

# **URBAN II Evaluation**

## Case Study: Halifax



# 1.0 Introduction

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Halifax is a town of 92,000 people located in the Yorkshire region of Northern England. Its URBAN II programme received a total of 12.6 million euros and was focused on five neighbourhoods including and surrounding the town centre (Boothtown, Pellon, Siddal, King Cross and West Central Halifax). The URBAN II target area contains 53,400 residents (about 60% of the total population of the town) of which about 10% were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Halifax's economic base was founded on the textile industry which helped the town experience rapid growth during the 18th century. Throughout the 19th century the local economy continued to be relatively strong and diversified into other manufacturing industries including engineering and metal production. Today the local economy is still reliant on traditional industries, with manufacturing providing 30% of its employment base (nearly twice as much as the UK average).

However, along with many other nearby towns whose local economies were built on traditional sectors, Halifax experienced significant economic difficulties in the 1980's and 1990's, with unemployment rising to 9% in 2000 (compared to a national average of 6%). Linked in with higher levels of worklessness were poor education attainment and low skills levels amongst the population. Only 59% of pupils attained a recognised level of performance at 11 years old compared to 73% nationally (1999 figures), whilst an analysis of unemployed people linked in with a large worklessness support initiative found that 92% had no formal qualification. The symptoms of these large economic challenges were widespread deprivation amongst the town's neighbourhoods. The URBAN II target area included 21 Super Output Areas<sup>1</sup> which are amongst the 15% most deprived in the country of which 14 are in the worst 10% and 7 in the worst 5%.

Interesting, almost all of the issues identified in an original SWOT for the URBAN II bid were economic related and focused on:

- a lack of new economic investment to replace the declining manufacturing sector
- a topography which restricted development, with the town being found within a relatively steep valley
- a skills mismatch between the skills held by local people and those required by new sectors
- a lack of graduates in the town. Those that did go on to higher education tended to move away to the nearby cities of Leeds and Bradford, the former of which had seen a significant increase in new job opportunities
- low income levels for those residents who were in work
- where the town has been successful in creating employment in new sectors (particularly the finance sector), many of these new jobs are taken up by people living outside of the town.

<sup>1</sup> An SOA is a small geographical area comprised of approximately 5,000 people used to map and assess statistical information in a particular geography developed by the UK Government (Office for National Statistics).

Although many of the structural economic problems which Halifax suffered from are not unique, the programme and its target area are interesting for a number of reasons including:

- The programme is based within a relatively small urban town as opposed to a medium or large city (with a total population of just 92,000),
- The programme is located within a predominately rural District and the *feel* of the URBAN II area is actually more akin to a large rural settlement,
- The surrounding District within which Halifax is found (Calderdale) is relatively prosperous and suffers little from the deprivation found within the five target neighbourhoods of the programme.
- Partly because of the above three issues, Halifax has not been a recipient of many other area-based funding programme before and URBAN II represented one of only two regeneration initiatives that have been targeted on the town over the last 20 years.

These issues all have a bearing on the relative success and failure of the programme and are picked up later in this case study report.

## **1.1 Background to the URBAN II Programme and its target area**

The URBAN II programme in Halifax had a strong focus on economic regeneration, with a particular interest on enterprise development. The original bid for URBAN funds had the title of 'Halifax- An Enterprising Town'. This concentration on the economic theme was founded on a theory that the root causes of social and physical issues within the town were linked to the decline of the local economy. The original theory described in the bid showed that without new and sustainable employment the town would find it difficult to solve many of its social problems as issues such as high crime, poor health and poor quality housing were all seen to be symptoms of low economic activity levels. As the original URBAN bid stated 'People are poor [in Halifax] as a direct result of a weak economy and the target area reflects low quality job opportunities, low paid employment and the sheer absence of work opportunities'.

Much of the programme's target area is residential with a large mix of pre, inter and post war housing developments although the area does contain relatively large industrial areas (in Pellon and King Cross), Calderdale College (in King Cross) and the towns main cemetery (in Siddal). The key green space in the target area is known as the People's Park (located in King Cross) which is an historic green space that has recently been restored through funding from regional and national sources (Heritage Lottery, English Heritage, Home Office and Single Regeneration Budget Funding).

