 2).

At the core of this challenge is the ongoing and systemic nature of discrimination. In simple terms, this means that we have difficulty in noticing and changing what is around us, and we tend to tweak within the parameters of what currently exists. In relation to this work, this means – at times – it has been challenging to obtain examples of practice that support movement towards model 2.

In the section that follows, where examples were available, we have used them to demonstrate ways in which thinking and practice can align to create a more sustainable impact on race inequality. However, when practical examples were not available, we have made some suggestions about what those running place-based initiatives might need to do to get closer to anti-racist practice. Where we have improvised and suggested future approaches, we would encourage Local Trust, Big Local partnerships and other community groups to explore these practices. This is an opportunity to test, experiment and break new ground – which is exactly what Big Local was designed to do.

The next section outlines opportunities for improving practice identified through the review in three key areas:

- place-based practice
- programme support
- programme design and creating an enabling environment for change.

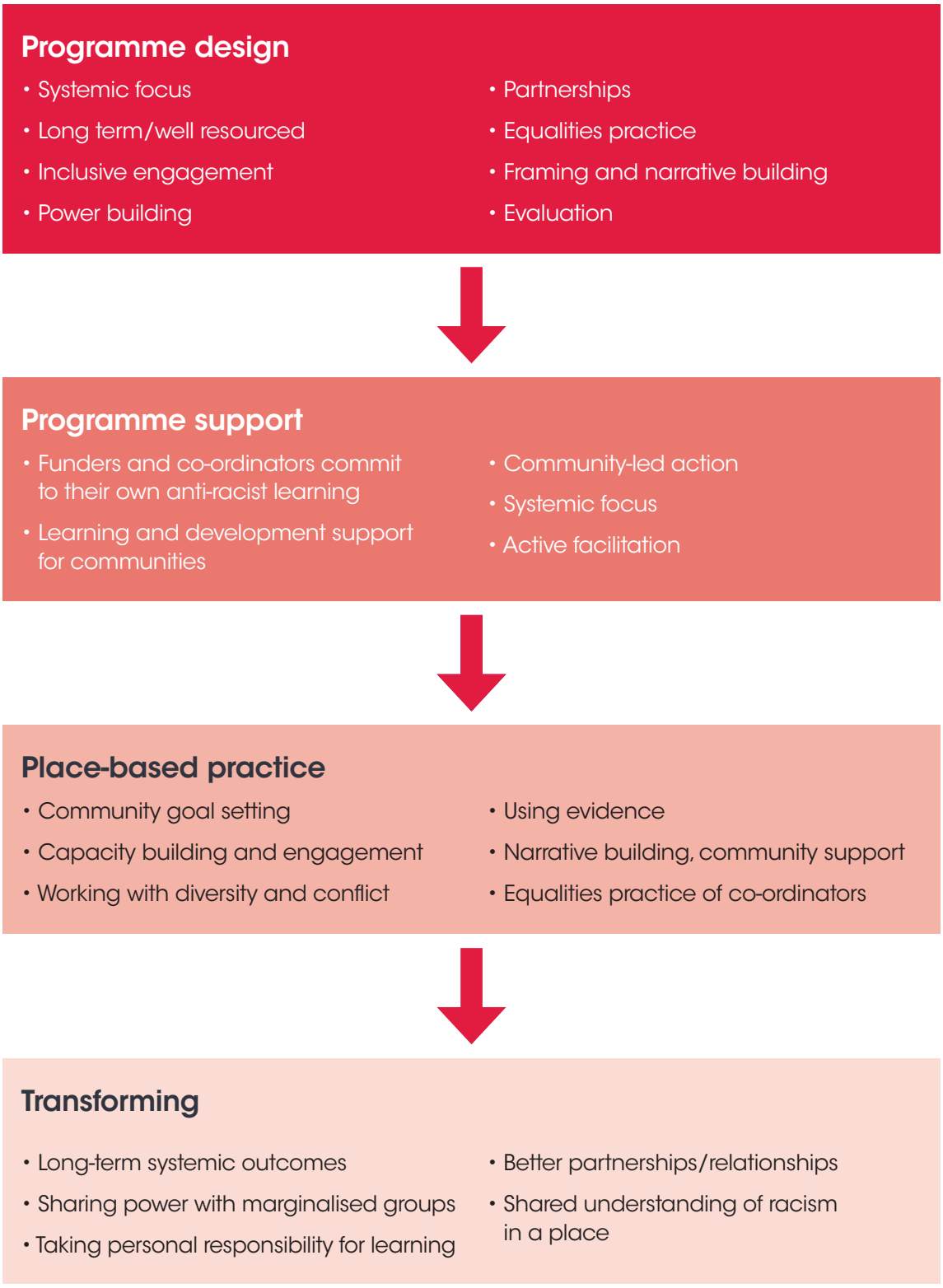
Opportunities to improve place-based action

The previous section (3.3) summarised the implications of the literature review and the review of Big Local practice. Available evidence suggests there are a number of programme design features associated with greater impact on tackling racism through place-based action. However, we also need to develop new ways of thinking and behaving within communities in order to make the most of programmes of this type.

Based on our analysis of the review, in order to achieve this transforming future that will tackle systemic racism, described in section 3.3, there are opportunities to improve place-based action in three key strategic areas. Figure 3 outlines these three areas of opportunity for development. Each element is needed in order to make a sustainable impact on tackling systemic racism in a place.

- **Place-based practice:** Effective practice is needed on the ground, amongst those involved in day-to-day running and co-ordinating place-based initiatives.
- **Programme support:** Support is required to promote learning and accountability for action on tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion within place-based sites. It is also required to help place-based initiatives engage partners and influence others in the area to support their efforts.
- **Programme design:** Effective programme design is required to create the enabling conditions, resources and structures required to make an impact on systemic discrimination in a place. In addition to programme design features, key emphasis is placed here on funders and programme designers committing to their own learning on anti-racism and sharing power with residents engaged in place-based action.

Figure 3: Opportunities for development



5.1 Place-based practice

In this section we share practice-based examples identified through a desk-based review and key practice themes identified in findings from the literature review described in section 3.1. These correspond to the six place-based practice areas identified in figure 3. Whilst many of these practices relate specifically to those involved in the day-to-day running and decision-making in place-based initiatives, some of these practices are relevant to funders and agencies co-ordinating and designing such initiatives too.

5.1.1 Community goal setting

Lay the groundwork

- Using a year zero can help provide time to set up a place-based initiative and develop community goals. It can help partnerships understand a range of views in their area and identify who is not at the table but needs to be.
- It is useful to take time to explore local data and invest in capacity-building work with traditionally marginalised groups. This can help lay the groundwork for making better decisions about goals and outcomes that place-based initiatives seek to achieve. It can also help prevent community groups with more influence and power dominating community goal-setting processes.
- The earlier place-based initiatives begin this process, the better. It can help ensure those most affected by issues of inequality are setting goals and outcomes for long-term place-based initiatives, as the example from Building Healthy Communities describes.

Example: Building Healthy Communities

The Building Healthy Communities initiative invested in the expertise of young people to help them decide its goals. The focus shifted from a general focus on health and wellbeing to a specific focus on reducing the disproportionate level of school suspensions experienced by pupils from BME backgrounds in California. As a result, the main funder of the initiative and various partners began to see the causes of the problem of racial inequities differently.

Engagement by young people helped to reframe the issue of school suspensions as an important social determinant of health, thus influencing the initiative's ultimate aims and outcomes. The impact of this work was significant policy and legal change in California, leading to reduced racial inequities in school suspensions.

