

PROPAGATING SUCCESS? THE INCREDIBLE EDIBLE MODEL

FINAL REPORT

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GLOSSARY

IE	Incredible Edible
IET	Incredible Edible Todmorden
SROI	Social Return on Investment
ToC	Theory of Change

FOREWORDS

Incredible Edible was a crazy dream that became a reality. An experiment born out of frustration and concern about our children's tomorrows that has created a platform where people of all ages cultures incomes and abilities can offer their gifts to build something kinder through food and the power of small actions.

Todmorden was the first community to come together to use the Incredible Edible model, to spin the three plates, over nine years ago and what an impact they have had.

This report captures some of that magic and generosity, but it also captures the very tangible economic and social impacts that grassroots movements like ours can deliver.

We now know the impact of Incredible Edible Todmorden. Now others outside our movement can share knowledge of this impact, and help play their part in shaping a kinder world.

Pam Warhurst CBE, Chair of Incredible Edible Ltd.

Small is beautiful.

It's a hard road to travel keeping your eyes both on the ground and on the journey ahead, and not be distracted by 'shiny big things'.

Incredible Edible Todmorden has undertaken to focus on voluntary actions, to stay free of outputs and outcomes, to manage our own dreams and goals using whoever and whatever comes our way.

We are working with the gifts people bring to us and the ever-increasing network of members who believe in the power of small actions.

We are travelling down an unmade road free of interference of state and bureaucracy.

As Pam said in her Ted Talk:

“There are so many things you can do, but ultimately this is about something really simple. Through an organic process, through an increasing recognition of the power of small actions we are starting at last to believe in ourselves again, and to believe in our capacity each and every one of us to build a different and kinder future.”

If this research helps good people to galvanise their skills and energy into being the change they want to see, bravo!

Mary Clear, Chair of Incredible Edible Todmorden Ltd.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This research project aimed to evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Incredible Edible (IE) model as applied in Todmorden and to assess its wider potential as a community-led framework for improving wellbeing.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Since 2007, Todmorden in West Yorkshire has been the focal point of IE, the pioneering social movement which uses local food to enrich communities. The IE model, as developed and applied in Todmorden, is based around a conceptual metaphor of three spinning plates – community, business and learning. Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET) – a community benefit society called IET Ltd. – has been instrumental in the development of two spin-off social enterprises, Incredible Farm and Incredible AquaGarden, which support entrepreneurial business development and education and training; and the IE Network and IE North, which operate under the auspices of Incredible Edible Ltd.

THE EVALUATIVE RESEARCH: AIMS, STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

The overarching aims of this study were:

- To evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of the IE model as it has been applied in Todmorden, in relation to community, learning and business ‘plates’.
- To assess the wider potential of the IE model as a community-led framework for improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

The study took a mixed-methods approach, including: Literature Review; Theory of Change Stakeholder Workshop and Refinement; Community Survey; Volunteer Survey; Semi-Structured One-to-One Interviews and Focus Groups; Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis.

FINDINGS

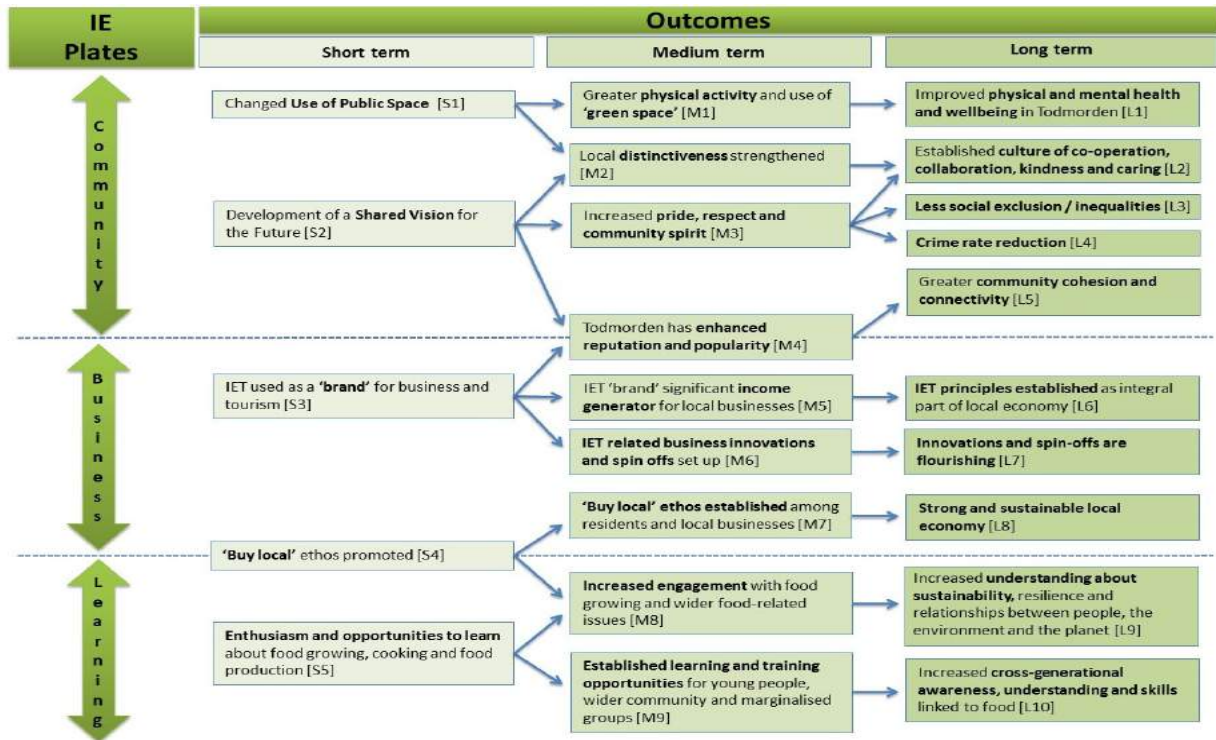
Origins and Development of IET

The study highlighted a number of themes related to the origins and development of IET:

- **Distinctiveness of Todmorden:** seen to be reflected in a cohesive and proactive culture.
- **Incredible Edible Model and Recruitment:** The IET ‘three spinning plates’ model offered a foundation for good local media relations, ensuring a high profile and attracting interest.
- **Visibility of Activities – Propaganda Gardening and Media:** IET established growing areas in public places. Proactive branding and use of wide-ranging media have enhanced visibility.
- **Impact and Expansion of Incredible Edible Todmorden:** IET and its spin-offs are seen by many as part of the town’s identity and IE initiatives are being established across the globe.

Theory of Change and Community, Business and Learning Outcomes

A stakeholder workshop was held to facilitate the co-production of a *Theory of Change* model, refined through wider consultation. The short- and medium-term outcomes identified in the ToC for the three spinning plates were evidenced in the research findings.



Community Perspectives

The *community survey* explored community perspectives and considered how IET has penetrated and influenced the wider population of Todmorden:

- **Awareness of IET and the Model:** Awareness of IET has increased and is now almost universal.
- **Community Engagement with Incredible Edible Todmorden:** Consuming food from IET growing areas is widespread among Todmorden residents and has increased markedly over time.
- **Community Engagement with Local Food:** Over half of Todmorden respondents stated that they purchase local food at least once a week.

