



E3M COLLECTIVE IMPACT PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT • February 2020



This evaluation report covers the series of E3M Alchemy events which took place during 2018 and 2019 in Oldham, Rotherham and Gainsborough.

The Collective Impact Project was supported by The Connect Fund.



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This evaluation report has been researched and written by Jamie Veitch, an independent social enterprise and communications consultant and Associate to Social Business International, with editorial input from Tej Dhami (The Change Coefficient) and the Collective Impact Project Advisory Group.

We are grateful to the many Alchemy participants who provided their detailed feedback and insights; to all Alchemy attendees across the Collective Impact Programme; programme partners (Oldham MBC, Rotherham MBC, West Lindsey DC); E3M Partners (Stone King, Zurich, Buzzacott, The Change Coefficient, members of the Bold Commissioners and Social Enterprise Leaders Clubs); and The Connect Fund.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alchemy Collective Impact Project, developed by E3M and delivered in Oldham, Rotherham and Gainsborough, demonstrated the power of collaboration between social enterprises, commissioners and investors.

This series of events developed by a team of social enterprise and investment experts gave participants permission to “think differently”, catalysing understanding of social enterprises and new models for the delivery of social good, relationships which will be the foundation for ongoing social development and action in the form of new partnerships and projects.

Around £12m of social investment was unlocked directly as a result of the programme, with projects and communities in all three locations benefitting.

What did the Collective Impact Project achieve?

Feedback from participants showed a marked shift in the understanding of opportunities presented by social enterprises and social investment as well as deeper insights into effective partnership working which maximises social value. Tangible actions include:

- The Gainsborough Investment Network (GIN) secured c £5m in grant and loan funding through the Local Access Programme, a place-based blended capital initiative. Gainsborough Alchemy facilitated partnership development, collaboration, co-design and the identification of specific initiatives which could be enabled through this Programme.
- A social-investment-backed housing special purpose vehicle will proceed in Gainsborough.
- Oldham’s Northern Roots project was approved by the Council at Cabinet in January 2019, informed by the work developed at Alchemy, and is progressing, with £700K of Council revenue funding over 2 years.
- Rotherham Rise was able to purchase its own building and secure its future thanks to social investment secured directly resulting from attendance at Rotherham Alchemy.
- Another South Yorkshire based organisation, and social enterprise P3, have each secured c. £3m in social investment because of relationships begun at Alchemy.

What was the Collective Impact Project?

The Collective Impact Project was conceived to facilitate new approaches to tackle place-based challenges. It was predicated on the belief that a partnership-based approach between commissioners, public benefit organisations and funders would yield long term social benefits creating sustainable models for development.

The programme aimed to catalyse knowledge, relationships and action for social good. A Connect Fund grant supported some of the costs of running the Collective Impact Project.

Why was the Collective Impact Project needed?

Public services suffered the double blow of increased demand and declining resources, fuelling a negative spiral for many communities. Effective allocation of resources, collaboration, long term approaches and the creation of sustainable models have never been more important. However, increased pressure can often lead to ever greater insularity and risk aversion when what is needed is real change, not just in what is delivered but how it is delivered.

The project was designed to help stakeholders learn from and be inspired by examples of social enterprise innovation from around the country and start to build the relationships and approaches needed to tackle the challenges facing their communities at scale.

The E3M initiative was developed and is managed by Social Business International. It is supported by partners to provide expertise and share knowledge about the key ingredients for successful social enterprise growth.

At the heart of E3M is the Social Enterprise Leaders Club, which brings together a group of the UK's most dynamic and innovative social enterprise leaders, operating in a diverse range of public service areas. E3M's Bold Commissioners Club is an innovation network of senior leaders in public bodies, who are pushing the boundaries of commissioning practice, and want to share learning and develop thought leadership in this field together. The Bold Commissioners Club has a special focus on innovation and achieving maximum public benefit in the way commissioning is undertaken.

How the Collective Impact Project worked

In each location extensive preparatory work was conducted in partnership with the local commissioning sponsor to help articulate the challenges and opportunities and ensure effective engagement. The focus of the programme in each location was an event hosted over twenty-four hours where commissioners, social enterprise leaders (both local and national) and funders were brought together.

Participants were exposed to examples of innovative practices across the country and then, through a tightly facilitated process, developed interventions together which they presented back to the group. After each event written materials as well as videos were created by E3M to support adoption of the suggested interventions.

The impact of the Collective Impact Project against its objectives:

Objectives	Evidence of success
New social enterprise solutions being developed at scale in the areas where Alchemy events took place.	Northern Roots approval. Carolyn Wilkins Chief Executive of Oldham "Northern Roots would not be progressing in the way it is without Alchemy. It helped in framing the ambition for Northern Roots; this model is only viable if it is about social enterprise."
E3M members and partners working together in new collaborative ways to solve local challenges	92%¹ of participants reported having a better understanding of the view of other stakeholders Commissioner participant "I found the conversations with different stakeholders enlightening. In future I will try and involve more stakeholders in project planning and delivery." 89% ² of participants reported collaborating with someone they met at the event
E3M members working with local social enterprise partners to grow their impact as part of the solutions.	"From my perspective, the event was a game-changer in terms of how all stakeholders pool resource to achieve direct social and economic impact." Jen McEvitt, Back on the Map.

¹ Of 50 participants who completed an online survey

² Of 27 participants who engaged in a telephone survey

Social investors helping to fund the social business solutions being developed	Around £12m of social investment raised directly as a result of the Collective Impact Project's Alchemy events.
Wider awareness of how commercial social enterprise can support commissioners and local stakeholder in creating new solutions to challenges and better understanding of how social investment can support this.	89% ³ of participants from local authorities reported an increased interest in working with social enterprises and in social investment while 75% ⁴ of social enterprises reported the event addressing barriers to securing contracts with local authorities. Commissioner participant “I got some really useful learning about the potential of collaboration with social enterprises and the different approaches and outcomes that can be achieved – I found the examples really helpful, some good examples across the range of scale too. They really brought to life what is possible and the difference it made to people and the local community.”

Key next steps and recommendations:

Based on the experience and feedback from the project, we have identified some important next steps and made a number of key recommendations, including:

Understanding: key steps for E3M and partners

- **E3M will** create a standing directory of concepts relating to purposeful service delivery, and make this available (perhaps across multiple formats) to commissioners, social entrepreneurs and investors.
- Work with partners eg The LGA, LGC Magazine, SOLACE, SEUK, NCVO, Access, Power to Change and others to disseminate and distribute this.
- Articulate a theory of engagement between purpose-aligned organisations of different types.

Relationships: commissioners of public services should:

- Be mindful of the perceived fragility of nascent social enterprise ecosystems; and of local fragmentation between commissioners, social enterprises, investors and the community.
- Invest in developing relationships between commissioners and social enterprises, and between large and small social enterprises.
- Consider how an external party or process (eg E3M / Alchemy / CIP) is a powerful and neutrally-viewed catalyst for self-organising local groups.

Actions

- **E3M will** offer Alchemy facilitation to local authorities, developing events with and for them.
- **Commissioners and local authorities** should recognise the need for community-based champions to progress actions post-Alchemy.
- **We recommend to Government** that funding from Funding from The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (designed to replace the £5.3 billion currently deployed to England via European Structural and Investment Funds) and from the next tranche of the Towns Fund should be deployed to support Alchemy processes within localities to provide areas with new ways to manage their economies and unlock purposeful service delivery.

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

INTRODUCTION

E3M's Collective Impact Project involved a series of 'Local Alchemy' events conceived as catalysts to develop and scale-up social innovations which can tackle place-based challenges.

The events took place in Oldham (July 2018), Rotherham (December 2018) and Gainsborough (July 2019). E3M's team planned and ran the events working closely with Oldham and Rotherham MBCs and West Lindsey District Council, and with people from social enterprises and community organisations in each location.

The design of the Local Alchemy events and the Collective Impact Project's overall Theory of Change evolved after E3M ran pilot events in London and Coventry. A grant from the Connect Fund supported some of the costs of running the Collective Impact Project.

The events brought together **commissioners, social enterprises and social investors**, to develop new social enterprise solutions to specific challenges in each place, and to foster collaborative service delivery.

Our intention was for the events to:

- Stimulate new ways of working, showcasing the "art of the possible" in purpose-driven commissioning, procurement and co-designed service provision.
- Promote meaningful, impactful learning and development.
- Catalyse wider awareness of how commercial social enterprise can support commissioners and local stakeholders in creating new solutions to challenges, and better understanding of how social investment can support this.
- Develop and nurture relationships between participants that they could draw upon afterwards.
- Enable and encourage E3M members and partners, and large and small social enterprises, to work together in new collaborative ways to solve local challenges
- Develop new social enterprise solutions at scale in the areas where Alchemy events took place.
- Generate funding by hosts or other investors to take things forward.
- Unlock funding from social investors helping to fund the social business solutions being developed.