This approach was successful because those involved in co-ordinating the initiative were able to shift their mindset on what appropriate policy outcomes should be. They listened to those affected by inequality and thought more broadly about the outcomes that the initiative wanted to achieve. This enabled the initiative to find a cause that people on the ground were willing to organise around and helped bring together a large body of residents and organisations willing to lobby for legal and policy change. (Scally et al., 2020).

Critically reflect upon goals and outcomes

- Thinking critically about the desired outcomes and the potential impact of different activities at the planning stage is important. The attitudes and beliefs we hold about race and racism influence the types of goals and activities we choose to pursue to address inequality.
- Certain models can be used to think through the ambition and reach of a place-based initiative's goals and outcomes such as the "third order change framework" (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). Models like this can be used to develop aspirations for place-based initiatives that are more in line with section 3.3, figure 2 and model 2 above.
- One of the challenges with model 1 outcomes (such as counting numbers of BME people involved in activities and sitting on decision-making bodies) is that they are often short term and unsustainable. They only tend to impact on those directly involved in projects. Addressing the immediate needs of disadvantaged communities is important. It is also useful to think about and address the causes of inequality and discrimination in an area, rather than simply respond to the symptoms.
- The example below is from Palfrey Big Local whose Imatter Walsall project focuses on the topic of child sexual exploitation. This issue affects a range of communities but can, at times, be framed as only affecting particular ethnic and cultural groups in an area, leading to stereotyping and division. The project took steps to talk about the challenging topic of child sexual exploitation with different local communities. Particular focus was placed on discussing and responding to some of the underlying causes of child sexual exploitation in the area.

Example: Imatter Walsall project

Palfrey in the West Midlands faces a number of social problems associated with antisocial behaviour, drugs, prostitution and child exploitation. The Imatter Walsall project, which is intended to be one of the legacies of Palfrey Big Local, aims to address the issue of child sexual exploitation directly by addressing some of the underlying causes in the area. In particular, the programme focuses on education to bring about behavioural and attitudinal change among local children and young people and in staff from a range of agencies that support them.

The programme also involves working with communities and local public agencies to prevent child grooming and to encourage open conversation about the risks, building on local community assets and strengths to achieve this. This project has promoted cohesion and addressed discrimination by emphasising that child sexual exploitation is a challenge that affects all ethnic groups and communities. (Bates, 2018, p. 13).

(See: https://twitter.com/imatterwalsall)

Photographer: Richard Richards/Local Trust.

Imrana Niazi from Palfrey Big Local speaks to other Big Local residents at a workshop titled, *Equality, diversity and inclusion in Big Locals* with Asif Afridi from brap at the Big Local Connects event in Nottingham in October 2021.

5.1.2 Capacity building and engagement

Flexible engagement/volunteering opportunities

- Offering flexible, informal and varied opportunities for participation is important. These engagement opportunities need to respond to the local context, recognising that only a minority of residents are likely to engage in formal decision-making processes.
- Regularly reviewing who is involved in place-based initiatives can support inclusivity. People with different experiences and knowledge may be needed at different stages of an initiative as strategies and goals change.
- Some place-based initiatives have also taken the decision to factor in financial support for residents who give their time, and some have created opportunities for residents to develop skills and capacity that may be useful to them in their careers or personal development. Camden Giving's Equality Fund, which recruited a decision-making panel from local residents who had experienced different forms of inequality, is a good example of this.

Example: Camden Giving's Equality Fund

Camden Giving's Equality Fund was designed by a panel of Camden residents with experience of inequality. Camden Giving worked with the panel of 10 Camden residents over a number of months, providing a programme of capacity building and learning and development support (as well as financial compensation for time). After this process of learning, development and relationship building within the panel and with the funder, the panel invited applications and chose successful applications. (See: Camden Giving, ND).

Tailored engagement practices

- Undertaking outreach work using highly qualified and locally embedded mentors, and providing holistic, neighbourhood-based facilities, can support engagement with traditionally marginalised groups.
- In some cases, individuals with particular protected characteristics may benefit from targeted support (for example, language support or work to build trust and relationships with mainstream community groups). It can be helpful to work with trusted local community groups who may already have existing skills, networks and relationships with particular communities. However, it is also important to recognise the limitations of assuming somebody's engagement needs are based on one aspect of their identity alone.

Example: Liverpool City Region youth engagement

A team responsible for the Liverpool City Region Strategy wanted to engage young people and people from BME backgrounds more closely in the planning process. They partnered with two existing organisations working with young people in the area. PLACED – a social enterprise with an academy for young people interested in built environment professions – ran a summer school for young people focused specifically on Liverpool City Region plans. Sefton Young Advisers – a group of trained young people – act as paid consultants and run bespoke engagement programmes across the area.

The team also used the digital platform, Commonplace, for digital engagement activity. This engagement work reached higher numbers of young and BME people than normal planning activities. Liverpool City Region staff felt the approach helped them achieve this because they invested in building trust with this group and were happy to let other specialist organisations take the lead. (See: Local Government Association, ND).

Let communities themselves define the boundaries of place-based initiatives

- The boundaries of place-based initiatives are not always natural 'communities'. Some communities may see themselves as part of a struggle for social justice that stretches beyond the immediate locality or the confines of a place-based initiative.
- Connecting with wider equality and social justice-focused movements can provide residents with an opportunity to reflect on how those issues may relate to their immediate neighbourhood. As an example, W12 Together Big Local gave local residents an opportunity to reflect on what the global Black Lives Matter movement meant to them and their locality.

Example: The We Exist film project

W12 Together Big Local collaborated with Rites of Passage Productions and Lorna French, an award-winning playwright, to produce a film called *We exist*. This was the product of an intense week-long series of workshops run by Rites of Passage and Lorna on the theme of Black Lives Matter and was an opportunity for local residents to share what the global movement means to residents and their area.

It was also an effective approach to engaging and empowering young people to share their voice in a meaningful way on a topic that resonated with them (Herman, 2020; Rites of Passage Productions, 2021).

Promote community leadership

- Capacity building and leadership development support for those most affected by inequality helps to ensure a range of voices are heard within place-based initiatives.
- Those running place-based initiatives need to consider the type of expertise they value when making decisions. Expertise based on experience of inequality is a useful addition to support decision-making.
- Funding grassroots activity that focuses on issues of anti-racism can help to ensure there is a pipeline of future community leaders in an area. For example, the Ubele Initiative is supporting BME social leaders to develop skills to respond to systemic racism in Manchester.

Example: Systems leadership training to tackle racism in Manchester

The Ubele Initiative is running a project as part of a place-based initiative in Manchester to promote racial justice. The project aims to engage an intergenerational group of BME social leaders to begin dialogue about systemic issues affecting communities.

The project aims to increase the capacity and capability of BME community organisations to engage in and eventually lead systems change initiatives by: creating spaces for dialogue; introducing leaders to system change strategies; building the capacity of leaders to respond to systemic social issues; and testing out strategies to do this with other partner agencies in Manchester. (See: Ubele, ND).

Photographer: Zute Lightfoot/Local Trust.

Volunteers for Bountagu Big Local at a community Winter Fair in Edmonton Green, London featuring an alumna of Local Trust's Community Leadership Academy (CLA), December 2021.