Volunteer Perspectives

The *volunteer survey* explored demographics and nature and impact of involvement in IET:

- **Volunteer Demographic:** The volunteer profile is similar to that of Todmorden in terms of gender, age and socioeconomic status.
- **Nature of Involvement:** The mean annual number of volunteering hours was 59, increasing over time. Volunteers' length of involvement averaged 4.5 years.
- **Impact of Involvement:** The respondents overwhelmingly reported a positive relationship between their IET involvement and a range of health, wellbeing and knowledge accumulation factors.

Enablers, Challenges and Wider Development

Analysis of data from the *interviews*, *focus groups* and *surveys* revealed a number of key enablers:

- **Individual Personalities:** The inspirational and charismatic personalities of the individuals who founded IET were understood to be pivotal in catalysing the initiative and motivating engagement.
- **Culture of Proactivity:** The proactive culture that characterised early development was seen to have infused IET and to have been instrumental in facilitating its successful evolution and expansion.
- **‘Three Spinning Plates’ Model:** The IET model was understood to underpin its distinctiveness and success and to have been highly influential in guiding its evolution

Likewise, a number of challenges were highlighted:

- **Countering Resistance to Change:** The perceived division between ‘incomers’ and longer-term residents was seen to have resulted in some resistance to new ideas instigated by IET.
- **Securing Inclusivity and Reach:** There were some concerns about elitism and perceptions that IET has only a limited ‘reach’ into the community.
- **Overcoming Scepticism:** A few sceptical voices questioned the motivations of high-profile individuals.
- **Living up to Expectations:** The extensive positive media coverage has led in some instances to pressure for IET to live up to its reputation.
- **Retaining Community Cohesion:** There was concern that the success and distinctiveness of IET was contributing to gentrification.
- **Assuaging Fears and Misconceptions:** There were early fears about IET’s provision of free food threatening local market traders and retailers, but relationships have improved markedly over time.

The research also highlighted issues relating to conflict, tensions and innovation:

- **Creativity and Difference:** IET’s innovation has, to an extent, grown and thrived on difference – and creative tensions have gone hand-in-hand with inspirational and charismatic leadership.
- **Coherence of Incredible Edible:** Whilst there was some appreciation of the reasons for IE separating into separate entities this had created some confusion and was seen to undermine coherence.
- **Effective Partnership Working:** There were differing perspectives on how strongly or harmoniously it has worked with other community organisations.
- **Different Agendas:** There were also issues with sub-groups wanting to use IET for specific purposes and concern that this could jeopardise its wider role in relation to the local economy.

Whilst some felt that IET had helped to bring people together, the research findings also highlighted issues relating to the engagement of different demographics:

- **Engaging the Whole Community:** The engagement of teenagers, young adults, longer-term residents and marginalised sections of the community was seen to be a key challenge.
- **Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers:** The ongoing recruitment and retention of new volunteers was identified as important to the long-term sustainability of IET.
- **Forging Outward-Facing Links:** The importance of securing links to individuals and organisations in a position to have influence locally was also highlighted.

A number of issues emerged concerning the ‘reproducibility’ of IET:

- **Coherence and Self-Determination:** IE initiatives need to embrace core principles but be able to take control of their own identity and evolve within their particular contexts, using their specific assets.
- **Understanding the Challenges:** An appreciation of the challenges that an IE initiative is likely to face was seen to be invaluable in guiding its development and navigating pitfalls.
- **Thinking Big, Starting Small:** There was a suggestion that it can be helpful for IE groups to ‘start small’, linking incremental change to a bigger vision of what’s possible longer-term.
- **Learning from Others:** The IE Network was viewed as a key resource for learning and peer support.

Social Return on Investment

The SROI analysis showed a Net Social Return for IET activities in 2016 of £878,609, set against inputs totalling £159,512 – and concluded that for every £1 invested, largely through volunteer time and small financial contributions, £5.51 was returned to the Todmorden community. Of this return, 75% was attributable to the uplift in demand for local food, as evidenced by the community survey, and 9.4% was attributable to the increase in visitors to Todmorden. As the analysis adopted a cautious approach, excluding ToC outcomes that could not clearly be attributed to IET or for which proxies could not be robustly identified, in order to minimise the risk of over-claiming.

DISCUSSION

A number of core discussion themes emerged from the research:

- **Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts:** The views elicited across all data collection strands were overwhelmingly positive. IET has had a significant effect on the town, and awareness and active engagement have increased markedly over time. Whilst framed in terms of the three ‘spinning plates’ of community, business and learning, the ToC outcomes clearly addressed social, economic and environmental dimensions.
- **Organisational Evolution:** Two core axes characterise the difference in ethos between organisations in the IET institutional family: focus (internal/external) and resourcing (reliance on external funding/self-reliance). The research suggests that the organisational evolution of IET and resulting contrasting ‘missions’ of the different entities reflect individual motivations and philosophies of original core members of IET, influenced by contextual factors, opportunities and challenges. The divergence between internal/external focus and between self-reliance /external resource reliance also reflects deeper and wider distinctions in social and environmental movements.
- **Incredible Edible Todmorden – Relationship Between Initiative and Place:** Todmorden has largely welcomed IET’s establishment. IET has achieved extensive community engagement, resulting in upward trends in both produce-picking and wider local sourcing. Whilst the success of IET is in part a product of Todmorden as a particular place with a distinctive community, the research also shows that it has its roots in the vision, leadership and actions of dynamic, and persuasive individuals at a specific point in time. IET’s proactive ‘can do’ culture has broken down barriers, engendered hope and revitalised community – further enhancing the town’s distinctiveness and attractiveness. It has also influenced local policy (e.g. through the Neighbourhood and Local Plans) and catalysed conversations about local/national/global connections and empowered people to explore their relationship with their local environment.

- **Reproducibility:** Whilst other IE initiatives may be able to put in place some of the same enabling factors that IET has benefited from, IET's success – evidenced through impacts such as local distinctiveness, enhanced reputation and the IET 'brand' – has been due in part to its trailblazing nature and its creation and 'ownership' of the IE concept. The research raises the question 'how is the IE model understood and used by other groups?'. Does it constitute a prescriptive tool, an overarching brand or a philosophy and set of values? Whilst the former might offer more coherence to an emerging movement, the majority view emphasised 'bottom-up' approaches and highlighted the importance of IE projects being locally determined, harnessing their own assets, and responding to and enhancing local distinctiveness. The profile and impact of the wider IE movement is due in part to those individuals and places that have been inspired by and adopted the IE vision and model – and there are now multiple examples of excellent practice. However, its success also owes much to the inspirational example of the 'original' IE in Todmorden driven by IET Ltd. and the wider work of IE Ltd. through Incredible North and the IE Network.