As explained above, the URBAN II programme had an economic focus centred on helping local businesses to grow and assisting local people to become more employable. The vision, main objectives and priorities of the programme are set out in the diagram below.

### PROGRAMME VISION

To combat poverty and deprivation in Halifax by creating and capturing sustainable employment opportunities from the development of an innovative enterprise culture rooted in community-led urban renewal

### PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Raise the skills base of communities at risk of exclusion from the labour market

Create ladders of personal progression which create a skilled and flexible local workforce, matched to quality and sustainable jobs.

Increase local employment opportunities by supporting new and growth businesses which increase jobs directly by growing sustainable local supply chains.

Place local communities at the heart of increased confidence in Halifax as a unique urban centre for living, working and investing in.

### PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

#### Priority 1: Enterprising People

Measure 1: New routes to new opportunities  
Measure 2: Creative Compacts for Employment  
Measure 3: Community Enterprise  
Measure 4: Competitive Communities

#### Priority 2: Enterprising Businesses

Measure 1: Growing Small Enterprises  
Measure 2: Increasing business competitiveness  
Measure 3: Places for Enterprise

This focus on economic regeneration by the URBAN programme was partly driven by the fact that another regeneration scheme (funded through the national "Single Regeneration Budget" or SRB) was also targeted on virtually the same target area as the URBAN programme. However, the focus on the SRB programme was more on social and physical regeneration meaning URBAN filled the gap in ensuring a more rounded and holistic approach to the neighbourhood renewal issues apparent in Halifax. Thus the economic foundations of the URBAN II programme were partly built around the needs of the area but also the desire to link directly into existing regeneration activity found within the town.

The programme was delivered by Action Halifax, an organisation (separate from the Local Authority) that was specifically set up to deliver both the URBAN II and SRB programme. Action Halifax managed the two programmes, was responsible for appraisals, funding allocations, monitoring systems and project support.

*Has this programme theory been realised on the ground?.*

Although the original theory lying behind the programme gave it a strong economic regeneration focus, in reality this theory sometimes became lost as the programme travelled through its life. An assessment of the types of projects supported and the associated spend patterns of the programme suggests it was more holistic than it had originally planned to be with a broader set of priorities that stretched beyond the economic development agenda. However, this was generally seen as a positive issue which demonstrated the flexibility of the programme to change to certain circumstances

Although about 70% of projects had links to the economic and enterprise agenda, there were also many which had a distinct social or physical theme, with no apparent association with the original economic theory of the programme. For instance, there are a number of health related project including a Community Health Training initiative that stimulated healthier lifestyles for local people, physical development projects which provided improved community and sports facilities and Town Centre Ambassador projects helping to provide an 'on street presence' and deter small scale anti social behaviour. Although it can be argued that all projects could help stimulate a more enterprising town (i.e. promoting healthier lifestyles can help increase employment levels) there was a relatively large number of projects that drifted away from the original theory of having a highly focussed economic programme.

This partial shift away from the original theory was to some extent explained by changes in the socio-economic characteristics of the target area. Even during the programme's inception stages, there was recognition that the national, regional and local economic situation was improving and statistics showed a downward trend in unemployment from 1999 to 2003. This meant the economic problems of the target area began to become less prevalent as local employment prospects improved (particularly in the banking and finance sector). In turn this led those responsible for co-ordinating the programme to drift away from the original tight focus on economic regeneration to also consider wider types of project ideas, including health, crime and community development.

This move away from the original theory was also partly linked to the programme having an open bidding round for URBAN funding, where local organisations 'pitched' their project ideas to the programmes appraisal panel. This led the programme to partly loose control on the types of projects it was funding and although there was guidance on the issues the target area suffered from (which centred on its economic difficulties) the project proposals coming forward covered a wider range of other local problems. As the programme moved towards a commissioning framework (where local issues were identified and project ideas were then developed for local organisations to bid for) later on in its life, it became easier to restrict the nature of the projects that were being supported whilst the Appraisal Panel became more specific in the types of projects they were looking to fund.