Movement building and influencing systemic change

- For those place-based initiatives interested in bringing together a group of communities and partners within a local system to tackle racism, 'movement building' approaches may be helpful. Movement building refers to involving a wide range of residents and local partners willing to make the necessary changes to community systems and behaviours.
- It can be useful to run dialogue and engagement activities focused on surfacing common values and perspectives on anti-racism between different stakeholders – those with traditional forms of power and resources and those without. In particular, this can help to create an environment where new ideas can take hold and where policymakers can feel empowered to pursue goals that are closer to the wishes of the local community. The example from brap used Three Horizons methodology to imagine a new anti-racist future for Birmingham, but other approaches could be used as effectively (International Futures Forum, ND).

Example: Anti-racist futures in Birmingham

brap, an equality charity based in Birmingham, ran a series of 'imagining' activities and workshops with children and young people in schools and youth organisations and with public sector organisations and community groups. The focus of these was imagining what a future anti-racist Birmingham would look and feel like. Input on the hopes and dreams of these different communities was used to develop a shared blueprint for an anti-racist future in the city.

This was shared at a city-wide event and has led to various public and voluntary sector partner organisations wishing to sign up and develop the blueprint further by taking action in their own organisations. The workshops where participants were able to imagine an anti-racist future were particularly helpful in supporting people from different backgrounds to identify how race and racism relate to their own lives and their community. Resources for running your own imagining session can be found at: www.antiracistfutures.org.

- There are sometimes opportunities to partner with wider social movements on topics of local interest. The No More Exclusions movement supports local action on race inequality in school exclusions and connects local movements to campaign at a national policy level.

Example: No More Exclusions movement

No More Exclusions (NME) is an abolitionist grassroots coalition movement with a focus on racial justice in education. The goal is to abolish school exclusions. The movement works to prevent the escalating number of school exclusions, in particular, the disproportionate rate of exclusions experienced by Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean children. NME has a number of 'chapters' in different parts of England which focus on local issues and the movement campaigns at local and national levels on policy and law change. They signpost sources of advice and advocacy for those affected.

The movement is particularly impactful in the way it enables young people to lead their own campaigns, to be heard and to steer the direction of work both within NME and outside it. They also work in close partnerships with many sister organisations, groups, activists and campaigners, including community, third sector, parent and youth groups.

(See: No More Exclusions, ND).

5.1.3 Working with diversity and conflict

Increasing the ethnic diversity of those involved in place-based initiatives is important. Yet increasing representation alone does not guarantee that people from BME backgrounds will have the power to make decisions and that they will feel included and heard. One of the challenges of working with diversity is that we want diversity to behave in ways that are acceptable and in line with our own thinking and practice. This means that, very often, diversity is not allowed to flourish because we cannot handle different viewpoints of the world. We may find different ways of communicating too difficult to relate to or too hard to handle.

If we really believe that ethnic and cultural diversity is of benefit to place-based initiatives and their decision-making processes, then we need to help people at a local level manage different viewpoints on race. We need to foster inclusion alongside representation. We need to confront racist stereotypes. We need to manage conflict and to see disagreement and discomfort when talking about race as a productive and potentially transformative force. We found few practice-based examples in the literature on this, but we outline below some practical steps to consider.

Confronting racial stereotypes

- It is important not to expect residents to represent one aspect of their identity alone (ignoring all the other dimensions of their lives). Failure to recognise intersectionality – all aspects of our identity such as class, gender, disability – can lead to stereotyping and assumptions about the diversity of experience people bring.
- Taking a stand to call out discriminatory or inappropriate comments and making clear what is accepted and considered respectful behaviour can help in confronting racial stereotypes.

Fostering inclusion

- The values and behaviours of decision-making panels in charge of place-based initiatives can have a powerful impact on others who join but who are not part of these 'norms' or do not fully understand the rules of engagement. Longstanding members may not appreciate the impact their unspoken behaviour has on those around them. But, in fact, these members often set the tone – and others conform to it. It can be useful to notice whose voices are heard more than others, whose are interrupted, and whose opinions are frequently overlooked or misattributed to others.
- There are opportunities for community decision-making panels to develop more awareness and discussion about their collective behaviour. Inviting feedback about how included people feel is important, particularly from those who are normally quiet in meetings or may have left the group. It can be useful to see how the group operates from the perspective of others (particularly those who may be traditionally excluded from such spaces).
- It is important to be aware of in-group and out-group dynamics and exclusion within decision-making panels and to restrict the impact they have.
- Useful questions include: do people around me, including those who are racialised differently from myself, share their opinions freely? How do I respond to questions, comments and challenges from people from BME backgrounds?

Working with conflict

- When making decisions about priorities for place-based initiatives, it is not uncommon for groups to work towards some level of consensus. This is natural. But it is also important to recognise that working with diversity also means accepting that people may not always agree. We tend to avoid conflict and see it as a 'bad thing' – but this can prevent people from sharing different opinions.
- When discussing issues of race, it is important to notice that disagreement or certain ways of communicating by racialised communities can be misattributed as conflict. The consequences of disagreement often weigh more heavily on those who are already marginalised.
- It is useful to create an atmosphere that welcomes debate and disagreement as a constructive and creative process. This requires the knowledge and confidence to raise difficult topics, including racism.
- Useful questions include: am I surfacing conflicts that are getting in the way of progress, including unexpressed or perceived conflicts between different ethnic groups? Am I avoiding or ignoring racial conflict and hoping things will work out by themselves? Often these types of conflict create more distance between different racialised groups and can create a toxic atmosphere.

Example: The Go Deep Game

The Go Deep Game is an internationally developed community 'game' that can be used to build communities and to bring together community members to learn more about themselves and their leadership. It aims to bring about awareness of diversity in participants and in the community. It also aims to find areas of shared understanding and potential for collaboration across different parts of the community.

The game has been used by agencies in a variety of countries, including Greece, Italy, Spain and Scotland, with mixed groups of adults and young people, including recent migrants. The programme has yet to publish a formal evaluation, but initial feedback suggests that the game creates opportunities for deepening connections between diverse residents. (See: Go Deep, ND).

5.1.4 Using evidence

Much of the literature argues that previous place-based initiatives have failed to address the structural causes of poverty and inequality. In addition, few place-based evaluations of initiatives explore their impact on promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination. Equally, the absence of data disaggregated by protected characteristic makes it harder to understand trends and impact in relation to promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination. These evaluative drawbacks restrict the ability of place-based initiatives to show the impact they have made at the end of the programme. They also make it hard for place-based initiatives to learn and adapt in order to improve their impact on promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination over time. The following practice approaches support better use of evidence.

Exploring the structural causes of race inequality in a place

- Identifying the interrelated root causes of poverty and racism in an area often requires engaging with the history of a place – to understand how this is interwoven with processes of racialisation.

Example: Granby Community Land Trust

When setting up a Community Land Trust in Granby (an ethnically diverse part of Liverpool), the co-ordinating group recognised the importance of listening to a range of voices and developing a shared understanding of inequality in the place. This included listening to experiences of how racism had contributed to people's experiences of inequality.

The area has a history of connections to the slave trade and, in living memory, riots against institutional racism had been violently repressed. It was important to acknowledge this and the impact on trust and relationships in the community when developing the Community Land Trust (Thompson, 2015).

Example: Campaign to address racial inequality in schools

A community-led campaign to challenge school closures in Philadelphia, US sought to research and unmask histories of marginalisation, disinvestment and displacement that particularly affected people of colour. Engaging with these histories of place brought schools and communities together and helped develop a shared narrative to challenge historic and structural factors affecting disadvantaged school pupils from particular communities (Good, 2017).

- Considering whether inequalities associated with the local environment (for example, availability of affordable housing, access to educational opportunities, access to shops and healthy food, access to quality green spaces) are patterned along racial lines can identify some of the more structural root causes of racial inequality in an area and enable communities to take action to address them.