CONCLUSION

- IET remains highly active and influential ten years on. This study has generated a wealth of insightful data pointing to IET's remarkable resilience and growing reach within and beyond Todmorden. The SROI revealed an impressive return on investment ratio of 1 to 5.1, profiling outcomes across all three 'spinning plates' and identifying the impact of IET on local food purchasing as particularly important.
- IE has resonated with Todmorden's residents and galvanising deep and sustained community action.
- IET has faced challenges, including resistance to change, scepticism and hostility stemming from negative perceptions and fears; and divergence and conflict threatening its cohesiveness.
- Alongside these challenges, it is important to identify and celebrate IET's success factors:
 - the 'three spinning plates model' of community, learning and business as a simple framework to involve, empower and enable joined-up action with demonstrable value
 - the leadership of charismatic, inspirational and entrepreneurial champions able to articulate the IET vision and engage people, ensuring the effective translation of idea to action
 - the facilitating nature of Todmorden's historical and (counter-) cultural context and distinctiveness, which in turn have been strengthened and enhanced by the actions of IET
 - a commitment to bottom-up and inclusive 'people power', not waiting for the leadership, permission and resources of government, but building a proactive 'can-do' volunteer culture
 - the use of food not only as the focus for growing, education and business development, but also as a unifying and inclusive common language and vehicle for local and global societal change
 - an appreciation of the value of 'visibility' to engender community-led action, demonstrated through the IET brand, effective use of media and 'commercially' viable activities
 - the creation of an effective and 'infectious' concept at a particular point in time, allowing IE to go 'viral' and catalyse national and worldwide movements that further spotlighted IET and the town
 - the use of 'propaganda gardening' to grow food in public spaces, thereby improving the town's appearance, raising awareness, catalysing conversations, encouraging people to re-evaluate their relationship to their environment, and stimulating broader re-appraisal in public policy discourse about the relationship between people and the public realm and what is 'normal' and 'possible'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PUBLIC POLICY	PRACTICE	RESEARCH
Public policy related bodies should:	IE and related initiatives should:	Researchers should:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ create enabling environments that enable self-starting community groups & peer-to-peer interaction within & between communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be responsive to their own particular context, valuing & utilising the IE ‘three spinning plates model’ as it relates to their own distinctive culture & assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ undertake a multi-site study to explore how the IE model has been understood & implemented in different contexts, & examine stories & impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ enable community initiatives to harness assets in the public realm, as growing areas & as spaces that promote distinctiveness & collective belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reaffirm commitment to bottom-up action, whilst appreciating the value of forging connections outwards to local democratic structures & policy-making bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ utilise innovative mixed-method designs that can capture social, economic & environmental outcomes of complex community-led initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ maximise potential for medium- & longer-term community impacts, acknowledging the complexity & unpredictability of holistic community action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consider developing their own ToC as a means of clarifying & achieving a consensus concerning their vision, aims, expectations & assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ seek to understand the links between contexts, mechanisms & outcomes, examining not only what works, but also for whom, in what contexts, & how & why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ value & support initiatives such as IE within the context of social prescribing & the growing evidence base concerning the horticulture, nature connectedness & wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consider engaging in evaluative research, appreciating the value for reflecting on progress, guiding future development & changing the perceptions of key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ engage diverse & hard-to-reach stakeholder groups & also seek to distil insight & learning not only from ‘success stories’, but also from conflicts, shortcomings & failures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ whilst being mindful of negative impacts, recognise that conflict, divergence & resistance can be assets for community action, kindling innovation & creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consider developing a consensus-based ToC as an evaluation framework & tool when focusing on IE & related community-based initiatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ appreciate the value of developing ‘media literacy’, recognising that communication & engagement can impact significantly on success & reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ advocate & seek funding for multi-disciplinary longitudinal studies, to understand the impact of complex community-led initiatives such as IET
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reflect on how local food-based activity can change people’s relationship to their environment, shift conceptions of the public realm, & connect to 21st century global challenges 	

1. INTRODUCTION

This research project aimed to evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Incredible Edible (IE) model as developed and applied in Todmorden and to assess its wider potential as a community-led framework for improving wellbeing. Whilst there is a strong perception that Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET) has achieved positive impacts, this has not been backed up with robust evaluative research evidence. This study therefore sought to build on previous research and to increase understanding of the wide-ranging impacts in a comprehensive and joined-up way – with a view to providing valuable learning and guiding future decisions and developments. The work was kindly funded by the Ashden Trust and the NISA Making a Difference Locally Fund. The authors are also grateful for the oversight and advice provided by Incredible Edible in Todmorden over the course of the study.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: INCREDIBLE EDIBLE TODMORDEN AND THE INCREDIBLE EDIBLE MOVEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Since 2007, Todmorden in West Yorkshire has been the focal point of the pioneering social movement called Incredible Edible (IE), which uses locally grown food as a way to enrich communities. IE Todmorden (IET) was founded by two charismatic local leaders, Pam Warhurst and Mary Clear, and is understood to have taken root through the efforts of residents who share a common concern about the decline of the town and the growing disconnect between people and their environment (Paull, 2011; Fairfax *et al*, 2012). In this sense, it emerged as a response to both the global challenges of climate change and food sustainability and the local economic and social challenges associated with post-industrial decline. Importantly, local food is viewed not only as a substantive focus in its own right: it is also used as a ‘universal language’ for engaging people and addressing the environmental, social and economic challenges faced by communities as a result of neglect by successive political administrations and the globalisation of the food system (Clarke, 2010; Dobson, 2014). Using the mantra ‘if you eat you’re in’, IET has used food and, particularly, access to healthy and sustainable local food, as a means to promote more inclusive community development, resilience-building and economic regeneration, through as a focus on bringing people together to work collectively for the future wellbeing of their communities and the wider world.

The approach taken in Todmorden appears also to be related to growing scepticism about the effectiveness of government policies, strategies and other top-down approaches. According to Fairfax *et al* (2012) “the seeds of IET took root in Clear and Warhurst’s frustration at the lack of leadership and action from government and industry not only on environmental issues but also on the future of the town.” IET is widely perceived to have played a key role in transforming the town both through economic uplift and by improving everyday living environments – a transformation said to be achieved largely without the help of existing democratic or private structures, instead brought about by self-starting volunteers living within the town (Warhurst & Dobson, 2014). In this sense, it emphasises the importance of endogenous activity (taking collective responsibility and

relying on grassroots action) rather than relying on exogenous assistance (seeking external funding and relying on outside expertise).

It has been argued that by combining small interventions that have a big impact, this approach represents a form of 'urban acupuncture'. This is perceived to have been influential in reclaiming ownership of the public realm; encouraging engagement with both local and global problems; challenging the thinking of local decision-makers; and strengthening a 'just do it' mind-set within the local community that contributes to both place-making and place-keeping (Dobson, 2014).

2.2 THE INCREDIBLE EDIBLE MODEL

The IE model, as developed and applied in Todmorden, is based around a conceptual metaphor of three 'spinning plates' (Paull, 2011; Warhurst & Dobson, 2014). Each plate represents one of the three core activities of Incredible Edible volunteers:

- **Community:** growing food in public spaces within the community that is free for people to take.
- **Business:** supporting local food-related enterprises.
- **Learning:** providing training and passing on skills.

Activities that tackle all three areas (either singularly or cumulatively) are said to maximise potential positive impact in accordance with the goals of IET:

“We think of these three elements as being like a spinning plate show. You’ve got the community plate, the learning plate and the business plate. If you can get one of them spinning, that’s pretty clever. Spin two and that’s impressive. But all three together – now that makes a show.” (Warhurst & Dobson, 2014, p.10)

The community plate has tended to receive the most attention, with the literature highlighting the significance of what has been termed 'propaganda gardening' in creating 'open source' food growing areas, changing people's relationship with their environment, and catalysing new 'conversations' (Fairfax *et al*, 2012).