However, although the programme in Halifax drifted away from its original theory, this change was often seen as a positive by stakeholders. The flexibility of the programme to respond to the changing nature of problems was often praised by stakeholders and its ability to direct resources towards present issues and concerns (as opposed to those present in 1999/2000) meant its relevance and overall added value was increased.

However, despite some drift away from its original theory the programme still remained a predominately economic answer to local neighbourhood renewal problems and although it strayed into being a more holistic type initiative at times, it still should be seen as concentrating on one particular part of the regeneration agenda. The level of integration displayed by the programme is dealt with in more detail later on in this case study.

## 2.0 Impact, outputs and results of the Programme

This section deals with the impact of Halifax's URBAN programme, looking at its direct and indirect impacts according to both programme information as well as the views of local stakeholders. It firstly looks at whether the target area has changed over the life of the programme.

### 2.1 How has the target area changed?

Statistical information showing how the target area has changed throughout the period of the programme is relatively positive and demonstrates that many of the key measurements of the economic situation of the area improved between 2000 and 2007. For instance, the unemployment rate in the URBAN II area fell from 6.5% in 2000 to 4.7% in 2007. This drop of nearly 1.8% was significantly more than in surrounding Calderdale which saw a drop of just 0.4% over the same period. The proportion of unemployed who could be classed as long term unemployed has also fell sharply over the programming period from 21% in 2000 to 13% in 2007. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE's again increased significantly over the period of the programme from 28% in 2000 to 50% in 2007.

However, there are a few indicators which showed a worsening in issues attached to the target area including the number of new businesses which have started up. The number of enterprises per 1000 population dropped from 46 in 2000 to 31 in 2007 suggesting that a key measurement of enterprise in the area (and a defining issue tackled by the programme) got worse, particularly because the national context around enterprise start up was generally getting better.

It is worth noting that the number of indicators collected by the programme to understand how the target area was changing were small, with only 5 key baseline indicators being used. However, this is positive as collecting indicators on issues for which the programme would have very little impact (crime rates, health levels etc) is often a criticism of similar programmes.

### 2.2 Outputs and Results

The table below provides a summary of all of the outputs and results collected by the programme (drawn from the end of term Evaluation Report 2008).

Indicator	Overall			Black and Ethnic Minority groups		
	Target	Actual	%	Target	Actual	%
<b>Output</b>						
Jobs Created	10	160	1600.0	6.5	26	400.0
Employed accessing training (Priority 1)	850	765	90.0	129	87.4	67.8
Unemployed accessing training	220	1168.3	531.0	271	369	136.2
Employed working towards a qualification	1475	850	57.6	165.5	156	94.3
Unemployed people working towards a qualification	132	438	331.8	93	154	165.6

People into temporary jobs	100	37.4	37.4	26	10.6	40.8
ICT Initiatives assisted	7	7	100	0	0	N/A
Childcare places created	40	84	210	8	0	0.0
Individuals involved in voluntary work	100	249	249.0	49	30	61.2
Community Enterprise Start-ups	12	12	100	3	0	0.0
Capacity Building Initiatives carried out	24	85	354.2	0	0	N/A
New Business start-ups	100	182	182.0	43	50	116.3
SME's assisted	500	928	185.6	166	279	168.1
Employed people helped through training (Priority 2)	2100	1651.6	78.6	270	529	195.9
Sqm of business space provided/improved	5000	49268	985.4	0	0	N/A
Land developed	1	1.665	166.5	0	0	N/A
<b>Results</b>						
People into Jobs	650	971	149.4	156.5	342.9	219.1
People accessing ICT	540	532	98.5	135	83	61.5
Jobs Created <sup>1</sup>	725	634	87.4	97	85.7	88.4
Voluntary/community organisations supported	100	321	321.0	7	17	242.9
Individuals involved in voluntary work	272	270	99.3	62	53	85.5
Assisted Start-up's surviving 18 months	75	72	96.0	7	9	128.6
SME's making better use of ICT	250	174	69.6	0	0	N/A
Sqm occupancy of business space provided/improved	4000	23644	591.1	0	0	N/A

An analysis of the output information shows that about two thirds have either been achieved or exceeded with key indicators linked to jobs created, unemployed people accessing training and square meters of business space improved all over exceeding by a significant margin (e.g. jobs created by 1600%). However, this could be explained by an underestimation when setting targets as opposed to a particularly strong performance in these areas although the output targets are not particularly low compared to other programmes of this size. The key underachieving outputs relate to people into temporary jobs, employed people working towards a qualification and SME's making better use of ICT. The majority of the underachievement in these areas was put down to an improvement in economic conditions which made hitting some of the targets (particularly employment related ones) more 'difficult'.