Example: Eat Healthy programme

An Eat Healthy programme in East Harlem, New York, US, provided healthy food for local residents to meet the immediate needs of those affected by racial inequality and poverty. At the same time, the initiative gathered evidence about how access to healthy food was affecting particular communities and parts of the area more than others. The programme used this evidence to challenge policies and to seek investment to address neighbourhood access to places to buy healthy food and the financial resources to buy that food on a consistent basis. (Nieves et al., 2021).

Using a range of evidence to understand impact on promoting racial equality

- It is important to build the capacity of community groups to understand and analyse different types of evidence about inequality. It can help to compare/triangulate what residents think about the most pressing issues of inequality in an area with other types of data (such as facts and figures on employment).
- Sometimes certain types of evidence are excluded from evaluation work. We may prioritise technical or academic expertise over those who speak with first-hand experience of inequality in the area. Yet creating trusted spaces for people to share this type of information can provide important evidence to inform decisions.
- Some community groups aim to work with partners (such as local authorities) to address the underlying structural causes of racial inequality in an area. In these cases, it can help to evaluate the impact of place-based initiatives on those partners in the local area/system. Consciously measuring these changes in relationships between partners can help place-based initiatives assess progress and change tactics when needed. An example of an evaluation framework to do this is offered below.

Example: Framework to evaluate systems change

Kania et al. (2018) offer a framework for examining systems change through place-based initiatives at three levels (adapted here to focus on tackling racism in school exclusions as an example):

- **Explicit:** Structural changes such as changes in local policies, laws or how resources are distributed to address issues of racial inequality (e.g. a local school changing its policy to address issues of racial inequality in the exclusion of school pupils).
- **Semi-explicit:** Changes in relationships, connections and power dynamics between different communities and partners in a place (e.g. local authorities and schools sharing more power with local parents and community groups, listening more to their concerns).
- **Implicit:** Changes and transformations in how we think about issues of race and racism in a local area (e.g. developing new ways of thinking and a shared mindset between partners about the detrimental impact of racism on young people's future skill development in the area).

See Scally et al. (2020) for examples of the practical application of this framework to evaluate place-based race equality initiatives in the US.

- It is important to routinely collect data about the protected characteristics of those who participate in or benefit from place-based initiatives (such as gender, age and ethnicity). It is also useful to analyse and share information openly between partners involved in place-based initiatives, encouraging partners to do the same in order to build accountability for progress. Finally, this information should be used to change and improve practice.

Example: Black Thrive

Black Thrive is a community-led, place-based initiative that seeks to change the significant inequalities in mental health and wellbeing experienced by Lambeth's diverse black population. It aims to do this by bringing together community and system stakeholders (e.g. local health agencies) to work collaboratively: facilitating equity of voice; building a data system that will inform collective action and monitor progress; and creating the mechanisms required to ensure transparency and accountability.

The initiative undertook a range of community consultation activities and then established local progress measures (such as reductions in reported discrimination by people with mental health problems in the area). The structures established through the Black Thrive initiative aim to make joined-up data available transparently across partners so that progress can be tracked and better decisions made about how to run mental health services. The initiative also aims to make data and evidence more available to the local population so they can hold the initiative/the system to account for progress.

(See: Collective Impact Forum, ND).

5.1.5 Narrative building

As identified above, place-based action needs to be connected to a well-evidenced analysis of the structural causes of discrimination within a specific place. The way in which this account of inequality is framed and described to different groups can affect who feels included and who feels excluded. It is important to try to build a shared story or narrative that different people in an area feel able to get behind and support.

As an example, issues of race and racism may not be seen as a relevant priority to some White British people in majority White British areas. Place-based initiatives seeking to progress race equality may need to manage the tension of wanting to achieve their goals, while at the same time not alienating partners who may not be as far along in their racial equity journey.

The following elements of practice can support community groups seeking to advocate and campaign on issues of racial justice (taken from Lingayah et al., 2018 and Lingayah et al., 2020):

- Be clear about your goals and target audience.
- Campaigners do not have to meet public thinking 'where it is at'. Campaigners should not try to brush over hot topics where public thinking is different from their own and is problematic on race and racism.
- When describing action on racism, appealing to public-spirited collective values that matter to most people (such as responsibility to one another, building togetherness and belonging) can help. It can be useful to provide examples of how action on racism aligns with those values, showing how it is a means to a decent life for us all (not just for people from a BME background).

- Showing that real change is possible and sharing real-life efforts and initiatives that make a meaningful difference can help build support for anti-racism campaigns. It is important to avoid just focusing on crisis talk, which may convey the urgency of racial injustice but can also feed public fatalism and disengagement.
- Connecting specific instances of racism in the community to the bigger systemic picture is also helpful. This includes showing how examples of racism experienced by particular residents can reflect wider, more structural problems of discrimination (such as patterns in the way that employers think about and treat people from BME backgrounds in the local area).

Example: Northamptonshire Race Equality Council Framing Racism project

Northamptonshire Race Equality Council ran a project engaging a range of diverse people in workshops to discuss the theory and practice of developing positive alternative messages (using metaphors) to challenge hate, prejudice and bigotry. The workshops were delivered by an equality charity called Equally Ours. Further workshops were then held to develop metaphors and messages on a variety of themes related to plans to address race equality in Northamptonshire, as part of developing *A new vision for Northamptonshire*.

Northamptonshire Race Equality Council is currently translating that vision into practical infographics, visual materials and simple messages that can be used on social media and in publicity to change the narratives in relation to equality and human rights. (See: NREC, ND).

Photographer: Richard Richards/Local Trust.

Big Local residents attending a workshop titled, *Equality, diversity and inclusion in Big Locals* hosted by Asif Afridi from brap and Imrana Niazi from Palfrey Big Local at the Big Local Connects event in Nottingham in October 2021.

5.1.6 Equalities practice of co-ordinators

It is important to regularly review and improve the equalities practice of those co-ordinating place-based initiatives. Co-ordinating organisations often play a 'backbone' role, bringing together traditionally marginalised residents in an area to build relationships with other stakeholders (such as funders, public agencies and community organisations) that hold power and resources. Thus, it is important for co-ordinators to have a really good awareness of how power and inequality operate within a place, and to make efforts to build community capacity and to share and elevate those voices that are excluded and rarely heard.

There are few practical, documented examples of efforts to improve the equalities practice of community groups and organisations responsible for co-ordinating place-based initiatives in the UK. Below we suggest a number of key competencies and areas for development (drawn largely from the literature review and our interviews and focus groups with Big Local areas). In the context of the Big Local programme, these co-ordinating bodies include 'locally trusted organisations' and reps and workers hired to support Big Local areas make an impact in their local area. The following are worthy of consideration when thinking about future recruitment and investing in future learning and development work within place-based initiatives.

- **Holding difficult discussions about race and racism:** Local community workers play a critical role in supporting the type of learning within communities that unsettles and confronts discriminatory attitudes. Yet our emotional responses to discussing race (such as defensiveness, shame, fear or guilt) can maintain current patterns of inequality. Useful questions include: am I comfortable talking about issues of race and racism? Do I understand my own relationship to issues of race and racism and how this might be preventing me from speaking up?
- **Becoming aware of the biases we hold:** We all have values and cultures of our own that help us understand and interpret the world around us – these ways of seeing are inevitably loaded with biases. In some instances, biases and perceptions/stereotypes held about people from BME backgrounds can have a negative impact and can prevent their full engagement. Community groups that are committed to equality allow time for individuals to develop awareness of their own biases. Understanding bias can help place-based initiative participants understand and moderate their behaviour and their decision-making. Co-ordinating organisations can play a critical role in facilitating participants' inner journey of change (for example, challenging biases and supporting reflection).