In relation to the business plate, IET aspires to strengthen the local economy, creating a clear 'brand' that can be adopted by local businesses such as local food producers, market traders, cafés, and restaurants. A growing interest in the initiative has resulted in what has been labelled 'vegetable tourism', with over 1,000 people visiting Todmorden in 2014 alone to see IET and engage with its members and their ideas (Smales & Warhurst, 2016).

With regard to the learning plate, IET prioritised engagement with schools early on in its development. The local high school, in particular, became involved by using their grounds for growing, procuring more local food and incorporating food growing and cooking into the curriculum (Paull, 2013; Smales and Warhurst, 2016; Thompson, 2012). In 2010 IET received support to employ 'food inspirers' to work with schools and local farmers. Attention has also focused on adult and community-based education and training, with a particular emphasis on the development of cooking skills through regular cooking demonstrations in the community (Aird, 2010; Paull, 2013). Links to the business plate were formalised through local farmers teaching on the high school's BTEC syllabus in agriculture (Dobson, 2014).

2.3 INCREDIBLE EDIBLE STRUCTURE AND EVOLUTION

Table 1: Incredible Edible Institutional Evolution

Year	Organisation	Details
2007	Incredible Edible Todmorden	Community group first established.
2009	Incredible Edible Ltd.	Limited company established to facilitate funding and legal obligations of group.
2010	Incredible Farm	One acre mixed farm, established as an educational resource and to supply fresh produce to local business.
2012	Incredible Edible Network	Set up to support other IE groups. Established in partnership with the organisation Locality through funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation charitable trust, now managed by Incredible Edible Ltd.
2013	Incredible AquaGarden	An Aquaponics focused educational resource borne out of Incredible Edible Ltd. and officially launched in 2013.
2015	Incredible Edible Todmorden Ltd.	A registered society established to separate community activities from other IE initiatives.
2016	Incredible North	An initiative to develop capacity and link organisations across the North of England who share the IE ethos.

Sources: www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk; Companies House; Mutuals Public Register

The organisational manifestations of IET have evolved considerably since its inception (see Table 1). IET is now formally a community benefit society called **Incredible Edible Todmorden Ltd.** In addition, two spin-off social enterprises exist that were set up by founder members of the movement. The Incredible Farm and the Incredible AquaGarden provide educational resources for the community and support entrepreneurial business development and innovative approaches to education and training.

In order to build on the success and burgeoning interest in the IE model, the founders have looked to mechanisms to promote the wider uptake of the model. In 2012, IET was instrumental in establishing the Incredible Edible Network, an arms-length partnership with Locality, as a response to the ever-growing interest in its work and to provide support to the burgeoning number of IE groups being set up across the UK (now totalling in excess of 100) and internationally. It operates under the auspices of Incredible Edible Ltd. and aims to facilitate the exchange of information about food activism and community resilience, and promote the IE approach in local and national policy, practice and decision-making. The main requirements for an IE group to be registered as part of the Network are a commitment to the three plates (community, learning and business) accompanied by demonstrable action within their community.

A more recent development is Incredible North, an Incredible Edible Network project, that seeks to establish a new approach to health, wealth and happiness by using the IE model to build capacity across the north of England and connecting those with shared aims:

“From prisons to hospitals, community groups to local businesses – together we can redefine our local economies, invest in local jobs and enrich our local neighbourhoods.” (Warhurst, 2016)

2.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

A number of research studies have been conducted on IET since its inception. This section provides a brief overview of this literature including the methods used and the main findings. One of the first studies of IET was conducted by a postgraduate student at the Centre of Environmental Policy, Imperial College London in 2009. The author Charlotte Lee-Woolf aimed to enhance understanding of the contribution that community action makes to the sustainability agenda. She used an in-depth case study approach – including semi-structured interviews with 13 IET stakeholders (using purposive and snowball sampling); an interviewer-administered quantitative questionnaire survey conducted with 111 people identified (using convenience sampling); and interviews with 4 national-level policy stakeholders. Her analysis focused on the emergence and development of IET, the ‘three-plate’ model and specifically the role of social networks in enabling community action and developing collaborative partnerships. Her findings highlighted the following key points:

- The involvement of key actors with a particular combination of skills, interest and leadership qualities, was vital for facilitating community engagement and action.
- The ‘connectedness’ of the community and the strength of its social networks enabled an inclusive approach to IET’s development.
- The focus on food as a vehicle for collective action facilitated community capacity-building for wider change.
- Community action can result in social and economic benefits to the local food system, including improved access and affordability, cultural reconnection, skill / knowledge-building for civic involvement (Lee-Woolf, 2009).

In the same year, researcher Jennifer Aird reported on progress across the three plates, drawing on research funded through the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. A community survey of 63 members of the general public, conducted at the annual Todmorden show and Harvest festivals, revealed that 70% of respondents grew their own fruit or vegetables and that over 70% regularly purchasing food produced within 30 miles of Todmorden. A survey of 28 local businesses reported that 6 respondents felt IET had impacted on their business, with 4 reporting an increase in demand for local produce; and 2 shops reporting an increase in sales of seeds and plants. Little information was provided, however, about the methods used in the research. In terms of the learning plate, the report highlighted activity in schools, including food growing and local procurement; skills training; and the initial development of the Incredible AquaGarden (Aird, 2009).

In a 2011 case study publication, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment reflected that IET represents an innovative way to address both global and local environmental concerns whilst also generating improvements to public spaces, community participation, social

cohesion and civic pride. It concluded that IET will succeed if it can integrate local food production into the economic, social and political life of the town (CABE, 2011).

In 2012, Bethany Thompson, a student at Leeds Metropolitan University, published an evaluation-focused case study of IET, drawing on a street questionnaire, interviews and secondary data. She identified a number of achievements in the first 5 years of IET including: improved physical appearance through planned and maintained food growing areas; a high level of local awareness of the aims of IET (although less than half of those surveyed saw IET as clearly positive and only 10% had been directly involved in the initiative); wider awareness beyond Todmorden (evidenced by around 5,000 weekly hits on the IET website); increased 'tourism' associated with the initiative; and the establishment of IE projects throughout the UK and internationally (Thompson, 2012).

In 2013, the consultant Imelda Havers reported on the impact of IET largely drawing on results from a business survey. The key findings were: 67% of businesses report an increase in demand for locally produced food; 57% have seen an increase in publicity for their business through IE; 46% have seen a positive impact on sales; a local food cooperative has been set up to provide a shared space for local food; and the number of local cafes and food outlets has increased. The study provided little information on how the data were sourced, sampled or analysed, however (Havers, 2013).