It is interesting to note that when the outputs, impacts and also the changes to the baseline figures are assessed the programme has performed well in two key areas- creating new jobs and helping local people to access these new employment opportunities. Many of the more successful projects (according to stakeholders interviewed) focussed on supporting local people to become job ready (through training, education and personal development) as well as actually creating the jobs which these supported individuals would then be able to access (through business support and stimulating new business development). Thus the most significant impact of the programme was linked to both the supply and demand side of employment in the town and the economic theme of the URBAN programme in Halifax was therefore the most successful element (although this is not surprising as its main thrust, resources and effort were directed towards this theme).

<sup>1</sup> Jobs created was seen as an output as well as a result- although this is not double counting on the programmes point

Projects which were often highlighted as having the greatest impacts included:

- **Experience Works:** This project increased training and employment opportunities for people aged 50 and over who were recently unemployed or who were interested in re-entering employment. It helped those who felt excluded from existing employment and training opportunities, enabling them to access training and employment opportunities within a number of voluntary and community organisations (e.g. Age Concern) so that they built up their skills and confidence of being in a working environment.
- **Workwise:** Workwise was a new Integrated Employment Service for disabled people within Halifax which employed specialist Employment Advisors to produce individual vocational profile with all disabled client groups which led to an Individual Development Plan being developed and guaranteed work experience.
- **Halifax means Business:** This project provided an integrated business advice and support service to start up and established businesses. Business advisors were appointed and specialist business support provided for existing companies. A Grant Fund was also established for business start up, business development and relocation of small businesses into the URBAN area.
- **Elsie Whiteley Incubation Centre:** The project established a virtual and an actual Business Incubator for start-up and newly established businesses in Halifax. The project included the costs of recruiting and employing an Incubator Manager and a Youth Enterprise Manager as well as a contribution to rental costs of subsidising the rent for new tenants, the cost of the website and a package of training events for the resident businesses.
- **Go For It:** This project helped women from the target area and young people from ethnic minority communities, particularly from West Central/King Cross, to access careers in the construction industry. The construction industry suffered from large skills and labour shortages and trainees received intensive training followed by guaranteed work experience.

Although the factors which helped these projects 'have the greatest impact' were all different the main reoccurring issues coming out of the research were:

- Multi partner involvement: where more than one organisation delivered the project i.e. where the incubator centre had partners from business support organisations, the local authority and an enterprise agency
- Based on recognised 'need': where the projects were 'carefully developed' through research and feasibility work in order to ensure they were actually needed and were relevant to the problem
- Strong staff: a straightforward critical success factor related to the strength of the staff who were often described as 'passionate' about the issues their project was trying to address (interesting strong staff were not classified as people who were good project managers or good at process related tasks such as finance or monitoring).

It is important to note that many of the projects which were supported through URBAN tended to strengthen existing provision and activity as opposed to creating new types of interventions. Many

of the URBAN projects added value to initiatives which already existed to expanded or build upon what was often already there. For example:

- URBAN improved an existing mainstream business support offer to local businesses (through the Halifax Means Business Project). URBAN funded additional Business Advisors who were specifically focused on helping Halifax's business community (as opposed to advisors who had to cover the whole region). This increased the intensity of the support and allowed advisors to spend more time with local businesses.
- URBAN added an outreach element to existing projects so that they were able to target more hard to reach groups in deprived neighbourhoods. For example, the Women's Support Centre was able, through URBAN, to employ Outreach Workers to go out into target communities and provide support within deprived neighbourhoods as opposed to being based in the town centre waiting for women to come to them.
- URBAN expanded the work of existing projects to deal with a wider range of issues than was previously possible. For example, the programme helped the police to tackle the issue of business crime in a much more coherent way by providing training to businesses and improving intelligence around an issue which was previously lacked the right resources to deal with it in a pro-active manner.