- **Systems thinking:** Those responsible for co-ordinating and working on place-based initiatives require certain mindsets, including the ability to understand how systems of discrimination operate within a local place. Co-ordinating agencies need to invest in building their fluency and knowledge on different dimensions of inequality (such as class, gender, race and disability) and in understanding their significance within a local area. Leaders need skills to involve diverse stakeholders in discussing the root causes of structural inequalities and setting a shared direction for how to respond to them.
- **Building trust and empathy:** Playing a co-ordinating role in place-based initiatives involves creating a 'container' that can hold a range of different views and that can bring in different people to lead and share their voices when needed. Co-ordinating organisations play an important role in cultivating trust and empathy amongst participants so they can freely share their perspectives.
- **Going slowly and acknowledging racialised harm:** Those who experience the negative effects of racism may find it hard to talk about those issues, particularly in settings that are multi-ethnic. Part of the work in building greater inclusivity and trust within place-based initiatives is acknowledging this past harm. Some people from BME backgrounds may not want to work with others in the community because they have been treated badly by them in the past. Dedicated work in partnership with specialist organisations who can support people who have experienced racialised trauma can help to build that trust. As can taking accountability for past inequalities in the way BME communities have been treated.

Example: Healing Justice London

Healing Justice London creates safe spaces for healing for communities that are marginalised. They recognise that previous trauma and histories of oppression can have an impact on people's ability to trust themselves, and this can also affect people's ability to see themselves as taking a leadership role in their community. The organisation uses a mixture of creative arts therapy and trauma-informed practice involving deep listening to support people from marginalised groups to build internal resilience and agency for community leadership. (See: Healing Justice, ND).

5.2 Programme support

A key theme that has emerged through this review is the limited impact of previous neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives on more systemic issues of inequality in the UK. There is evidence of limited impact on discrimination and exclusion felt by people with a wide range of protected characteristics living in the areas of those studies we reviewed.

Given the relatively scant evidence on efforts to address the systemic nature of racism and other forms of inequality through place-based activities in the UK, we went further afield in our review, as described in section 3 of this report. Some of the international empirical examples (particularly from the US) offer evaluative evidence and a useful insight into features that could be considered in a UK context. In sharing these examples, we acknowledge the significant difference in context between the US and the UK. Some of the community initiatives identified (such as Building Healthy Communities in California) involved hundreds of millions of dollars of investment from charitable trusts and local businesses over a decade. There are, of course, also differences in social welfare systems and levels of geographic racial segregation in these countries.

Another important difference between the UK and the US is the level of fluency in discussing issues of structural discrimination (such as racism and sexism). Though the US still faces deep challenges in addressing the root causes of systemic racism, there is often more discussion about the topic. As we have outlined in this report, if a place-based initiative is to adopt a more systemic approach to tackling discrimination in its local area, the change needs to start internally with those who design, set up and run the programme.

In the UK we often shy away from these debates. We need to develop a level of fluency and comfort with discussing issues of discrimination if we are to consciously tackle it and evaluate progress on it in future place-based programmes.

An inability to notice and discuss race and racism is not just a UK issue, of course; it is a worldwide challenge. The 'improving practice' themes identified in section 4.2 of this report are offered as a response to this challenge in a UK context. They also respond directly to a number of challenges faced by Big Local areas identified through the primary research we undertook for this report and a previous review of EDI practice in Big Local areas (Afridi et al., 2021). In particular, these practice themes can inform future learning and development support for Big Local areas offered by Local Trust.

Given the particular focus of this review on tackling racism, the learning themes that follow (figure 4) focus particularly on this, but some themes apply to other aspects of EDI.

5.2.1 Learning and development themes

The following learning and development themes respond to the 'place-based practice' themes set out in section 4.1.

Figure 4: Learning themes

Community goal setting	**Laying the groundwork for engagement of marginalised groups and critically reflecting on goals and outcomes**

- Ability to reflect on local data on inequalities and identify evidence gaps.
- Ability to relate your purpose and goals to the diverse communities you serve.
- Ability to see how your own experiences may have impacted upon your views about racism; understanding what this means in terms of shaping your views about the possible outcomes or impact of place-based initiatives.

Capacity building and engagement	**Flexible and tailored engagement practices. Promoting community leadership to support and influence systemic change**

- Awareness of how to use feedback/data to improve your engagement strategies.
- Understanding that the routes to progressing social justice may lie outside a local area.
- Ability to support communities to pursue their own social justice causes.
- Active listening skills.
- Ability to critically reflect on the types of evidence that are used to inform decisions and how power dynamics operate within your community.
- Partnership and relationship-building skills for systemic change (e.g. systems change strategies).

Working with diversity and conflict	**Confronting racial stereotypes, fostering inclusion, working with conflict**

- Awareness of bias and stereotyping, and limits of representation.
- Ability to notice and challenge discriminatory, abusive and inappropriate behaviour.
- Ability to judge and measure levels of inclusion in decision-making spaces.
- Awareness of in-group and out-group dynamics.
- Awareness of the transformational potential of conflict and how to support this.
- Ability to notice emotional responses to racial conflict and how to self-regulate.

Using evidence	Exploring structural causes of racial inequality in a place and using evidence to understand impact

- Awareness of the impact of racialised decision-making within a particular area (e.g. impact on outcomes and access to services/social infrastructure).
- Familiarity with different types of evidence for assessing impact on tackling discrimination/promoting inclusion; knowledge of how to analyse and use this evidence to inform decisions.
- Ability to measure the things that matter in relation to EDI that will have sustainable impact.

Narrative building	Building a shared narrative of causes of discrimination within a place and framing place-based action to encourage community support

- Ability to use evidence to examine the root causes of structural inequality in a place.
- Understanding of how to take an anti-racist approach in your engagement with local partners and communities.
- Knowledge of how to frame messages about anti-racism through your place-based initative.

Equalities practice of co-ordinators	Talking about race, developing awareness of biases, systems thinking, building trusting relationships with partners and communities

- Confidence to talk about race and racism with a range of partners/communities.
- Ability to notice and manage the impact of bias.
- Systems-thinking skills and ability to understand how systems of discrimination operate within a place.
- Knowledge of the impact of racism on white people/BME people.
- Ability to engage with communities and avoid retraumatising those who experience racism.
- Ability to facilitate discussions about racism safely, while also allowing for challenge and disagreement.

5.2.2 Local Trust's role in supporting development

Community-led action

A considerable strength of Big Local is the resident-led nature of the work. Accordingly, Local Trust seeks to support rather than direct Big Local partnerships to undertake specific activities. However, on the topic of responding to racism, levels of understanding around how to discuss and progress anti-racism remain an area for development in many community groups across the UK.

The evidence considered through our literature review (section 3.1) suggests that responding and reacting to racial inequality alone (such as providing services to BME groups) without addressing the structural causes of unequal health, education and employment outcomes may have short-term and unsustainable impact. Yet it is often these types of model 1 activities (figure 2) that characterise current practice through community-led action in the UK.

If Local Trust is to stimulate more ambition and systemic impact on this agenda in future, this will involve the organisation setting some of that direction. As we have proposed in this report, Local Trust can play a role by seeking to foster greater inquiry amongst community groups, more effective discussion and better use of evidence to inform place-based action. They can also play a role by encouraging greater accountability for progress on this topic and supporting Big Local areas to measure progress on EDI issues that matter to their communities (see Afridi et al., 2021 for more coverage of this).