This evaluation report considers the extent to which the Collective Impact Project successfully created the impacts envisaged, covering:

- Lessons learned by participants, partners and E3M;
- what participants have done (or will do) differently as a result of their involvement;
- and tangible outcomes from each event.

It presents our findings and recommendations based on our learning during the course of the Collective Impact Project about how social enterprises, commissioners and investors can work together to bring about change.

Complementary to this report, we have published a short case study and film covering each event on the E3M and Connect Fund websites.

E3M

The E3M initiative was developed and is managed by Social Business International. It is supported by partners to provide expertise and share knowledge about the key ingredients for successful social enterprise growth.

At the heart of E3M is the **Social Enterprise Leaders Club**, which brings together a group of the UK's most dynamic and innovative social enterprise leaders. They operate across the UK in a diverse range of public service areas, including: health and care, leisure, culture, transport, children and young people, housing and telecommunications.



Jonathan Bland, Social Business International and E3M

The Leaders' Club meets together with E3M partners quarterly. This provides a unique opportunity for peer-to-peer networking and sometimes leads to new business collaborations.

E3M's **Bold Commissioners Club** is an innovation network of senior leaders in public bodies, who are pushing the boundaries of commissioning practice, and want to share learning and develop thought leadership in this field together.

Our aim is to create a platform of mutual support for 'bold commissioners' dealing with the ongoing challenges of:

- Seriously reduced budgets resulting in major organisational reforms.
- Increased expectations from the public in terms of quality of provision and consumer experience shaped in other markets.
- The need to transform services and the way they are delivered with an outcomes focus.

The Bold Commissioners Club has a special focus on innovation and achieving maximum public benefit in the way commissioning is undertaken. Club members include senior commissioners from across the public sector, including local government, health, police, criminal justice, transport and other parts of Government.

The work of E3M partners and Jonathan Bland, Social Business International's MD, supporting the Bold Commissioners Club enabled the identification of a number of potential localities in which to run Alchemy events.

E3M's work operating the Social Enterprise Leaders Club brought leaders from some of the UK's most successful and innovative social enterprises trading in public service markets to the Alchemy events in the Collective Impact Project.

ALCHEMY EVENTS AND PROCESS

E3M convened a Collective Impact Project advisory group, which informed the project's intended impact and its programme design, process, measures of success and the framework for this evaluation report.

After direction from the advisory group, E3M sought to run the Alchemy events which made up the Collective Impact Project in collaboration with local authority partners:

- open to (or interested in the potential of) delivering more services with social enterprises,
- willing to engage in a constructive dialogue with their local social enterprise and community sectors, with social investors, and with E3M partners,
- able to identify and define place-specific projects or challenges to be the focus for the work done at each event.

Several potential partners and locations were identified during the course of the Collective Impact Project.

Working with leaders in Oldham MBC, Rotherham MBC and West Lindsey DC, and with the established social enterprise, community, and voluntary sectors, E3M delivered Alchemy events in Oldham, Rotherham and Gainsborough.

Each event involved an extensive planning phase spanning 2-3 months: defining challenges, nurturing existing local relationships, project- and site-visits, planning meetings, and hosting pre-event workshops for partners in London and for partners and event participants in each location.

The Alchemy process was designed to bring new perspectives to the defined challenges in each location, defining outcomes, developing ideas for new models for social enterprise scale and partnership, exploring financial options, partnerships, co-design and collaborations.

Communication before each event defined challenges, set expectations, and informed participants how they could participate most effectively.

Each event ran from early afternoon on day one to lunchtime on day two and involved:

- Welcome sessions from local and E3M partners,
- Icebreaker and get-to-know-you work,
- A reminder and analysis of the specific challenges or projects to address,
- Participants then breaking off to work in groups of 8-10, with each group including commissioners, social enterprises, social investors and E3M partners, and each assigned a challenge,
- Table-based work with a facilitator for each group,
- Facilitators drawn from E3M partners and from each sponsor organisations and were briefed in advance,
- Speakers, invited to give insights from across the UK, showing how social impact and value had been created in public service delivery elsewhere; how social investment had been accessed and used; successful examples of innovation in partnership approaches



- to commissioning and collaborative service delivery; (and showcasing how a purpose-driven approach to procurement and commissioning can work).
- Each group developed an adapted Business Model Canvas outlining scalable social enterprise solutions to its challenge area and completing this during the course of the afternoon on day 1 and morning of day 2.
- A working dinner at the end of the first day in which participants could develop new networks and relationships.
- A presentation from each group to conclude the event.

After each event, E3M provided:

- A full report to the sponsoring organisation including transcripts of each group's presentation; the business model canvasses and specific recommendations.
- A case study of the event.
- A film summarising the immediate impact and participants' reactions.

Participants at each Alchemy event were diverse. Councillors, metropolitan borough / district council officers, county council officers, health service commissioners, and representatives of local social enterprises and voluntary organisations worked intensively together alongside:

- E3M Bold Commissioners, senior leaders in local authorities, all pushing the boundaries with new approaches to organising local services,
- Members of the E3M Social Enterprise Leaders Business Club from from impactful, sustainable and mature social enterprises.
- Funders, social investors and the E3M Partners.

Over 200 people attended the three events. 71 participants attended Gainsborough Alchemy; 82 attended Oldham Alchemy and 54 Rotherham Alchemy.

A number of key ideas were generated by participants at each event, which also stimulated learning, knowledge sharing and new connections. These specific ideas have already been described within Case Studies published (on the E3M website) after each event.

ADVISORY GROUP

E3M assembled a Collective Impact Project Advisory Group which provided a strategic sounding-board over the course of the Collective Impact Project. Its members were Jonathan Bland, Social Business International; Julian Blake, Stone King; Eddie Finch, Buzzacott; Chris Wright, Catch 22; Tej Dhami, The Change Coefficient; Garath Symonds, consultant and strategic adviser to local authorities.

7 meetings took place, 3 in 2018 and 4 in 2019. The group's discussions about the specific challenge areas in each location informed each event's design and content.

Its reflections about each Alchemy event's outcomes and feedback enabled the further iteration of the timetable, process and design of the Rotherham and Gainsborough events.

And the group raised issues to consider: within this evaluation report; within the dissemination of learning from the CIP; and in the design of future events.

The author believes the Collective Impact Project was stronger for the accountability and insight of the Advisory Group.

INTENDED BENEFICIARIES AND IMPACTS

When the Collective Impact Project was conceived and planned E3M hypothesised it would create impact as follows:

Overarching goal:

“The ultimate goal is to see the development of some new social innovations operating at scale that can tackle local place-based challenges.

“We want commissioners and other key stakeholders to have a better understanding of how commercial social enterprises can offer innovative solutions, involving social investment where appropriate.”

The **ultimate beneficiaries** were defined as people and communities that experience new solutions for the challenges they face in the locations where the Alchemy events take place.

The **initial direct beneficiaries** were defined to be those taking part in the events and able to explore new ways of doing things:

- **Commissioners** from local authorities and other local public bodies – through access to creative thinking and support in developing new ways to configure local services, harnessing the innovative power of commercial social enterprise and social investment. In addition to those from the local area, the commissioners involved from other places can take back new ideas to their own localities.
- **Social Enterprises** – through the opportunity to offer new solutions. Small local social enterprises will get the chance to grow with support from larger businesses and the E3M partners; E3M members will get the chance to work in new areas.
- **Social Investors** – In the short term, the events will establish new relationships and a better understanding of the kind of investment opportunities that exist. In the medium term there should be some new opportunities to make social investments of various different kinds, depending on the outcomes in each locality.

Measures of success:

E3M proposed the success of the Collective Impact Project would be defined by the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New social enterprise solutions being developed at scale in the areas where Alchemy events took place.	ACHIEVED. Example: Approval and funding for Northern Roots as a result of Alchemy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E3M members and partners working together in new collaborative ways to solve local challenges	ACHIEVED. Partners have supported Northern Roots which has been given go-ahead.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E3M members working with local social enterprise partners to grow their impact as part of the solutions.	ACHIEVED. Bold Commissioners AND Social Enterprise leaders describe partnerships and collaborations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social investors helping to fund the social business solutions being developed	ACHIEVED. c. £12m social investment secured.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wider awareness of how commercial social enterprise can support commissioners and local stakeholder in creating new solutions to	ACHIEVED. Numerous comments from commissioners in telephone research and online survey.

challenges and better understanding of how social investment can support this.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an ongoing sustainable business model for an E3M Collective Impact offer. 	TBC. Most participants would attend future Alchemy events, but would require more details about format and time/cost required.

