Key Learnings
for empowering Connected Communities

Resourcing

It's important to have dedicated staff time to support this model of working and this should be a key factor in resource-planning at the start of a project. Co-ordinating roles are integral to supporting collaborative work and making sure to allocate time for this kind of work, or to recruit someone for this specific role, should ideally be part of place-based work.

Relationship mapping

Mapping out existing relationships at the start of and throughout place-based working can be a huge help. It builds a vital picture of key engagement opportunities and provides a helpful resource for evaluation and reflection on looking back on how relationships have developed over time through this model of working

Taking time

Place-based collaborative work takes time: time to build trust with those already working within communities, time to build collaborative ways of working, and time to deliver the intended change with local communities. It's important not to underestimate this and helpful to be realistic when setting out timescales.

Flexibility and Balance

Being flexible over intended outcomes, ways of working, and the extent of partner involvement is important. These elements of collaborative place-based working can change over time because of the context of each location and the different capacities of community groups and stakeholders involved.

Capacity-building

While community groups are often keen to build connections and deliver shared outcomes for their local area, not every group is confident or experienced in collaborative cluster-based working. Building collective capacity through developing skills and knowledge in this way of working can be an important step to empower groups to deliver sustainable methods of working best suited for their local area.

Evaluation and learning

Participatory learning and community reporting models are well-suited to place-based programmes and empower groups to be the leading voice in reflecting on outcomes and telling their stories. Embracing evaluation that explores less tangible but vital outcomes around community connections works just as well, if not better than, more traditional measures of success.