Systemic focus

Many of those involved in Big Local partnerships operate as volunteers and may have limited experience of designing projects and interventions to respond to racism in their area. Some partnership members also have a great deal of experience and insight to offer. Partnership members can be supported through building skills and confidence (as outlined in section 4.2.1) and through making space for those with experience and knowledge on this topic to lead. But this also requires Local Trust to use its power, resources and influence in ways that can leverage greater impact in tackling systemic discrimination in a place.

This leverage role may involve Big Local reps or Local Trust staff elevating the voices of residents involved in Big Local campaigns or projects to influence the behaviour of other partners in their area (such as local authorities or large community organisations). It may involve connecting Big Local areas that are interested in similar campaigns to tackle racism in order to learn from each other and identify opportunities for collective action and joint campaigning. It may involve supporting residents to lobby at a national level for legal and policy reform to process anti-racism, too. These are already activities that Local Trust excels at on a range of topics. Applying this support and influencing role to the topic of systemic discrimination would be a useful addition to this work.

Active facilitation

Discussing and learning about issues of racism in community spaces (like Big Local partnerships) requires active facilitation. It requires facilitators who actively pay attention to the impact of racism on people from different backgrounds, so they can avoid racialised harm. It requires facilitators to have a level of confidence in talking about racism. This confidence comes from facilitators having already considered their own racialised conditioning – and how this affects who they hear and how they respond to others when discussing race. Local Trust can support Big Local chairs and reps to reflect on their facilitation of these topics. In addition, there may be scope for Local Trust to provide spaces for 'affinity groups' who do not feel heard by their partnership or who have suffered racialised harm in their communities. This would be a space for such residents to support each other and discuss strategies for navigating this space.

Photographer: Richard Richards/Local Trust.

A Big Local resident speaks during a workshop at the Big Local Connects event in Nottingham in October 2021.

5.3 Future design of place-based initiatives in the UK

5.3.1 Applying the design features of place-based action to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion

The recommended design features of place-based initiatives identified in this report have an explicit focus on tackling structural, institutional racism. The evidence suggests that recreating previous approaches to tackling racism used in many previous neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives is unlikely to yield significant long-term impact. These approaches may address, in the short term, the needs of some BME communities who have the opportunity to engage with an initiative. Yet they are unlikely to tackle the systemic, institutional nature of racism and the way it operates within particular neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

There is an increasing focus on addressing inequality through place-based interventions, for example through the 'levelling up' agenda of the UK government or through the many place-based and community-led programmes being developed by devolved administrations, local authorities and independent funders. At the same time, we are at a point in our society's history where we are witnessing interest in and acceptance of the need to address longstanding racial inequalities amongst members of the public and within civil society. The Black Lives Matter movement and public awareness of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people from BME backgrounds have created an important window of opportunity for change. This creates the opportunity to significantly increase the ambition of place-based and community regeneration programmes to build inclusion and tackle racism through incorporating the "eight design features of place-based action to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion" identified in section 3.1.3 of this report and summarised in figure 5.

Figure 5: The eight design features of place-based action to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion

Systemic focus	• Combining a spatially based and people-based approach. • Involving communities as partners to support collaborative learning and systems change. • Responding to root causes of structural discrimination: EDI as a central focus.
Long term and well resourced	• Ambition and commitment to achieve impact at a scale commensurate with the problem. • Long-term, multi-agency approach. Investment in building capacity and community leadership of traditionally marginalised groups.
Inclusive engagement practice	• Flexible and emergent engagement opportunities. • Investment in targeted engagement practice. • Community-defined boundaries for place-based action.
Power building	• Strong governance and EDI accountability mechanisms. • Addressing internal power dynamics that can limit voice of marginalised groups. • Supporting outward gaze and influencing activities to challenge systemic inequality in a place.
Partnerships and relationship building	• Developing shared understanding of EDI. • Working at multiple levels to achieve change. • Building trusting relationships between funders and a place (high funding security and predictability; opportunities to learn together and challenge each other).
Equalities practice of co-ordinators	• Reviewing impact and developing skills and knowledge. • Good understanding of EDI and ability to engage various stakeholders in discussing inequality in a place. • Understanding how systems of sexism, ageism, racism, etc. operate at both community level and within partner organisations.
Framing and narrative building	• Connecting place-based action to well-evidenced analysis of structural causes of discrimination in a place. • Strategic communication and framing of EDI messages to help build support for place-based action across a range of partners/communities.
Evaluation	• Investment in high-quality data disaggregated by protected characteristic. • Using experimental long-term methods to test the impact of different strategies on EDI. • Monitoring changes in beliefs, capacity, agency and behaviour of partners to assess systems-level change.

Meanwhile there are clear indications, exemplified by the recent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report (2021), that parts of the UK government refute the existence of structural, institutional racism. There is a lack of recognition of the systemic nature of racism. This will pose challenges for future efforts to influence the design of large place-based initiatives along the lines identified in this report. Wider societal views about the irrelevance of anti-racism to largely White British neighbourhoods will also pose challenges.

Acknowledging the existence of systemic racism in the UK goes to the core of questions about who we are as a country, where we have come from and what kind of a future we want to create. Work on racism has always been intensely political. There is no lack of evidence that structural, institutional racism exists and that more systemic responses are required to tackle racism in local areas. A key question for Local Trust – and indeed for other agencies responsible for designing place-based initiatives – is how willing and able the organisation is to navigate this political environment. How can the organisation use its power and influence to ensure that place-based initiatives have this explicit focus on tackling systemic discrimination in the future?

Conclusions

A key theme that has emerged through this report is the limited impact of previous neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives on more systemic issues of inequality in the UK. There is evidence of limited impact on discrimination and exclusion felt by people with a wide range of protected characteristics living in the areas covered by the studies we reviewed.

Unfortunately, when evaluative data is available, it suggests that some of the most marginalised people in communities have not changed their overall employment or wellbeing prospects as a result of these initiatives. And when traditionally marginalised groups do benefit from projects, the outcomes can be felt temporarily. They can also pale in comparison to the larger structural inequalities associated with a labour market or education system that discriminates along the lines of race, class, gender, disability, and so on.

Yet, dismantling and unpacking the systemic nature of discrimination through place-based action is challenging. In particular, as this report has suggested, the engrained nature of racism can make it difficult to notice when the ideology of racism is showing up in our lives. But there is also disagreement and contestation about how much of a problem systemic racism really is in our society. As Lingayah (2021) puts it:

> **"The problem with the concept of systemic racism as it stands now is that it obscures as much as it reveals. A lack of clarity on what systemic racism is and how it works risks it becoming an almost mystical concept – one which is too easy for cynics to dismiss. What is more, research shows that racism is viewed mostly as personal prejudice and hostile actions directed by one person towards another, rather than as something that is designed into our systems" (p. 5).**

The opportunities to improve place-based action identified in this report respond directly to this challenge. The report offers routes to developing more clarity about how racism operates systemically within a particular place. It offers options for measuring progress to tackle systemic racism. It also offers ideas for design features for future programmes and anti-racist place-based practice that can be nurtured within place-based initiatives.

As identified in the previous section, creating an anti-racist future is a long journey. It requires a level of personal commitment and attitudinal/behavioural change from a range of different people and organisations from across the system to achieve it in a place (including funders and those co-ordinating place-based initiatives). We hope that some of the evidence and practice examples outlined in this report will help those reading it to take a step towards that future with the communities they serve and live in.