In the same year, a University of Pisa student Leonello Trivelli also undertook research with the aim of evaluating the social, economic and environmental impacts of IET. He undertook the first two steps of a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study – establishing the scope of the research and undertaking a stakeholder analysis; and mapping outcomes informed by data collected through interviews, questionnaires and workshops. The research, however, did not cover the other aspects of the SROI methodology including assigning proxy values to the outcomes or calculate a SROI score. The survey results reported that:

- 97% of residents said that they buy more local food today compared to five years earlier
- 57% of residents had begun to grow their own food following the example of IET
- 70% of residents believed that the town is better known due to IET
- 60% of residents think that IET has increased community pride and made the town more attractive to visitors
- 31% of business owners believe that IET has contributed to an increased number of customers
- 50% of businesses who include IET point of sale information said that sales had increased (Trivelli, 2013).

In 2014, Jonathan Schifferes conducted research-focused workshops with stakeholders involved in IET and two other related initiatives based in York for a project commissioned by the Royal Society of the Arts. Among the findings were that the common outcomes understood to drive IE projects mirrored IET's three plates: community connections and leadership, local learning, and business intelligence (Schifferes 2014).

2.5 HOW THE EVALUATIVE RESEARCH STUDY CAME ABOUT

As highlighted in the previous section, although IET has been the focus of a number of research and evaluation projects (e.g. Lee-Woolf, 2009; Thompson, 2012; Trivelli, 2013), these have generally focused on particular elements of the work and impact, rather than exploring and seeking to understand the wide-ranging impacts in a comprehensive and joined-up way. As Schifferes (2014) noted, the bottom-up community-led approach that characterises IET tends to run counter to the continuing demand for evidence of demonstrable impact. Whilst there is a strong perception that IET has achieved positive impacts, this has not been backed up with a great deal of robust evaluative research evidence.

This research project was initiated by Pam Warhurst, Co-founder of IET who placed a call on the 'research wanted' section of the Food Research Collaboration website for researchers interested in evaluating the economic, social and environmental impacts of the IE model as applied in Todmorden. Members of the North West Sustainable Food Collaboration (SusFoodNW) responded and met with IE Ltd. to discuss the call. SusFoodNW is an academic research collaboration between the University of Central Lancashire, Manchester Metropolitan University, Salford University and Edge Hill University, which is committed to increasing the understanding of food sustainability and bringing together key stakeholders to generate knowledge and action that promotes sustainable, healthy and socially just food systems. Colleagues from Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Central Lancashire collaborated in writing and submitting a research proposal, which was successful in securing funding from the Ashden Trust and NISA Retail Ltd. (via IE Ltd.).

3. THE EVALUATION: AIMS, STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of evaluative research to enable learning and guide and enhance future practice through building a better understanding not only of whether a project/programme is working effectively to achieve what it's trying to achieve, but also of why and how.

The overarching aims of this study were:

- To evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of the IE model as it has been applied in Todmorden, in relation to community, learning and business 'plates'.
- To assess the wider potential of the IE model as a community-led framework for improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

The formal objectives were:

- To co-produce a 'theory of change' associated with the IE model and its intended outcomes.
- To prioritise a selection of indicators linked to community, learning and business outcomes and undertake a small-scale Social Return on Investment analysis.

- To examine the reach and influence of IE Todmorden in terms of awareness, understanding, engagement and participation.
- To explore the perceptions and perspectives of multiple stakeholders and increase understanding of IE Todmorden’s social, economic and environmental impacts.
- To develop and disseminate a practical evaluation framework for the benefit of IE Todmorden and other IE and related communities wanting to understand and measure their own development and impact.
- To identify recommendations for research, policy and practice.

A decision was taken to limit the scope of the research to the core elements of IET and therefore not include the spin off social enterprises (Incredible AquaGarden and Incredible Farm) or any other developments referred to in the previous section that are not focused on the town of Todmorden. This is in part due to resource constraints and in part a result of the aim of generating an evaluation framework that can be applicable to other IE groups.

3.2 GOVERNANCE

The research team established a Liaison and Oversight Group, comprising representatives from IE Ltd. and IET Ltd., in order to:

- Oversee the project and enable the two-way flow of information.
- Provide a key liaison function, facilitating access to relevant resources and contact with wider stakeholders.
- Participate in a ‘theory of change’ workshop to help frame and inform the evaluation.
- Offer guidance (where appropriate) in relation to reporting and dissemination of the findings.

Additionally, a Project Advisory Group was established to provide high-level strategic guidance where needed and specifically to help frame findings and recommendations in relation to national and regional policy contexts.

3.3 CONTEXT

Todmorden is a market town in the Upper Calder Valley, within Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council in West Yorkshire. Historically, the Lancashire-Yorkshire boundary ran through the centre of the town, but the 1888 Local Government Act shifted the boundary so that the town was located wholly in Yorkshire. In terms of present-day administration and governance, Todmorden Parish comprises Todmorden Ward and a small part of Calder Ward. Formerly a thriving textile centre, Todmorden is now increasingly a commuter town for people working in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield.

The 2011 UK census reported the population of Todmorden Parish as 15,481, of which 7,466 (48.2%) were male and 8,015 (51.8%) female (ONS, 2011a). As detailed in Box 1, demographic data for Todmorden Ward suggests that the population is less ethnically diverse, poorer, more deprived and has greater rates of ill health than national averages.

Box 1: The Todmorden Ward Context

- The age distribution of residents is broadly similar to the UK as a whole, with 18.7% being under 16 (compared with 19.0% for England) and 18.2% being 65 and over (compared with 17.5% for England) [2015 figures].
- Ethnic diversity is significantly less than average, with the Black and Minority Ethnic population representing 5.2% of the total (compared with 14.6% for England) whilst the 'non-white UK' population represents 8.2% of the total (compared with 20.2% for England) [2011 figures].
- The Index of Deprivation score is higher than the national average – 26.2 compared with 21.8 for England [2015 figures] – whilst overcrowded housing is lower (4.9% compared with 8.7%) [2011 figures], unemployment slightly higher (4.7% compared with 4.4%) [2011 figures] and primary school age eligibility for school meals higher (18.11% compared with 14.5%) [2016 figures].
- Life expectancy is lower than average at 78.0 years for men (compared with 79.5 for England) and 79.8 years for women (compared with 83.2 for England) [2012-14 figures]. In terms of general health, 6.9% of the Todmorden population are categorised as 'bad or very bad' (compared with 5.5% for England), whilst 21% of the Todmorden population had a limiting long-term or condition (compared with 17.6% for England) [2011 figures].
- Long-term unemployment was 6.76% in September 2015, which was almost double the national average (3.65%) and significantly higher than the Calderdale borough as a whole (4.98%).
- The proportion of 18 – 24 year olds receiving state benefits was estimated at 15.99%, which is over a third greater than the national average and also significantly higher than Calderdale as a whole (12.62%) [2012 figures].

Sources: ONS, 2011b; ONS, 2015a; ONS, 2015b; DCLG, 2015; DfE, 2016, CFFC 2016.