IMPACTS ACHIEVED

Impacts were measured by E3M in the aftermath of each event and during the course of this project evaluation. E3M:

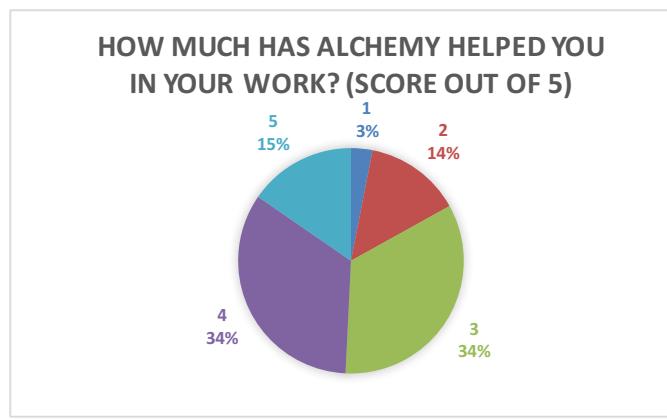
- debriefed facilitators and collated business model canvasses from each working group at the conclusion of each event,
- encouraged participants to provide feedback (and to continue discussions and developing new relationships) straight after each event,
- captured immediate impacts in case studies and short films.
- conducted an online survey through a survey in August - September 2019 in which all Alchemy participants were asked about developments, whether there had been a better appreciation of the solutions being developed in the Alchemy places and whether they had done or were planning to do anything as result of the learning from the Alchemy events,
- commissioned telephone research conducted in October and November 2019 in which 27 Alchemy participants were interviewed and provided in-depth feedback about lessons learned and impacts resulting from (or expected as a result of) Alchemy; its strengths and weaknesses; the value, format for, and potential sustainability of any future events; and any proposals as to how Alchemy's impact could increase.

ONLINE RESEARCH: SUMMARY RESULTS

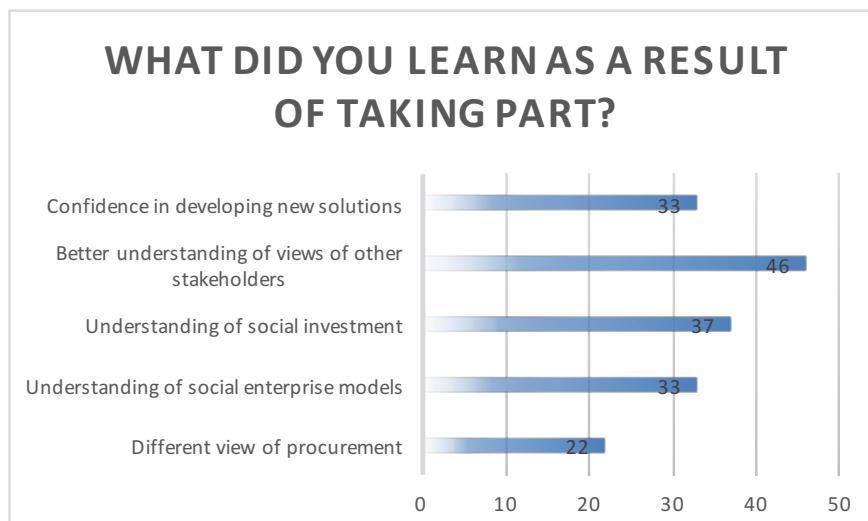
65 people participated in the online survey between 9 August and 25 September 2019.

- 20 had attended Oldham Alchemy.
- 21 had attended Rotherham Alchemy.
- 32 had attended Gainsborough Alchemy.
- [some delegates had attended 2 or 3 Alchemy events].

Asked to rate how much Alchemy had helped in their work using a score from 0-5 in which a rating of 5 was defined as “very helpful” and 0 as “not at all helpful,” the mean score was 3.5, and 49% gave a score of 4 or 5:



Mean = 3.5



57% reported they had gained an understanding of social investment and 71% a better understanding of the views of other stakeholders.

Asked, “**What might you do that’s new or different as a result of taking part in the event?**” participants demonstrated they will take action as a result of the understanding and relationships developed at the events. For example:

- “Has given real energy and enthusiasm locally for Northern Roots and confidence about exploring new models of delivery amongst officers in the council and elected members. This includes colleagues from finance and procurement for example.” Rebekah Sutcliffe, Oldham Council.
- [We will] “Consider Social Investment as an option when developing new services. Be braver in innovation to get better outcomes for children.” Jo Smith, RMBC.
- “Look at alternative procurement processes on case by case basis.” Mark Rainey, Lincolnshire County Council.

Specific points which were made frequently included:

- Commissioners explained they will think differently about social enterprise service delivery, make better use of social enterprise models, and consider co-production approaches.
- They said they are more likely to build collaborations with other stakeholders and explore alternative procurement processes too.

- And they will be more inclined to look at Social Investment options when developing new services.
- Social enterprises described how the events had enabled them to understand new routes to access finance, and in some cases had already unlocked social investment.
- And they described how valuable it is to foster a better understanding of social enterprise amongst commissioners, with some social enterprises already working with new contacts and securing new contracts.

The comments demonstrate:

- Commissioners are changing how they work with social enterprises and some are have been able to co-design services.
- Participants are interested in social investment.
- Social enterprises attending have been able to use their new knowledge and understanding to secure contracts.
- Collaboration with and understanding of other stakeholders was valued.

TELEPHONE RESEARCH: SUMMARY RESULTS

Further to the online survey, E3M commissioned a telephone survey of participants by Social Business International Associate, Jamie Veitch. Jamie had attended all three events.

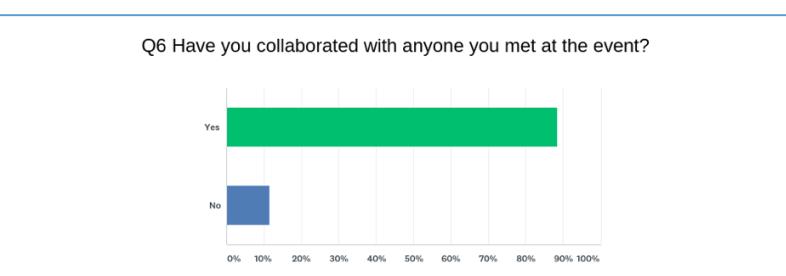
The telephone research involved interviews with key stakeholders from each Alchemy location and from E3M delegates. With the approval of the CIP advisory board, Jamie selected 26 potential interviewees from the Gainsborough delegates; 28 from Oldham delegates; and 22 from Rotherham delegates (of these, 4 potential interviewees had attended more than one Alchemy).

These 76 potential interviewees were chosen to:

- Provide a diverse and representative range of stakeholders, by location, sector, seniority and involvement
- Provide sufficient potential interviewees to ensure at least 25 interviews could take place.

The interview format was designed to be adaptable to the type of organisation in which each interviewee worked (ie an interviewee from a social enterprise was not asked exactly the same questions asked of one from a commissioner). The questions were agreed with the CIP Advisory Group but were a framework rather than a rigid script to allow the interviewer to draw out as much useful information as possible; depending on the answers given, not all questions could be asked.

Interview summary results



The events have already fostered collaboration for the majority (nearly 90%) of participants.

Commissioners:

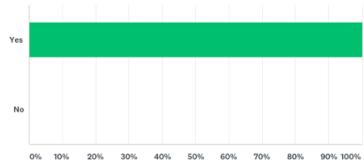
All commissioners who participated in the evaluation interviews believed the events addressed barriers to working with social enterprises. Most said their interest in working with social enterprises had increased (those who did not said they were already highly interested in working with social enterprises).

As a result of Alchemy, commissioners are more interested in working with social enterprises and with social investment.