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Appendix 1: Definitions

We used the following definitions in this review (whilst recognising that each definition is by no means definitive or accepted by all).

Black and Minority Ethnic 'BME'	We use the term 'BME' to refer to people who identify as Black or as part of a marginalised ethnicity, community or group. Where specific articles use a different definition such as 'People of Colour' we use the term defined by the author.
Discrimination	Treating another person unfairly or less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic.
Diversity	A recognition of each other's differences. A diverse environment describes a wide range of backgrounds and mind-sets which support a culture of creativity and innovation.
Equality	Ensuring that people are not treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010) and that they are able to enjoy equal outcomes, choices and opportunities compared to others.
Equity	Each person has different circumstances so giving everybody the same may not be enough to equalise outcomes. 'Equity' refers to allocating the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.
Inclusion	Creating an environment where everybody feels welcome and valued.
Not in employment, education or training 'NEET'	NEET, an acronym for "Not in Education, Employment, or Training", refers to a person who is unemployed and not receiving an education or vocational training.
Protected characteristics	These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Place-based initiative	In the interests of consistency, we used the generic term 'place-based initiatives' for initiatives of varying geographical size and complexity (such as neighbourhood, city and region). Often 'place-based' is about more than just spatial scope. It also refers to principles and a style of approach that is 'joined up' and brings diverse stakeholders together to respond to issues specific to a place over a sustained period. Thus, we use the following definition taken from Dart (2018): "A collaborative, long-term approach to build thriving communities delivered in a defined geographic location. This approach is ideally characterised by partnering and shared design, shared stewardship, and shared accountability for outcomes and impact."
Racism	Racism is a belief that human beings can be categorised into 'races' on the basis of physical characteristics like skin colour and facial features, that are indicators of different abilities, qualities or worth. This prejudice-based belief, action or behaviour takes place within a context of power (of the perpetrator).

Appendix 2:
Summary of place-based initiatives considered in the review

A number of specific place-based neighbourhood regeneration and place-based initiatives are referred to in the report. A brief description of each initiative is included below:

Programme / Initiative	Aims / scope	Funder type	Start date	Country
Big Local	Funding programme to provide at least £1 million to each of 150 communities in England to be spent over 10-15 years at the communities' own pace and on their own plans and priorities.	Foundation	2011	England
Building Healthy Communities Initiative	A 10 year, $1 billion community initiative launched by The California Endowment in 2010 to advance state-wide policy, change the narrative, and transform 14 of California's communities most devastated by health inequities.	Foundation	2010	USA
City Challenge	Neighbourhood regeneration fund open to councils to bid for funds to address deprivation in their area. Those successful received £37.5 million spent over 5 years.	Government	1991	England
Community Land Trust, Granby	Community Land Trust initiated to renovate and own derelict properties in four streets in Granby, Liverpool (an ethnically-diverse neighbourhood).	Government and private sector	2011	England
Community Participation Programmes	Empowerment programmes to support neighbourhood regeneration activities. Included Community Empower Networks (£35 million), Community Chests and Community Learning Chests (£50 million).	Government	2002	England

Programme / Initiative	Aims / scope	Funder type	Start date	Country
Eat Healthy	Community-based nutrition and health promotion program in East Harlem with a focus on addressing racial inequities in access to healthy nutrition.	Government	2016	USA
Health Action Zones	Multi-agency partnerships in 26 areas of England. Aim to encourage place-based / community-based activities to tackle health inequalities.	Government	1998	England
JRF Bradford Programme	Ten-year programme funded by Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Place-based, multi-agency approach to empower communities and improve community cohesion.	Foundation	2004	England
Local Enterprise Growth Initiative	Initiative to release economic and productivity potential of most deprived local areas through enterprise and investment.	Government	2006	England
Logan Together	Long-term, whole of community campaign to create best life opportunities for every child in Logan. Collective Impact approach.	Government, Foundations and Charities	2015	Australia
Metropolitan Development Initiative	Initiative to support development in urban areas and break down social, ethnic and discriminatory segregation in these areas.	Government	1999	Sweden
Neighbourhood Action Strategy	Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada provides support to resident-led "community planning teams" as they develop and implement action plans intended to build healthier communities. $2 million budget.	Government	2012	Canada
Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders	Development of 35 Pathfinders to develop and test neighbourhood management with overall investment of £100 million by 2012.	Government	2001	England

Programme / Initiative	Aims / scope	Funder type	Start date	Country
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	Neighbourhood Regeneration programme for 88 of England's most deprived neighbourhoods. £800 million fund. Aim to lower worklessness and crime and improve skills, housing and physical environment.	Government	2000	England
New Deal for Communities	Neighbourhood Regeneration programme for 39 of England's most deprived neighbourhoods. Aim to ensure regeneration is community-led and to improve outcomes on key indicators associated with crime, health, housing, worklessness, physical environment and employment. Each neighbourhood funded by, on average £50m of programme spend.	Government	1998	England
Oakland Healthy Start programme	Programme to address racial disparities in infant mortality in Oakland, Washington.	Government and Private Sector	1991	USA
Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools	Collaboration of teachers union, Action United, the Philadelphia Student Union and Youth United for Change. Campaign to prevent school closures.	Information not available	2012	USA
Project U-Turn	City-wide collaborative to address school drop-outs in Philadelphia. Has leveraged and / or realigned $272 million from public and private sectors.	Government, Private Sector, Foundations and donations.	2006	USA
Single Regeneration Budget	Harmonised different government programmes and funding streams to simplify funding and better support local regeneration projects.	Government	1995	England
Thriving Together Initiative	Multi-sector, place-based initiative to help improve the lives of Young People in Phoenix, Arizona.	Government, foundations, school.	2015	USA

As the list above indicates, the majority of programmes and initiatives considered in this review were England or UK-based. In the report, where an initiative is from outside the UK this is identified explicitly in the text.

Appendix 3: Methodology

Figure 1 below provides a summary of methods for each phase of the research:

Figure 1: Methodology

Literature review methodology

Research Objectives

The review had the following objectives:

- What has been the impact of place-based initiatives and neighbourhood renewal on tackling discrimination, and addressing inclusion issues (along lines of gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment and disability)?
- What has been the impact of initiatives of this type on addressing issues of racial discrimination and inclusion specifically?
- Which design features in initiatives of this type support inclusion and tackling discrimination, and which undermine it?

Search Strategy

Researchers undertook exploratory searches of the literature using relevant academic search engines and Google Scholar. This was later supplemented with a review of relevant websites of organisations involved in place-based or neighbourhood regeneration activity to gather further grey literature. Searches were inclusive of both peer-reviewed academic and grey literature.

Searches were undertaken using various search strings of the terms 'place-based', 'regeneration', 'community-led', 'evaluation', 'inclusion', 'discrimination' combined with a list of specific group descriptors for all protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Given the large quantity of search results, the study used an iterative search strategy and emergent selection and appraisal processes in order to generate broad-ranging, meaningful and saturated research findings rather than cover all of the literature.

Selection techniques

The inclusion criteria were:

- Published in English
- Published in 1990 or after
- Any country of origin
- Includes evidence about the impact of place-based or neighbourhood regeneration activities disaggregated by one or more protected characteristic
- Explores a place-based approach, model or theory and factors contributing to or undermining the promotion of inclusion and tackling of discrimination

The review excluded literature that was overly theoretical or limited only to the description of a community-led activity minus evidence about its impact. Fixed quality criteria were hard to apply in the time available due to the mix of theoretical and empirical documents and the varied nature of the literature. Consideration was given to rigour and the credibility of data, but the level of quality of such evaluations varies considerably (Griggs et al. 2008). Appraisal thus largely focused on relevance to research objectives, with a preference for UK-based studies. Given the practice-based aims of the research, influential models of place-based activity informed by practice-based evidence were not excluded based on their rigour. However, if documents were not peer reviewed, informed by a literature review, or informed by practice-based evidence then they were excluded.