3.4 METHODS

Taking into account the breadth and complexity of the research focus and the importance of eliciting multiple theoretical and stakeholder perspectives on IE, the study was designed using a mixed-methods approach – employing a range of both qualitatively- and quantitatively-focused data collection and analysis techniques. These included:

- **Literature Review:** In order to contextualise the research, an initial literature review was undertaken, focusing on previous IE studies, both published and unpublished (see section 2.4).
- **Theory of Change Stakeholder Workshop and Refinement:** A workshop was held early in the research process with approximately 30 IET stakeholder participants (recruited via email and word-of-mouth). This aimed to inform and enable the co-production of a 'theory of change' (ToC), which both informed and was further refined by the parallel data collection processes outlined in this section as well as consultation with the Project Oversight Group. Broadly, a ToC is a schematic description of how an organisation or project works towards and achieves its intended impacts. It is usually developed 'backwards' by starting with the identification of long-term goals and presented diagrammatically as a flow chart showing the different steps and the links between them (Andersen, 2009; Taplin & Clark, 2012). As both a participatory process and a product, ToC is valuable in helping to clarify and secure consensus about what a project is seeking

to achieve in the short-, medium- and long-terms, and in examining and articulating the assumptions that are made about how change occurs. It is thus a useful planning, communication and evaluation tool. In addition, the ToC was developed to provide a reference for the Social Return on Investment study outlined below.

- **Community Survey:** Informed by the emergent ToC, a questionnaire (Appendix 1) was designed using a mixture of open and closed questions, focusing on mainly quantifiable data. In order to elicit as many responses as possible the survey was design to be completed quickly and with relatively little reflection if desired. A number of questions from the 2009 research study by Lee-Woolf were incorporated to provide a comparative element. Following piloting and refinement, this was initially made available using an online platform and supplemented by face-to-face ‘on the street’ engagement to ensure that the sample was representative. A total of 320 Todmorden residents completed the survey. The resulting data were analysed using simple statistical analysis as well as qualitatively drawing out key themes emerging from the open-ended questions.
- **Volunteer Survey:** A short survey was conducted with a sample of 28 IET volunteers, self-completed either online or using paper copies. In a similar manner to the community survey, the emphasis was on maximizing completion rates. The questions explored the nature and personal impact of involvement with IET using mainly closed questions in order to provide a quantifiable account of IET volunteer activities.
- **Semi-Structured One-to-One Interviews and Focus Groups:** A total of 24 one-to-one interviews and two focus groups were conducted with 32 stakeholders in total, selected using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. Initial one-to one interviews were held with 10 people centrally involved in IET and related activities and organisations. A further round of interviews was conducted, focusing on the three IE plates, with 6 people identified as representing the community ‘plate’, 4 people identified as representing the learning ‘plate’ and 4 people identified as representing the business ‘plate’. The interviews were all semi-structured, using narrative-pointed questions (Wengraf 2001), therefore encouraging participants to illustrate and expand on points raised in the interview by giving examples of specific incidents as they had experienced them. The interviews were supplemented by two focus groups: one with young people representing both community and learning ‘plates’ (three participants) and one with market stall owners representing the business plate (five participants). Likewise informed by the emergent ToC, the interview and focus group schedules (Appendix 2) were designed to explore stakeholders’ awareness, perceptions, experiences and perspectives on IET and its influence and impacts. By using a combination of one-to-one interviews and focus groups, it was possible to elicit both individual perspectives and insights informed by interaction (Wilkinson 2011). All interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed and data were subjected to a thematic analysis, cross-check and refining, to build understanding through a process of discovering themes within the raw data, and by interpreting their implications in relation to the aims of the evaluation (O’Leary 2004), using NVivo software. A range of secondary and tertiary themes were coded, which were grouped under primary themes of origins and development; community, business and learning outcomes; and enablers, challenges and wider development (Appendix 3). These appear in bold in Section 4 (Findings). Illustrative quotations are also included, with anonymous identifiers (Px).

- **Social Return on Investment Analysis:** A small-scale Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of IET's activities in 2016 was undertaken as part of the research in order to provide a 'monetised' meta-indicator of the impact of IE on the Todmorden population. SROI is a well-established approach that recognises that 'value' is much broader than that captured and communicated in financial terms (Nicholls *et al*, 2012). It provides a framework for measuring and accounting for social and environmental, as well as economic, costs and benefits. By estimating financial costs or 'proxies' for project inputs and outcomes, a monetary 'valuation' is achieved, allowing a return on investment to be calculated that takes account of the full value achieved. The importance of SROI thinking has been embedded in legislation through the 2013 Public Services (Social Value) Act, which requires people who commission public services to consider how they can secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits (Cabinet Office, 2016). In this study, the ToC was used as the basis for prioritising a selection of indicators linked to community, learning and business outcomes, and these were then used to frame the SROI. The SROI process also drew on the Volunteer Survey to help quantify inputs and impacts.

Ethical approval for the research study was granted by the relevant ethics committee at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Central Lancashire. Among the stipulations from this process were to ensure the secure storage of confidential data (using password-protected and/or encrypted folders); and to gain informed consent to use anonymised data collected during the research process.

4. FINDINGS

This section outlines the main findings from the research process, incorporating data from each methodological stage outlined above and beginning with a thematic account of the formation and evolution of IET. The data for this study was mainly gathered between June-December 2016 with some supplementary collection in early 2017.

4.1 INCREDIBLE EDIBLE TODMORDEN: ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

The interviews and focus groups, supplemented by comments received via the community survey, provided a qualitative account of the story of IET, offering insights into its origins and development. A number of themes emerged from the subsequent analysis, as detailed below.

Distinctiveness of Todmorden

As touched upon in the preceding sections, Todmorden has its own distinctive character rooted in history, geography and social and economic circumstances. The participants in this study described a perception of uniqueness and isolation that is both positive and negative. The positives can be characterised as **cohesive** qualities, borne from adversity:

[People in]...Todmorden...feel as though they're on the outside...they're on the edge of Calderdale, they're on the edge of Burnley, they're on the edge of Lancashire, and they do feel as though they're being sort of squeezed out of all of those areas...so they do feel on the periphery quite a bit. A long way from Halifax and, you know, where the decisions are made...

But it does mean that they have their own...town council, which is strong. They have their own groups, which are strong, you know, the market traders and, you know, they do stick up for themselves. So the sort of double-edged sword I think it is. (P15)

This need for the local community to represent itself was perceived as leading to a fertile situation in which people are encouraged to be **proactive** in the community:

We've always had a kind of 'get on and do it' attitude...where we're situated, we're at the far end of Calderdale, so we get left out or the money seems to only reach certain parts. So we very much sometimes feel that...we're a bit out on a limb. So that's why we take advantage of saying, 'right, well if they won't do it, we'll do it ourselves', which I think is a really good attitude to have. (P26)

The Incredible Edible Model and Recruitment

As outlined in the introduction, IET originated through the actions of two community members who developed the **model** based around the three aforementioned 'plates' of community, business and learning. These three plates were actioned in various ways, including a gardening group, cooking skills and encouraging local businesses to adopt the IET brand. This idea came about during one brainstorming session:

I literally thought, 'we've got to shift it...we've got to take personal responsibility'. It was obvious food was the one to do it with. It was obvious it couldn't be predicated on money, and it was obvious it needed to be a simple story. So that was why three plates was blindingly obvious...How can you not do three plates when you know the three aspects of sustainability? (P3)

The founder members of IET enlisted the help of a local newspaper to announce a community meeting as that week's front page lead which immediately gave IET a high-profile in the town. Approximately 60 people turned up to the initial meeting at which the IE model was proposed.