Thus the impact of the programme was often seen to be more about adding value to existing initiatives as opposed to developing completely new provision.

## **2.3 Impacts**

It is interesting to note that when stakeholders were asked to describe the largest impacts of the programme most did not state the direct impacts in relation to its outputs (i.e. the number of jobs created or businesses supported by URBAN). Instead many described the wider and more indirect impacts as being the biggest benefits of the programme.

Strengthening the voluntary and community sector was seen as a key indirect impact of the programme- about half of the projects funded were run by voluntary or community organisations. There was a conscious decision made by the Monitoring Committee to direct resources towards the voluntary and community sector as opposed to simply providing additional resources to mainstream organisations such as the Local Authority. The voluntary and community sector often had better links in to the hard to reach communities which the programme was trying to support. For instance, provision of URBAN funding to a women's support organisation that already worked with vulnerable women (on issues connected with domestic violence, health etc) in order to help them also deliver employment support was seen as a better way of reaching this group as opposed to supporting a mainstream employment organisation. Similarly, supporting a voluntary organisations (Age Concern) that already had a strong track record with working the over 50's was also seen as the best way for the programme to reach out to this group and help them back into employment. The decision to support the voluntary and community sector not only helped the

programme to support the hardest to reach groups but also helped strengthen the sector in general so that it became more professional and able to diversify into new types of provision for its target groups. For instance, the capacity building of this sector helped them become more competent in terms of financial systems but also how to manage and deliver a European funded programme.

Another wider impact of the programme was the level of community development which URBAN stimulated in Halifax's deprived neighbourhoods. The programme supported a wide range of community development activity which strengthened community facilities and infrastructure within the town. For example, URBAN:

- supported the redevelopment of a Community Resource Centre in North Halifax which helped provide a new meeting room, training room and library for local people
- funded a Community Development Consortium which provided four outreach workers to capacity build, fund raise and provide grants to various local resident organisations
- funded the construction of a purpose built community centre in Pellon to provide a physical space for local residents to meet.

Although these examples had an underlying economic focus (new community buildings were used to provide training and outreach employment advice), they all helped to strengthen the community infrastructure found within target neighbourhoods and provided local residents with facilities that were seen to benefit the social fabric of the area. These projects were also identified as being a key legacy of the overall programme as they would continue to benefit local communities well beyond the programme's life.

The programme also had a wider impact in relation to raising the awareness of the needs of Halifax among regional stakeholders. Because Halifax was the only URBAN II programme in the region, it raised interest in the town from regional organisations including Yorkshire Forward (an organisation funded via Government to promote Economic Development) as well as the Regional Government Office. Both these organisations were involved in an advisor capacity on the Monitoring Committee. The involvement of regional organisations to the programme also led to more funding coming into the town to support local key projects. For instance, The Elsie Whiteley Centre received a grant from Yorkshire Forward to match fund its further redevelopment. Although it was difficult to identify the extent to which this may have happened in the absence of URBAN, there was widespread recognition that the programme had put Halifax 'on the map' when previously it was viewed by regional stakeholders as perhaps not the most needy part of the region.

All stakeholders noted that these wider impacts had the benefit of providing long term impacts to the target area, post 2007 when the majority of URBAN funding had finished. A stronger community and voluntary sector, a more solid community development infrastructure and higher levels of interest in Halifax and its deprivation problems are all longer term legacies of the programme whose benefits far outlast the initial funding.

## 3.0 Links with Other Programmes and Policies

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The URBAN programme in Halifax was a central part of the towns regeneration approach. Although the area was deprived, because the wider District of Calderdale was relatively prosperous Halifax did not tend to receive a significant amount of external funding from either central government or the European Commission. This meant there was actually a limited amount of other regeneration initiative/ policies for the programme to link into and, as the URBAN programme covered most of the town, the URBAN strategy was often seen as the overall strategy for Halifax anyway.