In total more than 316 articles, books, and reports were identified as eligible for screening. After the removal of duplicates, each study abstract was examined and studies were omitted based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in 187 for full review. A total of 62 studies were excluded following full review and further assessment in relation to the three research objectives. Following this review, further related literature was identified and additional grey literature was accessed via a web-based search of relevant place-based initiative websites. The final sample included 141 documents.

Data extraction and analysis

Some 141 documents were reviewed using a standardised template. Documents included primary and secondary research and grey literature sources such as best practice guidance and programme evaluations. The documents spanned multiple types of place -based and neighbourhood regeneration initiatives responding to inequality issues through cross sector /cross-agency collaboration. Together, all but 19 of the study's documents originated in the UK. The research team met regularly to discuss emerging themes and to ensure consistency in data collection. As a final step, the data was analysed thematically and grouped into key themes that were arranged in relation to the three research objectives. Additionally, because evaluating evidence and making comparisons across intervention studies is particularly challenging as outcomes are often measured differently, the researchers grouped outcomes conceptually to compare across studies and draw meaningful conclusions.

Appendix 4: The evidence

This appendix summarises the results of the literature review for a number of protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. It also provides evidence of the impact of neighbourhoood regeneration and place-based action on promoting inclusion and tackling discrimination.

Race

- High levels of engagement of people from BME backgrounds in neighbourhood regeneration projects as beneficiaries (Batty et al., 2010a), but limited engagement in decision-making (Macleavy, 2009; Loftman and Beazley, 1998).
- Some examples of inclusion of BME residents, but mostly evidence of exclusion along the lines of: racist stereotyping (Beebeejaun and Grimshaw, 2011); use of exclusive language and communication (Pothier et al., 2019); and not having the power and agency to influence decisions about use of resources and strategy (Beazley and Loftman, 2001).
- Some modest improvements in BME residents' health, crime and employment outcomes in neighbourhood regeneration activities compared to White residents, but data is scarce (Amion Consulting, 2010; Batty et al., 2010a; Beatty et al.; 2009). Evidence of people-level change refers mainly to 'place-based' indicators (such as views about the local area) not people-based indicators (such as health and employment). Some evidence of improvements in school-based education initiatives (Wilkinson et al., 2010; Amion Consulting, 2010).
- Some examples of impact in challenging discriminatory attitudes held by different agencies in an area, though overall the literature describes how hard it is to make an impact on this topic (Henderson and Williams, 2017; Ecotec, 2010; Beatty et al., 2009).
- Limited impact on improved social capital for people from BME backgrounds living in neighbourhoods (other than for those who directly participate in projects) (Kearns et al., 2020; Batty et al., 2010a; Ecotec, 2010; Taylor et al., 2005).

Gender

- Engagement of women in neighbourhood regeneration activities and in decision-making largely equal to men, though men were more likely to hold the role of Chair (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Batty et al., 2010a).
- Women more likely to participate in volunteer community representative roles (as opposed to professional roles) (Gudnadottir et al., 2007).

- Exclusionary practices experienced by women include: feeling less comfortable in some male-dominated environments (Appleton, 2017; Jupp, 2008); practical challenges associated with caring commitments; attitudinal barriers and stereotypes about the role of women in society (O'Hagan et al., 2020); less value given to forms of participation and networking favoured by some women (Skelcher et al., 1996 cited in Lowndes, 2004).
- Place-based policies in the UK have not fully appreciated the gendered nature of poverty or the gendered experiences of space and place and its impact on women (Riseborough, 1997; Brownhill and Darke, 1998; Matthews et al., 2012).
- Evidence of a limited number of improvements in outcomes experienced by women compared to men as a result of neighbourhood regeneration programmes. These include improvements on fear of crime, feeling unsafe after dark and mental health (Beatty et al., 2010; Batty et al., 2010a; Batty et al., 2010b).

Disability

- Relatively little robust data on levels of engagement of disabled people in neighbourhood regeneration activities (Edwards, 2001).
- Neighbourhood regeneration activities can exclude the voice of disabled people through limits to access (e.g. distance, timing and physical access). But exclusion can also be felt in the way that disability is 'framed' – with a focus on disability inequality as a medical or individual problem, rather than a socially created problem for us all to respond to (Edwards, 2009).
- Neighbourhood regeneration activities for disabled people often focus on jobs and training and there is evidence of individual outcomes for people who participate in these projects (Matthews et al., 2012). However, getting disabled people 'job ready' doesn't address wider issues disabled people may experience in a place (such as lack of support or a discriminatory job market) (Griggs et al., 2008; Beatty et al., 2009; Edwards, 2009). As an example, a review of neighbourhood regeneration case study areas found that disabled people experienced declining or static employment, education and community safety outcomes over the period of intervention (Ecotec, 2010).

Age

- Though young people were likely to be involved in neighbourhood regeneration projects as beneficiaries, they were less likely to be involved in decision-making and volunteer roles (Local Trust, 2019; Beatty et al., 2010 and Batty et al., 2010c).
- Decision-making spaces were felt as exclusionary by some young people, with a lack of trust in the process and frustration that young people weren't being heard (Ecotec, 2010; Sullivan et al., 2006). Most successful engagement reported for specific projects involving mentoring and ongoing support.
- Where evidence was available for older people, exclusion was described in terms of discrimination and the limited power and role older people were able to play in decision-making (Simpson, 2010).

- Some indication that under 25s reported more outcomes on crime-related indicators and that those over 65 made less improvement on a range of neighbourhood regeneration indicators (Beatty et al., 2010).
- Despite some individual level improvements for younger people in employment outcomes and sense of belonging in the local area, there is evidence that these were not felt by all young people in an area (such as young NEETS) and were not sustainable (Ecotec, 2010; Boland et al., 2017).

Religion or belief

- Limited evidence on the impact of neighbourhood regeneration or place-based activities on tackling discrimination or promoting inclusion for those with religion or beliefs (brap, 2018; Bremner, 2017; Church Urban Fund, 2015; Furbey and Macey, 2005).
- One study suggests that exclusion is felt in the following ways for people with religious beliefs. Firstly, some religious groups have more experience / resources to engage in neighbourhood regeneration processes than others. Secondly, sometimes older men play a representative role for religious groups within regeneration processes and this can limit the breadth of engagement with the local community. Thirdly, neighbourhood regeneration can amplify differences between religious groups and challenge cohesion when some groups are perceived to be receiving less resources of influence than others (Farnell et al., 2003).

Sexual Orientation

- We found very little evidence about the impact of place-based initiatives or neighbourhood regeneration in tackling discrimination or promoting inclusion based on sexual orientation (Matthews et al., 2012). This is of concern given the high levels of disadvantage faced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the UK (Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2008).

Gender Reassignment

- We found very little evidence about the impact of place-based initiatives or neighbourhood regeneration in tackling discrimination or promoting inclusion for trans people. Again, this is of concern given the high levels of disadvantage faced by trans people in the UK (WEC, 2016).

Appendix 5: Further reading

The following additional materials informed the literature review outlined in Section 3 of the main report as well as the specific findings on different protected characteristics in Appendix 4.

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