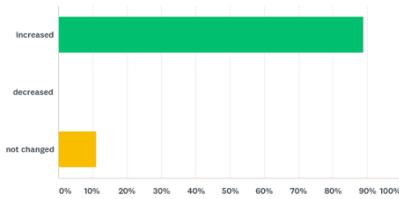
Asked “**What was the most valuable element of attending / convening Alchemy in your opinion?**” and about **what they had learned**, commissioners’ responses (which can be viewed in full within the Appendix) included:

- “Meeting people from organisations I hadn’t met before, understanding more about social enterprise and hearing about different approaches to commissioning. I got some really useful learning about the potential of collaboration with social enterprises and the different approaches and outcomes that can be achieved.” Ann Johnson-Brown, NHS Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group
- “Supporting Northern Roots. This was really valuable. NR would not be progressing in the way it is without Alchemy. It helped in framing the ambition for NR; this model is only viable if it is about social enterprise.” Carolyn Wilkins, Oldham Council.
- “Supporting our Access Programme bid and having the confidence to bring the challenges into a wider arena: the benefits of creating a shared and common understanding outweighed the risks of having our heads above the parapet. The Alchemy concept and process gave me personally the confidence to do this.” Eve Fawcett-Moralee, West Lindsey DC
- “Since Gainsborough Alchemy I’ve had a meeting with the Key Fund, and looked at how we might bring social investment into our blended funding packages in the district.” Neil Cucksey, East Lindsey District Council
- “The event showed purposeful commissioning can work. We are starting to build a symbiotic relationship with smaller organisations now.” A local authority commissioner.
- “It gave tangible examples of how we can deliver something in a different way and deliver more social value.” Councillor Sean Fielding, Leader, Oldham MBC.
- “It gave us as a local authority things to reflect on in how we work with partners, how we are or can be more pluralist, what rules get in the way, and what are we doing that gets in the way of purposeful commissioning and enabling. Our ambition doesn’t yet match our reality but there were discussions in the room leading to further conversations and actions which enabled us to make progress.” Carolyn Wilkins, Oldham Council (Chief Executive).

Q8 Did the event address any barriers to working with social enterprises?

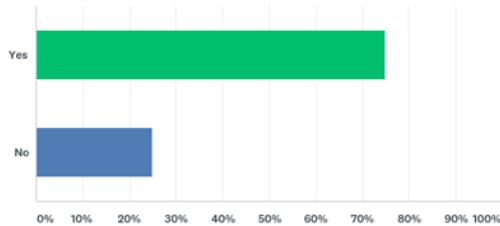


Q9 As a result of the event, has your own interest in working with social enterprises and social investment:

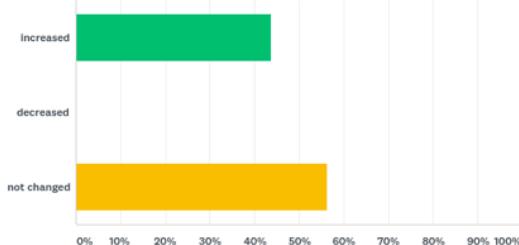


Social Enterprises:

Q10 Did the event address any barriers to securing contracts with public sector organisations?



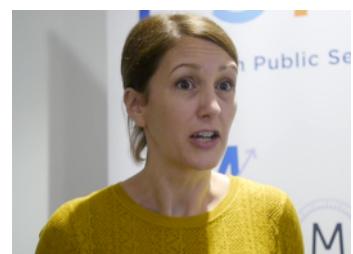
Q11 As a result of the event, has your own interest in working with local authority and public sector commissioners and social investment:



Attending Alchemy (and pre-Alchemy preparation) was described by many social enterprises as a significant investment of their time, but their answers demonstrate how worthwhile this was. Three-quarters of survey participants believe Alchemy addressed barriers to securing contracts.

Their comments about the most valuable elements of Alchemy, and its impact included:

- “For commissioners: to learn about different things going on from E3M members and to change perspective. I know from sitting on tables many commissioners had not previously thought about service delivery from a provider point of view (for example, the impact on the provider of payment and contracting terms). After listening to more information in a presentation about the SASC deal, we pursued this further and have been approved for a £3 million loan subject to legal sign off” Gemma Bukel, P3.
- “There were three key elements: 1.Learning - gaining knowledge around the technicalities and procedures of procurement. Widening horizons that there are other ways of looking at things from how it is traditionally done. 2.Networking - meeting other people, which led to specific benefits to Rotherham Rise. 3.Generating new ideas. As a result of meeting Key Fund at the event we have secured social investment and been able to buy our building.” Sue Wynne (right), Rotherham Rise.
- “The most valuable part was the sense of developing relationships. There were a host of varying technical exercises to help the situation progress over the two days. And it was unusual as an event: what you don't often get is people making decisions at a high level in the room at the same time as people who deliver those things. It was also highly effective at setting out intentions.” James Murphy, Lincolnshire Community Foundation.



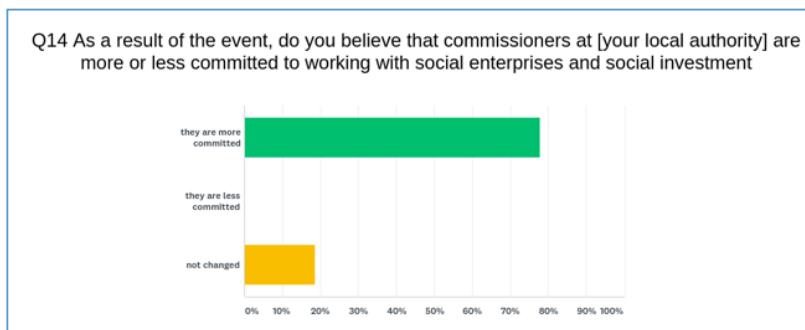
- “It's always helpful to see a whole community come together and work together, you learn a lot by comparison with your own community. Alchemy attendees brought tremendous enthusiasm and a will to do new things.” Janet Rowse, Sirona Care and Health CIC.
- “I spoke to a few potential investors and since then I have spoken to the Social and Sustainable Housing Fund.” Heidi Walton, LEAP and HATS.
- “We looked at alternative methods of procurement to sustain an existing service. Following the discussions at the event, we had a clear rationale of the type of procurement activity the LA could take with our service, and we've since secured a 2-year contract.” Anonymous.
- “From my perspective, the event was a game-changer in terms of how all stakeholders pool resource to achieve direct social and economic impact.” Jen McKevitt, Back on the Map.



Heidi Walton

Social Investors:

Social investors who attended Alchemy events and participated in the evaluation believe the events increased the commitment of local commissioners to work with social enterprises and social investment:



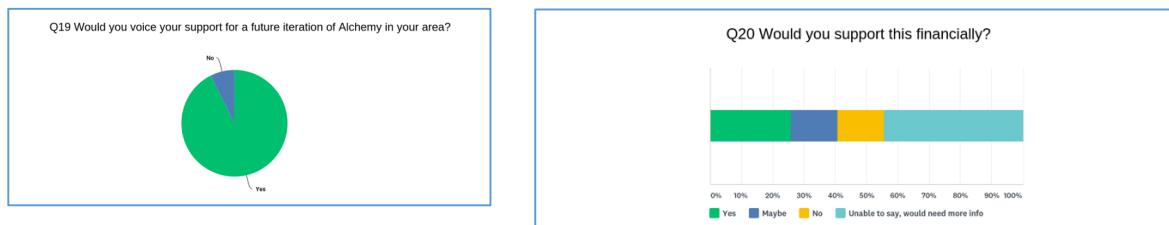
Several social investment deals were unlocked as a result of Alchemy, which we describe elsewhere. Social investors' comments include:

- “There are 2 very important things. 1. that Alchemy happened in Gainsborough at all - it was a statement of value in the town. 2. in practical terms, as a way of bringing people together, hot-housing key issues and bringing multiple agencies together has been valuable: not only for the town's Access Fund bid, but for catalysing independent activity which is already bearing fruit. It has got the attention of external partners, interested in doing things in the town, and come up with solid ideas.” Dave Thornett, Key Fund.
- “One of the bits (of the jigsaw) is the interaction of the 3 way triangle of commissioners, providers and investors. In the commercial world it is a 2 way relationship, ie just the provider of a service and the people paying for it, while the social purpose world often involves a 3 way relationship. But many events in our world only bring 2 of the 3 together. This brought all three. Plus, it was good to cover the public procurement rules.” Peter Morris, Social and Sustainable Capital.

Everyone:

All participants were asked if they would support a future iteration of Alchemy. Most (95%) would; and 40% could say they definitely would, or may, pay to attend. 45% would need

more information, and 15% would not pay. The reasons given were more about organisational restrictions on payment to attend events rather than the value of Alchemy.



EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Catalysing understanding, relationships and action

The Collective Impact Programme's Alchemy events catalysed three essential elements to enable purpose-driven delivery of public services: understanding, relationships and action.

Before concrete **action** can take place (eg social enterprises and commissioners collaborating to co-design services; investors backing projects, etc), it's necessary to develop **relationships**. Effective relationships are built on trust – and an **understanding** of other parties' strengths (and the challenges they address).

Understanding

Relationships

Action

Actions: Already, specific and concrete **outcomes** with economic and social **impacts** have taken place as a direct result of Alchemy. Social investment of c. £12m has been committed, benefitting people and communities in all three locations.

Alchemy also catalysed a mutual **understanding** between commissioners, social enterprises and investors – and has begun and nurtured many vital new **relationships**.