The one other regeneration programme found in the town was a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) scheme which ran over the same period as URBAN. A critical success factor of the URBAN II programme identified by most stakeholders was its close link to this SRB programme. Both programmes covered the same target area, both had an overall objective of regenerating deprived neighbourhoods, both were delivered by the same organisation and both had similar timescales. Critically, the URBAN and SRB programmes often acted as match funding for each other so projects could apply for 100% of the funding for a particular initiative instead of having to source funding from various other sources. The two programmes also linked up well in terms of having clearly defined differences in what they were actually trying to achieve, with URBAN focused on the economic agenda whilst SRB on the social and physical theme. Thus URBAN II linked into other regeneration programmes extremely well and the level of alignment was very strong.

The extent to which the programme linked up with wider regeneration policy and practice at a regional level was limited. The accompanying SRB programme linked to the URBAN programme was specifically designed to support the Regional Economic Strategy, the main overarching economic development strategy for Yorkshire. However, unlike the SRB scheme there was no attempt made by the URBAN II programme to align itself to this regional strategy nor was there recognition within key programme level documentation about how the programme supported wider regional objectives. This was not to say the project activities and their eventual impacts did not help the Regional Economic Strategy to be realised, but rather that there was no direct intention to link the programme up with regional strategy and policy.

## 4.0 Factors of Success

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The key factors of success were identified as follows:

- The first critical success factor was having a clear remit on a single regeneration theme (economic regeneration) which provided a focus for the entire programme in relation to setting its objectives and developing its projects. Although the programme did stray into other issues outside of economic regeneration (as mentioned earlier), because it had a relatively tight focus on one theme there was more likelihood for the programme to make a difference. As one

stakeholder stated 'being too holistic waters down the impact sometimes- we didn't want to spread our jam too thinly'.

- There was a clear view among stakeholders that Halifax made the most of its URBAN II funds because it had not, and probably will not in the future, get a chance like this again. Because of the relatively prosperous nature of surrounding areas Halifax did not receive wave after wave of area based grants like some of the other larger cities within the region. Although there was no real evidence to prove this, stakeholders tended to see that this 'single chance' focused peoples minds more on ensuring that there was a lasting legacy and generally forced people to make the most of the funding they received. As one stakeholder explained 'we took nothing for granted, URBAN funds did not replace a previous funding package from Europe nor would in be replaced by another funding round in the future'.
- Another critical success factor picked up during the evaluation was the programmes focus on lesser deprived areas. Although parts of the target area represented some of the most deprived parts of England, a fair proportion of it was not classified as suffering from sever levels of multiple disadvantage. This gave the programme two advantages. Firstly that some of the problems which the URBAN programme was trying to solve needed less investment to 'put right'. Stakeholders felt that many of the target neighbourhoods were at a 'tipping point' in that a relatively small amount of URBAN funding could stop a problem becoming worse. Business crime is a good example of this where URBAN funding was used to stop the problem 'getting out of hand' as opposed to dealing with a problem which had been a sever issue for decades and which would need a significant amount of investment over a long period to address. Secondly, URBAN funding could also go a long way in helping residents and business overcome their problems as many only needed a relatively small amount of intervention to improve their current situation. For instance, although educational attainment levels were poor, many pupils only missed recognised grades (for example C and above at GCSE) by a relatively small margin. Again, a small amount of additional support funded through URBAN would tend to see a relatively good return in terms of better exam results across the board.
- There was no doubt among stakeholders that another critical success factor was the sustained period of economic growth within which the programme existed. The widespread growth of the national and regional economies did help the programme, particularly because its primary focus was around stimulating more jobs and helping local people access those jobs. Stakeholders were quick to state that key indicators such as unemployment has dropped at a faster rate within the target area than elsewhere, but still recognised that the programmes task of creating more jobs would have been significantly harder if it was in operation today.

As noted above, the success factors in relation to the projects revolved around having multi agency working, strong staff members and a robust understanding of the needs of the target area.

## 5.0 The Integration of the Programme

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URBAN programme in Halifax did not adopt a truly integrated approach in relation to tackling economic, social and physical problems. There is no doubt that there are URBAN projects within the portfolio of activities which align to all three themes but the emphasis of its efforts and attention was very much directed towards the economic regeneration of the town's deprived neighbourhoods. Thus physical projects funded through the programme often had an enterprise strand (e.g the Elsie Whiteley Incubator Centre) as did projects falling under the social theme (e.g. childcare support projects to reduce barriers to employment). Thus, the vision, objectives, measures as well as the indicators attached to the programme all focused on economic related activity with enterprise, employment and skills being the key facets of Halifax's approach.