Roles were quickly **assigned** to individuals based on willingness and previous experience. For example, a member with an accountancy background was recruited to the finance sub-committee; those with cooking and farming experience were given appropriate practical roles. In some cases, roles were defined by what was needed:

I just picked up everything that nobody else wanted to do, and then I ended up getting stuck with it. So I am the [lists several responsibilities]. (P10)

A small number of core members began to collaborate on a more widespread campaign in the local area. Alongside this, several **links with local organisations** were developed and strengthened, and an IET community volunteer group was established. In particular strong links were forged with the fire and police stations, high school, health centre and several businesses within the town.

Visibility of Activities – Propaganda Gardening and Media

The formation of IET coincided with the emergence of low level instances of **guerrilla gardening** in the town, influenced by a growing global movement at the time. This action initially stemmed from an independent source of dissatisfaction with the way local environmental issues were being dealt with and a desire of residents to improve things, rather than being an explicit part of IET's initial actions:

It just made sense to stick the odd cherry tree on a bit of wasteland where nobody would notice it had just appeared...We'd got fed up waiting for the council to come and fix things, so we just decided we would come and fix them anyway. (P8)

Growing food in public spaces formally began with a community herb garden as part of a project with the 'Todmorden in Bloom' horticultural society. After the establishment of IET, public food growing activities quickly moved from what could have been perceived as random and opportunistic to a more structured approach in collaboration with public organisations in the town. Over a relatively short period of time, growing areas were established in a series of highly visible public places such as the police station, the health centre, and train station. A canal towpath was also employed along with a larger community garden known as Pollination Street, located on a piece of derelict land next to the town market. These were connected through a walking route now known as the 'Incredible Todmorden Way' and formerly called the 'Green Route'. Interview respondents regarded the development of these growing areas as part of a community movement aimed at transforming the town through what was termed '**propaganda gardening**'. Propaganda gardening was distinguished from guerrilla gardening as it is deliberately visible and concerned to make a political statement, provoke a response and catalyse discussion and debate.

Founder members quickly worked on developing **branding** in order to increase visibility in the town:

We could label up [the existing planting] and that could start the conversation immediately with the community...then you could lead on from that to start talking about this new thing that we had called Incredible Edible. (P8)

I'd seen the signs coming in to Todmorden, when you come in and you think, 'Incredible Edible, what's all that about?' I'd seen the signs go up and I didn't really twig what it was about. The next thing, [I asked myself] 'what's going on here?' (P13)

Whilst there was a general sense that high visibility had been achieved, some of those responding to the community survey part of this research suggested that the promotion of IET and dissemination of information about opportunities for involvement have not been successful in reaching the whole community. Comments included "I'm not sure how to get involved – I haven't seen anything advertised about getting involved or heard anything about it from the locals" and "I never know when the events are taking place."

IET's high visibility beyond Todmorden was been strengthened through its effective promotion on new **media** platforms, both nationally and globally:

IE have got good publicity, they know how to use social media well. They've got a good website. (P26)

Building on the early support of a local newspaper [see above], IET has been covered extensively via newspapers, radio and television, including a number of film documentaries. Additionally, its members proactively used social media including Facebook and Twitter, and aided by a popular TED talk *How We Can Eat Our Landscapes*.

Impact and Expansion of Incredible Edible Todmorden

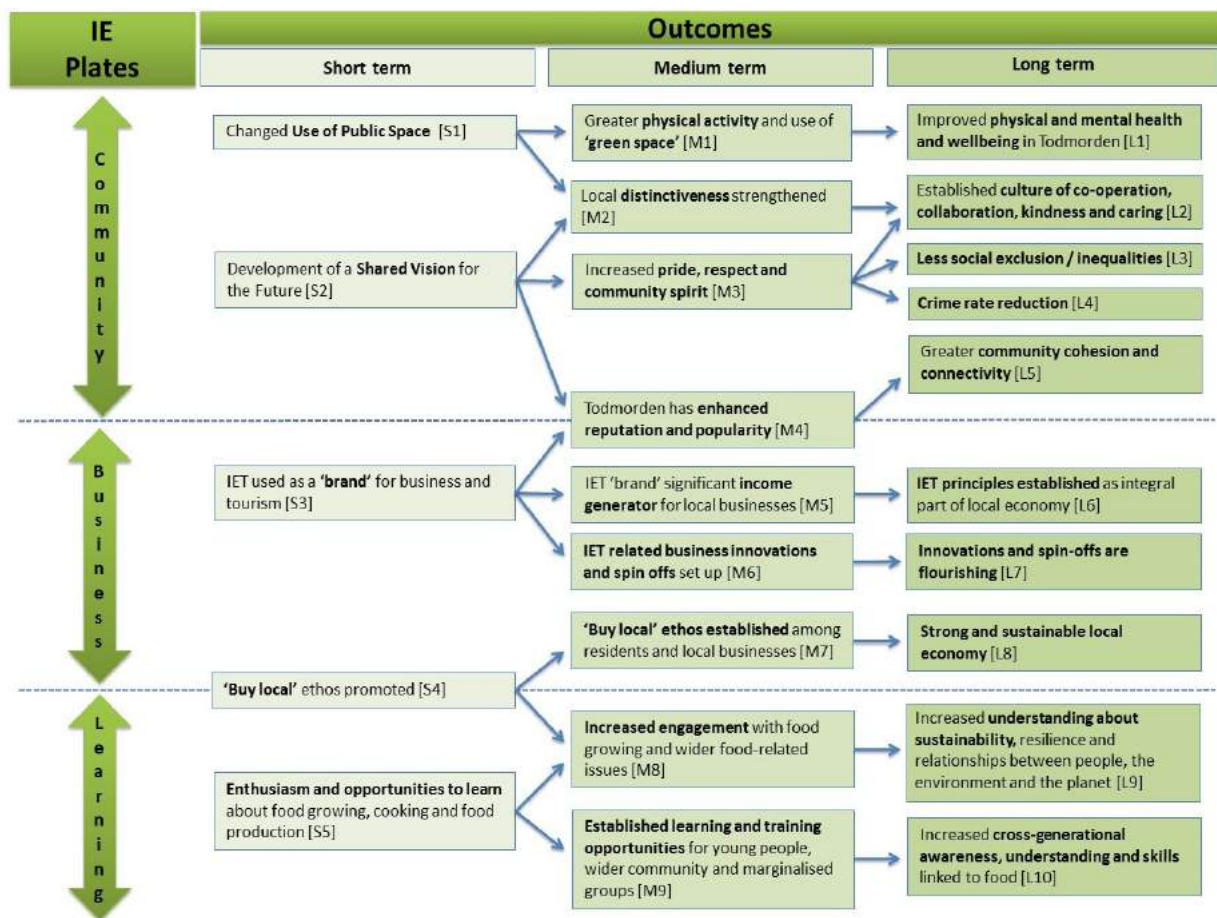
Over the course of several years, IET appears to have become more popular in the local community as more members became engaged and IET gained traction with local organisations and businesses.

The evolution of IET has been long-term and is still developing and expanding. IET is seen by many of those interviewed as part of the town’s identity, including the local spin-off enterprises Incredible Farm and Incredible AquaGarden. However, its direction of travel has not been welcomed by all. For example, a comment from the community survey reflected “I preferred the initial DIY guerrilla gardening aspect...[it] felt more radical than setting up social enterprises etc.”