Returning to the original **aims** of the collective impact project:

	UNDERSTANDING	RELATIONSHIPS	ACTIONS
Stimulate new ways of working, showcasing the “art of the possible” in purpose-driven commissioning, procurement and co-designed service provision.	✓		
Promote meaningful, impactful learning and development.	✓		
Wider awareness of how commercial social enterprise can support commissioners and local stakeholder in creating new solutions to challenges and better understanding of how social investment can support this.	✓		

Develop and nurture relationships between participants that they could draw upon afterwards.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
E3M members and partners working together in new collaborative ways to solve local challenges		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Encourage big and small social enterprises to work together.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
New social enterprise solutions being developed at scale in the areas where Alchemy events took place.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Generate funding by hosts or other investors to take things forward			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social investors helping to fund the social business solutions being developed			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Specific Projects

- The Gainsborough Investment Network (GIN) has secured around £5m in grant and loan funding from Access and Big Society Capital through the Local Access Programme, a place-based blended capital initiative. Gainsborough Alchemy facilitated partnership development, collaboration, co-design and the identification of specific activities and initiatives which could be enabled through the Local Access Programme.
- A social-investment-backed housing special purpose vehicle will proceed in Gainsborough.
- Oldham's Northern Roots project was approved by the Council at Cabinet in January 2019, informed by the work developed at Alchemy, and is progressing, with £700K of Council revenue funding over 2 years.
- Rotherham Rise was able to purchase its own building and secure its future thanks to social investment secured directly resulting from attendance at Rotherham Alchemy.
- Another South Yorkshire-based organisation, and social enterprise P3, have each secured c. £3m in social investment because of relationships begun at Alchemy, with "other deals possible too."
- A small grant for a Gainsborough VCSE organisation.

The quantitative and qualitative feedback through rating scales, answers to binary (yes/no) option choices, and comments received from participants, including their descriptions of contracts won, social investment secured and increased awareness, demonstrate the Alchemy series of events achieved every metric through which E3M's Advisory Panel had determined success could be measured.

The feedback also demonstrates a commitment from commissioners, especially in Oldham and Gainsborough, to new ways of working involving social enterprise and social investment.

Left to right: Jackie Wilson (Oldham MBC), Jonathan Bland (E3M and Social Business International), Cllr Sean Fielding, Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Dr Carolyn Wilkins OBE (Oldham MBC).



KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Alchemy participants have provided valuable feedback, incorporating positive reports of impacts, new ideas, suggestions about how to increase the impact and legacy of the events, and some constructive criticism.

For commissioners (still viewed as the organisations with power and money) who want to build trust with potential partners, the benefits of a process designed to catalyse understanding and relationships certainly outway the risks of “having your head above the parapet” as one survey participant described it.

Multiple participants made positive comments about the impact of Alchemy on understanding and relationships; and indeed on actions which have already occurred as a result (all comments have been typed into the telephone survey verbatim and left in the online survey as given).

Other participants made constructive suggestions regarding how the events could be run; to some extent the Alchemy events over the course of the CIP evolved anyway. For example, the business model canvasses iterated from Oldham to Rotherham to Gainsborough; we adjusted some timings for vignettes, speakers and mood boards; we worked hard with all partners to bring diverse voices and participants to the events.

What works in terms of timings for some people doesn't for others: many participants loved the event format but others found the commitment required too much and would prefer a single day / shorter event. This suggestion is being carefully considered by the Advisory Group.

Some VCSE participants approached the events with a degree of healthy scepticism. Some participants came to the event(s) and engaged fully; others perhaps with a fear that the exercise was tokenistic. This approach can result from previous disappointments, or because the commissioners and VCSEs in a locality are at a particularly early point on the continuum of understanding > relationships > actions.

Others were prepared to engage but have expressed some frustrations at the lack of any apparent changes in procurement and commissioning approaches or follow up, or their experience with a partner organisation.

These comments also demonstrate how unusual, and how difficult, it can be to bring commissioners and social enterprises together and to effect meaningful change. They reinforce the assertion, above, that **understanding** and **relationships** are essential foundations for **action**.

Participants' comments from the telephone survey about how Alchemy's impact could have increased are included, in full, within our appendix. Some excerpts:

- “I genuinely thought the organisation of Alchemy was really good. I was anxious beforehand because it was a different kind of event. I genuinely thought it to be really well curated, a very interesting mix of different voices we would not have heard if we (Oldham MBC) had organised it. It helped us to inform a fundamental reform of relationships; to stop describing people as commissioners / providers. How do we understand, co-design and co-deliver; how do we harness diversity; do those diverse voices inform Oldham's service design - these are questions I am wrestling with. I like events that make you feel differently afterwards - it feels like time well spent.” Carolyn Wilkins, Oldham Council, Chief Executive.

- “I don't think you could have improved it - it was very slick and very impressive: organisation, pre-event, on the day and afterwards.” Hilary Centeleghe, GC Business Growth Hub.
- “I would have liked there to have been follow up, and an update from the council following the event. There were a lot of potential ideas created on the day, so as an active participant I would have appreciated knowing how this information was used and if there were any changes.” Sue Wynne, Rotherham Rise.

The Collective Impact Project Advisory Group, which met several times during the programme of Alchemy events, raised specific learning points relating to the Alchemy process in the future, including:

- E3M must ensure the expectations of commissioners are appropriate. If they don't understand social enterprise and purposeful service delivery then their most desired outcome of Alchemy may be to secure external finance, rather than to nurture the conditions for success of a social enterprise ecosystem.
- When / if attendees believe they already know what is needed in their location, this can present a barrier to discussion and collaboration. Alchemy vignettes demonstrate how “things can be done differently” based on what's happened elsewhere.
- Some Alchemy attendees (whether commissioner or VCSE) are active and some passive - coming with a desire to be led to a solution. We must focus on collaboration in pursuit of common purposes.
- E3M is planning an “Alchemy-light” learning day to test a one-day approach.
- Test a “citizen assembly” approach in the run up to future Alchemy events, enabling more diverse community involvement (and giving participants access to additional information ahead of each event).
- There's a need to connect Alchemy recommendations with dynamic individuals in each location, with the resources and willingness to progress ideas for the benefit of the whole place.

E3M PARTNERS' INVOLVEMENT

Members of E3M's Bold Commissioners and Social Enterprise Leaders clubs made an invaluable contribution to the Collective Impact Programme. Bringing commissioners and social enterprises (social investors too) from outside each locality enabled locally-based participants in Oldham, Rotherham and Gainsborough to:

- Ask questions of organisations which had previously experienced similar challenges (ie commissioners within each locality could ask questions of commissioners from elsewhere; locally based social entrepreneurs could learn from social enterprises now operating at scale).
- Learn from organisations which provide or commission services without an expectation or pressure to be working together.

Participants at each Alchemy event reported how meeting and questioning E3M partners gave them valuable insights – increasing their understanding of commissioners' and social entrepreneurs' perspectives.

E3M partners' involvement extended beyond attending the events: partners provided a sounding board when planning and following up on each event. Partners reported benefits: many new relationships began and are now being nurtured; social enterprise club member Gemma Bukel of P3 described social investment resulting from the Alchemy events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

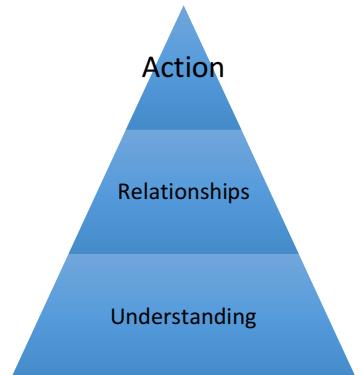
The Collective Impact Programme demonstrates the potential impact when social enterprises, commissioners and investors collaborate.

Around £12m of social investment was unlocked directly as a result of the programme, with projects and communities in all three locations benefitting.

The programme gave participants permission to “think differently” and created a safety net to go on to act differently. Its aims were ambitious; this evaluation has already reflected the difficulty in addressing a lack of understanding, and poor relationships, between public service commissioners, social enterprises and investors.

CIP catalysed mutual **understanding** between social enterprises, commissioners and investors, and developed new **relationships** built on this understanding. These are the foundations without which **action** cannot happen.

In light of participants' experiences, the outcomes, insights and feedback during the course of the Collective Impact Programme, we make the following recommendations and suggest these key steps to enable social enterprises, commissioners and investors to work together to bring about change.



Understanding: E3M will:

- Create a standing directory of concepts relating to purposeful service delivery. This foundational document would introduce interested parties – in effect it captures the learning described by many Alchemy participants.
- Make this available (perhaps across multiple formats) to commissioners, social entrepreneurs and investors. Work with partners such as SEUK, SOLACE, The LGA, NCVO, Access, Power to Change, LGC, MJ and other magazines, and others to disseminate and distribute this.
- Articulate a theory of engagement between different types of purpose-aligned organisations.