Although this suggests that the integrated approach to regeneration promoted by the European Commission through the overall URBAN II Initiative was not followed in Halifax it needs to be remembered that an adjoining SRB programme dealt with the social and physical elements of the local regeneration agenda. Thus together both programmes promoted an integrated and holistic regeneration programme for the town. If URBAN had attempted to be more holistic in its approach then the level of confusion and duplication with the other SRB scheme would have been a key issue of concern and the clear boundaries which existed between the two programme would have been lost.

It is interesting to note that many of the stakeholders stated that one of the critical success factors of the programme was that it did not try to be holistic or, as one stakeholder put it 'be all things to all men'. As picked up in the previous section, if the programme had attempted to deal with all three themes of the regeneration agenda then stakeholder perception suggests that it would have achieved less, mainly because resources would have been stretched further. The strategic stakeholders interviewed as part of this evaluation stated that even if the SRB programme had not existed, the URBAN programme would have probably still only been focused on the economic regeneration agenda.

## 6.0 Programme Management

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As stated previously, the URBAN programme was co-ordinated by Action Halifax, a company set up to manage both the URBAN and SRB programme. The decision not to deliver the URBAN programme through the Local Authority had a number of advantages:

- A perception of more freedom to respond to issues where key decisions did not have to go through Local Authority systems including relatively lengthy and complicated decision making processes.
- A perception of having more local control through an organisation which is responsible to a board mainly made of local organisations including local residents and businesses.

- Because of the above, a perception that the organisation (and its associated projects) had better links into the local communities in which it was trying to assist.

Whilst it is difficult to prove whether these perceived advantages had any bearing on the success of the programme, stakeholders all saw that the programme being delivered outside of the Local Authority was a key strength of its management arrangements.

Another key strength of the management was the Monitoring Committee and its relatively broad representation. The Committee consisted of 26 people, only six of whom were from the local authority, whilst nine were from the private sector, six from the community sector and four from the local voluntary sector. This wide ranging group of individuals ensured that discussions and decisions considered a range of viewpoints, including those of local residents and local business people (with the Chair being a local businessman). Connected to the Monitoring Committee were the different sub-groups which dealt with both the appraisal of projects as well as the different themes of the programme (enterprise support, employment development). Again these groups consisted of a broad range of stakeholders who ensured that different viewpoints were considered.

Linked to the above issue was the way the programme empowered the local community, with residents being at the heart of key decisions attached to the programme. This was particularly true for funding allocations and appraisal decisions with local people always sitting on either the appraisal or approval committees. These local residents received training on how to appraise projects and were often the ones who probed the most when it came to testing the integrity, need and usefulness of projects that aimed to support their neighbourhoods.

The monitoring systems set up by the programme manager were also seen as a key strength, although there were some issues concerning the quality of information dealing with the results and impacts of the programme (dealt with later in this section). Local organisations were trained to establish and run the systems which helped the overall programme to record all of the outputs and spend, reduce any double counting, create robust evidence and ensure no outputs were missed. The Programme Manager had a strong background in developing monitoring systems for area based programmes and also ensured that every organisation who received funding had training provided so that they knew what to expect. Audits of all projects also took place to ensure that systems and procedures were being properly adhered to.

It needs to be remembered that because many of the projects supported through the programme were run by the voluntary sector the need to provide clear guidance on monitoring was paramount. Many of these organisations had not delivered European funded projects previously meaning support on developing and implementing monitoring procedures was extremely important.

Although the monitoring systems attached to the programme were strong in relation to outputs it was relatively weak when it came to recording the impacts and results. Although impacts were recorded by the programme there was much less emphasis put on projects to assess the effects of URBAN beyond its outputs. When project managers taking part in the evaluation were pushed to

explain the impacts or results of their projects the responses tended to be vague. Thus a business support project was aware of how many businesses they supported, tended to be less aware of how many of those businesses actually started up or grew as a consequence of the support and where even less aware of how many people gained a job in the business or whether that business was still trading. Some project managers provided estimates of impacts and results but they were clear that there was no evidence to substantiate their claims. Much of the reasoning behind this came down to two issues. The first was that projects were not pressed to record results or impacts and secondly that projects would have had to do additional tracking work of their beneficiaries post the URBAN II support which almost all did not do (some employment projects did contact their beneficiaries after a six month period to see whether they were still in work).