Relationships: Commissioners seeking purpose-aligned partners should:

- Be mindful of the perceived fragility of nascent social enterprise ecosystems; and of local fragmentation between commissioners, social enterprises, investors and the community.
- Invest in developing relationships between commissioners and social enterprises: an external party (eg E3M) or facilitated process (eg Alchemy / CIP) is a powerful and neutrally-viewed catalyst for self-organising local groups.
- Invest in building relationships between large and small social enterprises too.

Actions:

- **E3M will** offer Alchemy facilitation to local authorities, developing events with & for them.
- **Commissioners and local authorities** should recognise the need for community-based champions to progress actions post-Alchemy.
- **We recommend to Government** that funding from The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (designed to replace the £5.3 billion currently deployed to England via European Structural and Investment Funds) and from the next tranche of the Towns Fund should

be deployed to support Alchemy processes within localities to provide areas with new ways to manage their economies and unlock purposeful service delivery.

Our thanks once more to the many Alchemy participants who provided their detailed feedback and insights; to all Alchemy attendees across the Collective Impact Programme; programme partners (Oldham MBC, Rotherham MBC, West Lindsey DC); E3M Partners (Stone King, Zurich, Buzzacott, The Change Coefficient, members of the Bold Commissioners and Social Enterprise Leaders Clubs); and The Connect Fund.

E3M is an initiative of Social Business International Ltd. Company number 7007166. Registered office: 75 Kenton Street, London WC1N 1NN.

www.e3m.org.uk | www.connectfund.org.uk



Buzzacott

APPENDIX: Telephone survey results

Timing

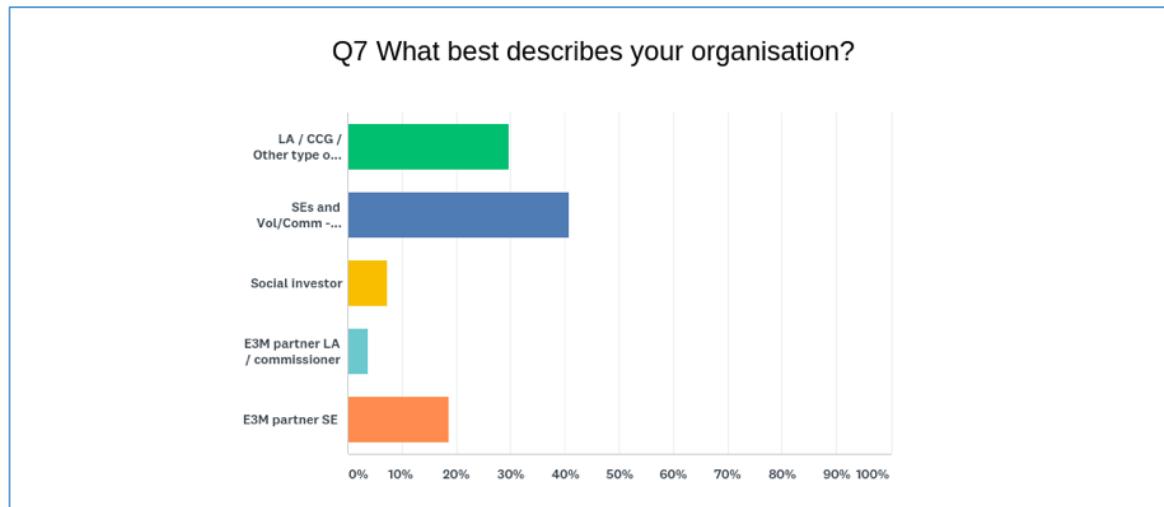
After a CIP Advisory Group meeting on 15/10/2019, Jamie contacted target interviewees repeatedly by telephone and email, from 16/10 - 20/11, to book convenient times at which they could speak and conduct interviews. 27 interviews took place in total with each interview lasting typically between 20 and 30 minutes (some longer). The first interview took place on 16/10 (Sue Wynne, Rotherham Rise); the final interview on 20/11 (Carolyn Wilkins, Oldham).

Interviews were conducted by telephone after booking appropriate times and in the main were typed up and transcribed at the time of the interview, with the interviewer inputting answers directly into a manual data entry form in a professional (SSL encrypted) SurveyMonkey account, except:

- Carolyn Wilkins' interview was conducted on 20/11 with no access to the internet and was typed and then input to surveymonkey on 15/12.
- Ann Johnson-Brown requested to have the questions emailed to her, emailed her answers back on 4/11, and Jamie then input them later.

Several interviewees requested total anonymity.

Participants



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
LA / CCG / Other type of commissioner	29.63%
SEs and Vol/Comm - local to event	40.74%
Social investor	7.41%
E3M partner LA / commissioner	3.70%
E3M partner SE	18.52%
TOTAL	27

Name	Organisation	Role	Which event attended	Have you collaborated with anyone you met at the event?

Alex Kirby	Family Action	WellFamily Co-ordinator Gainsborough	G	Yes
Alun Francis	Oldham College	Chief Executive	O	Yes
Ann Johnson-Brown	NHS Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group	Head of Transformation	G	No
Anon			R	Yes
Anon			R	No
Anon			R	Yes
Anon			O	Yes
Anon			G	No
Carolyn Nice	Lincolnshire County Council	Assistant Director Adult Frailty and Long Term Conditions	G	Yes
Carolyn Wilkins	Oldham Council	Chief Executive	O	Yes
Councillor Sean Fielding	Oldham MBC	Leader, Oldham Council	O	Yes
Dave Thornett	Key Fund	Business Development Manager	G and R	Yes
Eve Fawcett-Moralee	West Lindsey DC	Chief Executive	G	Yes
Gemma Bukei	P3	Director of Strategy & Innovation	O, R and G	Yes
Graham Metcalfe	Department for Work and Pensions	Partnership Manager	G	Yes
Helen Littlewood	Clifton Learning Partnership	CEO	R	No
Hilary Centeleghe	GC Business Growth Hub	Senior Growth Manager	O	Yes
Iain Dimmock	SING	Systemic Investigator	G	Yes
James Murphy	Lincolnshire Community Foundation	Joint CEO	G	Yes
Janet Rowse	Sirona Care and Health CIC	Chief Executive	O	Yes
Marcus Hammond	Slumgothic (X Church)	Director	G	Yes
Neil Cucksey	East Lindsey District Council	Assistant Director - Property, Business and Growth	G	Yes
Neil McInroy	CLES	Chief Executive	O	Yes
Peter Morris	Social and Sustainable Capital	Investment Director	G and R	Yes
Shaun Needham	Target Sheffield	Chief Executive	R	Yes
Sue Wynne	Rotherham Rise	Chief Executive	R	Yes
Susie Finlayson	Power to Change	Development Manager	O	Yes

Interview Questions

Part 1:

- Confirmed Name, Organisation, Job title and the event(s) attended.
- What was the most valuable element of attending / convening Alchemy?
- What did you learn from the event? How has this supported your work?
- Have you collaborated with anyone you met at the event?

Part 2-A: for commissioners:

- Did the event address any barriers to working with social enterprises? What and how?
- As a result of the event, has your own interest in working with social enterprises and social investment: increased | decreased | not changed ?

Part 2-B: for interviewees from social enterprises and from Vol/Comm organisations:

- Did the event address any barriers to securing contracts with public sector organisations? What and how?
- As a result of the event, has your own interest in working with local authority and public sector commissioners and social investment: increased | decreased | not changed ?

Part 2-C: for interviewees from social investors:

- Did the event identify local projects and partners which could be suitable for social investment?
- As a result of the event, has your own interest in working with public sector commissioners and social enterprises in (area): increased | decreased | not changed ?

Then every interviewee went into the same Part 3:

- As a result of the event, do you believe that commissioners at [your local authority] are more or less committed to working with social enterprises and social investment? [they are more committed] | [they are less committed] | [not changed]
- Since the event, what has changed in [your location] with regards contracting or commissioning with social enterprises? What, if any, other developments can you attribute to the process that began at Alchemy?
- Do you expect other outcomes, such as collaboration between participants or social investment to take place as a result of Alchemy?
- How could we have increased the impact of the event?
- Any other comments?
- Would you voice your support for a future iteration of Alchemy in your area? Would you support this financially?
- Anything else you would like to add about Alchemy's impact?

What was most valuable?

Name	Organisation	What was the most valuable element of attending / convening Alchemy in your opinion?
Anon		For me it was bringing together non-statutory services. We work with statutory services and get caught up with that network and tends to be the default position, to rely on that network. It was good to meet representatives covering a wider network.
Anon		The biggest ticket item was the indication from the local authority for their intention to procure housing or to build again (through a special purpose vehicle) and the potential that could bring. There were other concepts that are linked to youth / social enterprise / new deal schemes. We could have a significant input.
Anon		Attending Alchemy introduced me to SASC and we are now in the latter stages of accessing £3m in social investment.
Anon		Hearing the different examples from around the country; barriers and successes they've had (in terms of social enterprise services delivery) and how this could work locally.
Alun Francis	Oldham College	To get a sense of the council's wider ambition for new projects in the town
Ann Johnson-Brown	NHS Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group	I attended the pre-event planning session but was only able to attend day one of the actual event, so didn't experience the full two days or the evening meal. The most valuable elements of attending for me were i) meeting people from organisations I hadn't met before and ii) understanding more about social enterprise and hearing about a range of examples and different approaches to commissioning.
Carolyn Nice	Lincolnshire County Council	Meeting and talking with people I never would have met in my day to day work. This was brilliant.
Carolyn Wilkins	Oldham Council	Supporting Northern Roots. This was really valuable. NR would not be progressing in the way it is without Alchemy. It helped in framing the ambition for NR; this model is only viable if it is about social enterprise.

Councillor Sean Fielding	Oldham MBC	Getting all the partners and people in the room. Rather than being council led, this enabled a range of opinion about how to take the Northern Roots idea forward which was very valuable. And how the tables mixed people together and got people with different outlooks talking - making for good discussions.
Dave Thorne	Key Fund	There are 2 very important things. 1. that Alchemy happened in Gainsborough at all - it was a statement of value in the town. This was particularly important given some of the partners involved. There are some devastating statistics relating to Gainsborough. The South West ward is no 24 (!) on the IMD. Poor housing; children living in poverty; absentee landlords buying property. An intervention is positive. 2. in practical terms, as a way of bringing people together, hot-housing key issues and bringing multiple agencies together has been valuable: not only for the town's Access Fund bid, but for catalysing independent activity in the town, which is already bearing fruit. It has got the attention of external partners, interested in doing things in the town, and come up with solid ideas. Above relates to Gainsborough. Also attended Rotherham, at which social investment was unlocked for Rise.
Eve Fawcett-Moralee	West Lindsey DC	Supporting our Access Programme bid and having the confidence to bring the challenges into a wider arena: the benefits of creating a shared and common understanding outweighed the risks of having our heads above the parapet and it was the first time the town has ever done this. The Alchemy concept and process gave me personally the confidence to do this: Oldham and Rotherham had happened and had supported both their local authorities and their local VCSEs. This gave me the confidence that WLDC could be next.
Gemma Bukel	P3	For commissioners: to learn about different things going on from E3M members and to change perspective. I know from sitting on tables many commissioners had not previously thought about service delivery from a provider point of view (for example, the impact on the provider of payment and contracting terms).
Hilary Centeleghe	GC Business Growth Hub	We already work very closely with Oldham MBC. The most useful element was the early alert that there were possibilities to get involved with Northern Roots, and what the project could be. We are now working closely with Anna Da Silva, I have assigned an advisor to Northern Roots and we want to link our Recipe4Success programme in with this. I have a new programme starting which supports individuals who are self-employed so there's a possible link here too."
Iain Dimmock	SING	The dinner in the evening - meeting people. All the best bits happen at coffee and when people relax after working together.
James Murphy	Lincolnshire Community Foundation	The most valuable part was the sense of developing relationships. There were a host of varying technical exercises to help the situation progress over the two days. And it was unusual as an event: what you don't often get is people making decisions at a high level in the room at the same time as people who deliver those things. It was also highly effective at setting out intentions.
Janet Rowse	Sirona Care and Health CIC	It's always helpful to see a whole community come together and work together, you learn a lot by comparison with your own community. Alchemy attendees brought tremendous enthusiasm and a will to do new things.
Marcus Hammond	Slumgothic (X Church)	I think it was really nice to be in a situation whether a lot of people trying to do things were in the same space. Usually things are very fragmented. Bonding was useful: usually you get procedures but not humanity. It was good to commit that amount of time. 24 hour events are bonkers: no-one in their right mind would go to one, until you realise that you develop trust and relationships with other people who go through it.
Neil Cucksey	East Lindsey District Council	From my POV, greater understanding of social enterprise in all its various forms. It was not a sector I was familiar with so it was great from that perspective to learn more.
Neil McInroy	CLES	Explaining what Northern Roots was all about; getting a coterie of people, collaborations and conversations to start. It set the soil conditions for growth for Northern Roots.
Peter Morris	Social and Sustainable Capital	Adding small bits to the jigsaw of knowledge and understanding.
Sue Wynne	Rotherham Rise	There were three key elements: 1. Learning - gaining knowledge around the technicalities and procedures of procurement. Widening horizons that there are other ways of looking at things from how it is traditionally done. 2. Networking - meeting other people, which led to specific benefits to Rotherham Rise. 3. Generating new ideas.
Susie Finlayson	Power to Change	A couple of things: seeing the process. Doing the kinds of jobs we do it is interesting to see how other people do this stuff.

		Complementing that, the different people in the room, it is really interesting how you managed to get such a diverse range of people to come. And reflecting on the event afterwards it was positive to have seen Oldham Borough's vision and drive to make the borough better for people - but not in a bad "top down" way.
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Learning:

Name	Organisation	What did you learn from the event? How has this supported your work?
Anon		There's not a great deal of joined up thinking is what I learned, although I have arranged a lunch for commissioners and for some of our workers, and invited some of the local councillors who attended the event to come (but disappointingly despite chasing I have not heard from any of the councillors). Lot of people came away from the event fired up.
Alun Francis	Oldham College	Learned about Northern Roots in the town, a project we would like to be involved in.
Ann Johnson-Brown	NHS Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group	I got some really useful learning about the potential of collaboration with social enterprises and the different approaches and outcomes that can be achieved – I found the examples really helpful, some good examples across the range of scale too. They really brought to life what is possible and the difference it made to people and the local community.
Carolyn Nice	Lincolnshire County Council	i) The Sunderland people (who gave a presentation and participated on a table) were really interesting in terms of what they are doing and have done. There are some similarities in terms of the deprivation in neighbourhoods there and here in Lincolnshire. ii) I was not aware - even though I am a resident and a service provider here - just how much was going on in Gainsborough - there is so much fantastic stuff going on which I discovered thanks to talking with people at the event.
Councillor Sean Fielding	Oldham MBC	It was about right for my level. I was a bit ignorant of social enterprise before Alchemy and it was great to develop an understanding of social enterprise.
Eve Fawcett-Moralee	West Lindsey DC	New information about levering funding and finance: community bonds and tax reliefs eg SITR (social investment tax relief).
Gemma Bukel	P3	Oldham: really interesting to me, initially the Northern Roots idea felt big and vague but over the two days we learned about the council's ambition and clear determination to scale social enterprises as part of this, with clear opportunities. Gainsborough: I know the area well already because of the housing work we do housing, but it was good to learn more about what is going on. Just been asked to meet an Executive Director as a result of attending the Gainsborough event. Rotherham: I was surprised about the lack of resource they (the council) have. I was sat with lots of commissioners who seemed really keen, wanted to organise a visit to one of our projects, requested a lot of follow up information from me. RMBC would be a target area to work in for P3 so it was great to learn about who they are and what they do.
Iain Dimmock	SING	I heard stories I hadn't heard before, but nothing I was not already aware of. It is one of the most useful things to hear stories but I was frustrated at how these interrupted our work.
James Murphy	Lincolnshire Community Foundation	YES, specifically quite a lot about what other people want and need when it comes to making Gainsborough better. And I developed some good relationships with people experienced in developing cooperative structures. That's been outside our skillset. It speaks to the idea of what trying to co-create with commissioners.
Janet Rowse	Sirona Care and Health CIC	As above. Now it's about how you put things together.
Marcus Hammond	Slumgothic (X Church)	What Julian was talking about around procurement - I can see it could be really helpful to people up the food chain in commissioners.
Neil Cucksey	East Lindsey District Council	Since Gainsborough Alchemy I've had a meeting with the Key Fund, and looked at how we might bring social investment into our blended funding packages in the district.