The lack of information about the impacts of the programme is also evident in the overall end of term evaluation of Halifax's URBAN programme. The study dwells more on the outputs of the programme and the strengths/ weaknesses of the management systems as opposed to the effects of its activity. This is partly down to fact that the evaluation was done soon after the programme ended (when impacts have perhaps not had time to manifest themselves properly) but also because there was no real evidence of tracking issues connected with results and impacts.

## **7.0 Sustainability and Legacy**

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One area for consideration of any time limited regeneration programme is the level of sustainability and legacy which is left once core funding finishes.

At project level Halifax's URBAN II programme has been relatively successful in ensuring that its activities continue post funding. There are a range of examples of projects being mainstreamed where URBAN II funding has been replaced by other resources from mainstream organisations such as the Local Authority. These examples include:

- The continuation of the Community Health Trainers which recruited and trained local residents to act as peer health educators which is now funded by the Primary Care Trust
- The Town Centre Ambassadors which recruited unemployed people from across the URBAN area to provide on-street presents in Halifax is also continuing and is now being funded through the Local Authority.
- The Halifax Works project which trained unemployed people with skills specifically required by local businesses has been continued and is now being funded through three mainstream organisations (Yorkshire Forward, the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus).

Capital projects funded through the Programme have also left an obvious legacy on the neighbourhoods. The Elsie Whiteley Centre left a legacy in terms of a large incubator facility for local businesses, townscape enhancements funded through the programme continue to benefit visitors to the town centre whilst the various community and sports facilities built or improved will also benefit people well beyond the period of URBAN.

Programme Managers estimated that approximately 60% of projects funded through the programme have been sustained in some form or another. This is high and was put down to three key reasons:

- at the appraisal stages the project had to state how the activity was going to be continued post URBAN. Without a clear idea on this, project applications were marked down.
- a clear recognition among mainstream organisations that the URBAN funded projects had actually 'worked' and that there was a proven need for projects once URBAN funds ran out
- the tapering of URBAN funding throughout the projects life so that the URBAN contribution reduced as the project matured which placed an increased emphasis on mainstream budgets towards the end of the projects life.

However, despite success, it is worth remembering that 40% of projects were not sustained post URBAN II funding. Although some projects are one offs and come to natural conclusions, the key reasons for a difficulty in mainstreaming projects revolved around three key issues:

- as was stated earlier, because Halifax is located in a relatively prosperous area it did not, unlike many other URBAN target areas, receive a plethora of other area based regeneration funding. When URBAN and the accompanying SRB programme finished, there was no other funding pot to utilise in order to continue activity. Unless the project was supported through mainstream funds it generally had no alternative external funding to turn to.
- many of the projects supported by URBAN sought match funding from the related SRB programme so that a complete package of funding could be found. However, both SRB and URBAN funding finished virtually at the same time meaning projects that had relied on them for 100% of their funds found it hard to find a replacement over a short period.
- Because the programme channelled a lot of funding towards the voluntary and community sectors, the level of interest that mainstream organisation had in supporting projects post URBAN was sometimes limited. If more mainstream organisations had been delivering URBAN projects then more activity would have become mainstreamed.

At programme level, issues connected to legacy and sustainability are less clear. The structures, including the partnership still exist and Action Halifax who was responsible for co-ordinating the URBAN programme is still active. However, the impetus and drive behind these structures has been lost and the main purpose of their existence (to deliver and URBAN and SRB funded programme) has now gone. Although the Partnership still meets (to discuss the needs of the area and the work of the ex- URBAN projects which continued) the level of interest and membership has reduced. The staff complement of the organisation has also dropped from 12 to 6 over the last year. So although the programme structures have technically been sustained, their role and value has not continued to the same extent. Again the reason for this was the fact that Action Halifax could not, as one stakeholder stated, simply take charge of the 'next round of external funding coming in to the area.