Neil McInroy	CLES	What Northern Roots could be; that there was enthusiasm; and it helped me to understand what it was all about and supported our continued involvement.
Peter Morris	Social and Sustainable Capital	One of the bits (of the jigsaw) is the interaction of the 3 way triangle of commissioners, providers and investors. In the commercial world it is a 2 way relationship, ie just the provider of a service and the people paying for it, while the social purpose world often involves a 3 way relationship. But many events in our world only bring 2 of the 3 together. This brought all three. Plus, it was good to cover the public procurement rules. There are some social investors whose business models mean they have lots of contact with commissioners. Then there are other social investors, including us at SASC, whose basic model is to work with providers. We don't come across commissioners often. So it was helpful to try to bring all three parties together.
Sue Wynne	Rotherham Rise	Knowledge of the technicalities and practicalities of procurement and that it doesn't always have to be done via the same process. And learning about i) other social enterprises / VCSEs, including Hull and ii) options for social investment.

Increasing Impact:

Name	Organisation	Job title	How could we have increased the impact of the event?
Ann Johnson-Brown	NHS Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group	Head of Transformation	What didn't work so well for me was: i) some of the logistics of the event – the arrangements seemed to be tailored to the assumption that attendees lived in or were staying overnight in Gainsborough - Lincolnshire is a big county, and not all organisations with a vested interest in Gainsborough are based in Gainsborough. So the late evening finish followed by an early breakfast start the next day were problematic, 1 full day would have been better than two halves. ii) Although it was a great opportunity to meet people from organisations I'd not come across before, there wasn't much time during the session I attended to meet and talk. I found the "task" for the table work problematic – as we were being asked to develop thinking and solutions around something in the absence of information/data about the issue – so is was very subjective as to what we felt was the sticky issue and what we felt the solutions should be.
Anon			I'm not sure that people present really gain from learning about legal aspects of procurement. My organisation for example does not need to know this. We have a proprietary protocol to go through when it comes to procurement; as long as that is followed we are free to engage any provider so we do not need to know the ins and outs of legalities. But I could be in a unique position, and it is useful background to know. It does elevate an offer.
Anon			Go back to the councillors and seek evidence as to what they have actually done after the event. Also commissioners need to stop doing pilots and short term stuff.
Anon	(Rotherham attendee)		In all honesty the challenge is Rotherham MBC. Their problems kind of made it impossible. they are looking at a multi-million pound shortfall in the costs of addressing child sexual exploitation. Even one of the speakers said was impossible. The fact RMBC commissioners had misunderstood the event to such a great extent caused a 3rd sector backlash after the event. But I don't think it was E3M's fault about that, the commissioners really seemed to think the event would bring new money to RMBC and even though the event showed them examples of different, purpose-driven ways of commissioning, which have been successful elsewhere, they (the council) were not interested.
Carolyn Wilkins	Oldham Council	Chief Executive	I genuinely thought the organisation of Alchemy was really good. I was anxious beforehand because it was a different kind of event. I genuinely thought it to be really well curated, a very interesting mix of different voices we would not have heard if we (Oldham MBC) had organised it. It helped us to inform a fundamental reform of relationships; to stop describing people as commissioners / providers. How do we understand, co-design and co-deliver; how do we harness diversity; do those diverse voices inform Oldham's service design - these are questions I am wrestling with. I like events that make you feel differently afterwards - it feels like time well spent.
Marcus Hammond	Slumgothic (X Church)	Director	In all honesty, most vignettes felt detached. What is social enterprise? I was sat on my table saying the actual base of social enterprise in Gainsborough is really fragile, people on the table were alarmed when I said that and I would have liked more of a conversation around that. The climate and broader willingness is very strong and strengthening all the time; but I was trying to say it is fragile because most of the fledgling

			<p>social enterprises here will have developed in relationship with WLDC and they are so poorly resourced. It is a good but not effective relationship. I think we needed more honest conversations about fragility. Small organisations can feel really exposed. Most people in our project are low on skills and confidence themselves. It is good to meet council officers at events like this but they need to come into local projects to really understand. Please do another Alchemy in Gainsborough and extend an invitation to more of the grassroots people. It would be a complete eye opener and give so much more ownership of the context in which we operate. Make it looser, a bit deconstructed - put people in a room with no agenda and see what happens.</p>
Councillor Sean Fielding	Oldham MBC	Leader, Oldham Council	We needed to be clear to council officers and councillors about why we want people attending for both days - some people only made a commitment to come for one day and you only get the most out of it by coming to the whole thing.
Carolyn Nice	Lincolnshire County Council	Assistant Director Adult Frailty and Long Term Conditions	I think it would have been really good to see more Lincolnshire examples (of social enterprise service delivery and of social investment) at the event. Sometimes you need to get that local hook - showing people that "this has worked in Stamford, etc". The Sunderland people were fantastic, there were lots of good national examples of work, but sometimes we need that local hook.
Iain Dimmock	SING	Systemic Investigator	The event felt very surface to me. I realise I was an outlier in the room, someone who wants to explore problems more deeply than the average punter, but to me the event felt very one dimensional. Your Alchemy process was not necessarily the way I would work. In my own work in convening events I prefer to get to the heart of the problem. Hearing people's stories is vital but it broke up a structured environment. We were working on tables and getting going, then you made us stop thinking to pay attention to speakers - your process paid no attention to whether people were making progress and breakthroughs. Generally you should not pre-allocate people to tables. You should spend some time forming each group, allowing people to build relationships and get to know each other, and hear each other's stories before getting in to the work at all. Then, after building relationships, there should be a process on the day of identifying what challenges to address - you should not have decided them beforehand. Then the groups of tables would come together naturally. I totally understand that for many people, the process you ran at Alchemy is very unusual for them, and for many people that would have been quite enough. But the limitation for me was that your process did not allow us to get to the heart of the problem.
Hilary Centeleghe	GC Business Growth Hub	Senior Growth Manager	I don't think you could have improved it - it was very slick and very impressive: organisation, pre-event, on the day and afterwards.
Peter Morris	Social and Sustainable Capital	Investment Director	As a social investor, I am interested both in high level consciousness raising and in getting deals done. Both need to happen. But there is a tension between them. Many social investors are under pressure to deploy their funds, ie we have to do deals. The consciousness raising stuff is great - I am really interested in it - but it is not what we are there to do, day to day. It felt especially at Gainsborough that we could have benefitted from some investor / investee matchmaking in separate sessions.
Susie Finlayson	Power to Change	Development Manager	Difficult, but by having attendance from more people from local communities and community organisations. Tailoring it in advance to them, which I recognise you may well have done, to ensure they are not intimidated - the groundwork to bring those individuals in is very important. Intensity: for people like me my day job covers me going along to this, but for someone from a running a small local organisation perhaps you need to consider what the most important parts of it would be for them to come to, if they can't come to the whole thing: eg half day for insight. Dinner was a nice touch.
Janet Rowse	Sirona Care and Health CIC	Chief Executive	The one thing that for me would've really helped: it would have been good to see the land. I was really impressed with the organisation. Facilitation was excellent. It built relationships.
Eve Fawcett-Moralee	West Lindsey DC	Chief Executive	The Alchemy team were helpful before, during and after the event. Facilitation was a bit patchy on some tables. eg Amanda was left facilitating a group and she needed more support.
Gemma Bukel	P3	Director of Strategy & Innovation	I've really enjoyed them, learned a lot, met people.
Alun Francis	Oldham College	Chief Executive	Format worked well: presentation; working groups; discussion on the tables. If anything I would have liked more examples of what is feasible and what is possible to show us more deliverable ideas.
James Murphy	Lincolnshire Community Foundation	Joint CEO	The biggest thing is social enterprise sectoral representation. There were a few people there but if we had more frontline delivery organisations there (at Alchemy) that would have a multiplier effect in

			the impact. I understand many were invited though, and that the barrier is that for small organisations, time is a huge issue, it is too costly in terms of their time to come.
Neil McInroy	CLES	Chief Executive	Less procurement jargon. On the one hand this was about a new form of development from the bottom up to develop space and activities. On the other hand there was the public sector reform and public service narrative. Was this about building a new economy or public service reform. These things are not incompatible but it was a bit all things to all people, a bit middle class happy clappy. You need to turn up the dial on progressive economics. Should have focused on Northern Roots only, did not need other conversations.
Neil Cucksey	East Lindsey District Council	Assistant Director - Property, Business & Growth	Can't think of anything. Only comment slightly odd starting mid afternoon one day, then taking an overnight break, and running to after lunch on the next day ...I know there was an evening meal though, which I missed.
Dave Thornett	Key Fund	Business Development Manager	Gainsborough: the opportunity to shape what happened is unusual when it comes to this kind of event. Generally there is a format, you might get to influence slightly - with this participation worked so well. With Rotherham, significant challenge is what was and is happening in Rotherham. It will be a slow burn. But Rise's investment for the building came off the back of it.
Sue Wynne	Rotherham Rise	Chief Executive	I would have liked there to have been follow up, and an update from the council following the event. There were a lot of potential ideas created on the day, so as an active participant I would have appreciated knowing how this information was used and if there were any changes.