As outlined in Section 1.3, the influence of IET spread rapidly, with IE and IE-related initiatives being established across the UK and the globe.

4.2 THEORY OF CHANGE

Figure 1: Incredible Edible Todmorden Theory of Change Model



As outlined above [see 3.4], an initial stakeholder workshop was held to facilitate the co-production of the ToC model (Figure 1). Given the complexity of the interactions and impacts associated with IET, the approach to developing the ToC grouped identified outcomes in a matrix based on the three 'plates' combined with three temporal scales (short-, medium- and long-term).

Although these categories generally proved conducive to identifying outcomes and relating them to each other, a clear consensus around their location in the matrix was not always achievable. This particularly applied to defining certain outcomes as Short, Medium or Long. During the workshop, participants were encouraged to consider these times scales as 1-3 years, 4-10 years and 10+ years respectively. In addition, some outcomes were considered as straddling plate definitions.

Throughout the ToC development process, the interconnected nature of all the outcomes was stressed and the trade-off between accuracy and conceptual clarity acknowledged. The final version followed a number of iterations and was informed by insights from the interviews and focus groups and consultation with the project oversight group. In considering the evolution of IET, stakeholders generally agreed that it is currently at the 'medium term' stage.

4.3 INCREDIBLE EDIBLE TODMORDEN: OUTCOMES

The IE model of the three 'spinning plates' (community, business and learning) clearly resonated with the local community and proved an effective focus for developing the ToC model and structuring further data collection. The IET short- and medium-term outcomes identified in the ToC were evidenced in the interviews and focus group data along with some comments from the community survey. Considering the three 'plates' in turn:

4.3.1 Community

Changed Use of Space/Public Realm

IET made an immediate and visible impact on the use of space in Todmorden:

[Many of the IET / propaganda gardening areas] in the town centre was built in the first two years...and over the last five years, [the IET Community Lead] has organised the rest... it all happened very quickly...just getting out there and getting it done. (P1)

They have subsequently maintained and developed these areas. The Pollination Street site has been used by local organisations (e.g. Three Valley Vegans) as a space to put on public events. IET has also contributed to the improved the appearance of the town in other ways such as facilitating public works of art. A number of examples were given of how the community had reclaimed unused or derelict outdoor spaces in a variety of different contexts:

They've put a big board up, 'Welcome To Our Town', great. It was, I don't know if you saw it before, the old Health Centre?...Derelict building, looked a total mess. Tidied it all up. (P13)

Alongside using space around schools for creating vegetable patches with children [see 4.3.3] and creating growing areas in public sites such as the police station, health centre, and train station, care homes also became involved:

People [are] going out and about and gardening [in] places like Fernley Lee old people's home...I think linking people with growing and...the veg patch there and I think maybe the elderly people went out more to have a look at it. (P15)

The focus on using the public realm differently was understood to have begun to change people's perception of their locality and relationship to their local environment, creating a greater sense of ownership and positivity:

That actually is the biggest thing because that sense of place that is positive, allows a shift in mindset in your relationship with the place. It just, that to me, is the most significant thing. (P3)

However, whilst the data suggests widespread support for IET in terms of its use of public space, there was also some negativity about its impact on the town's appearance. Comments from the community

survey included “I don't support making our town look scruffy and becoming a laughing stock” and “patches often look abandoned unless there's a competition or a Royal visit on the cards.”

Greater Physical Activity and Use of ‘Green Space’

Participants understood that physical activity was a benefit of horticultural work (especially of demanding activities such as weeding) and that encouraging this could be viewed as one of IET’s aims. There were suggestions that the community has become more active as a result of IET, particularly through volunteering:

Improved physical and mental health wellbeing for Todmorden, I think so, people feel better. If you get people out doing a little bit of exercise, a bit of walking, a bit of digging, great, why not? (P13)

Even without volunteering and participating in IET directly, there were other ways to affect physical activity rates: for example, the ‘Incredible Todmorden Way’ (also referred to as the Green Route) offers a walking route, which residents and visitors can take as part of the IET tour, be directed to from the tourist office or simply follow the signposts using their own initiative:

The minute you come into the town on the train, you’ve hit the green route, a walking group to walk round the town, health benefits there. (P13)

Development of a Shared Vision for the Future

The notion that IET had brought people together for the shared purpose of improving the local community permeated both the one-to-one interviews and focus groups. The stories were filled with a sense of confidence and creativity and highlighted the importance of vision and innovation:

People coming together and thinking, “OK, we need to raise money for something or we need to change something or we need to create something”, people are coming together and thinking outside the box, in a way that they haven’t done before, and with a lot of really nice...things popping up all the time that are very alternative. So I think it’s inspired people to be themselves and come together in whatever form they want to (P2)

Likewise, the community survey data highlighted how IET was understood to have helped to build a shared sense of purpose and togetherness – “it grows kindness and sharing and makes us feel like we are in a great place to live”. IET uses food not only as a focus in its own right and as a means to bring people together to focus on community concerns, but also used it as a vehicle to convey wider messages about sustainability, to engage people in discussions about key challenges facing the planet and to encourage an ethos of ‘think global, act local’:

Looking at air miles, looking at packaging, you know, looking at environment pollutions, fossil fuels, factories, all that sort of stuff – it’s so important to our future, to start to think about our food...It’s a communication tool, it’s a ‘breakdown barriers’ tool, it’s a lovely thing we share for fun and for love. But it’s massively important to our future health and wellbeing of ourselves...[and] the planet. (P2)

Local Distinctiveness Strengthened

It was apparent from the interviews that Todmorden's reputation linked to IE is about more than food growing. An explicitly-stated IET ethos of kindness was illustrated in examples of activities given by participants:

Kindness can be delivered in all sorts of ways but Incredible Edible [is] a demonstration of moving from a rhetoric to the practical application of cooking for people, sharing with people, doing stuff...Incredible Edible has a potential to respond positively to that, you know. (P3)

This IET culture is understood to have enhanced local distinctiveness and to have contributed to change in the town, in turn is altering attitudes of other members of the community:

I didn't move to Todmorden because of it, but now that I'm here it's like, this makes sense why I would live in this town...because this is a town where this happens...there's a lot of northern towns...in England, where there isn't anything like this. And the High Street's really...deadly boring and...samey. And then suddenly, you come to...Hebden Bridge and Todmorden and there's this, there's this wonderful community, there's people who are really trying to make a better world, you know, their little corner at a time. (P27)

Increased Pride, Respect and Community Spirit

The community survey suggested that many people feel proud to be associated with IET and its achievements, revealed through comments such as "IET has brought a new sense of community and pride to Tod" and "I believe it gives the town a feel good community air." Likewise, those interviewed made reference to the pride of place that IET had generated at a time when the town was in decline:

I think it rekindled a sense of pride in a number of people who felt disgruntled that Tod was only going to keep going down. (P2)

One of the less visible impacts of IET was that it has developed **connections** in the **community** which may not have originally been envisaged. For example, parts of Todmorden were flooded recently in 2012 and again in 2015. IET's influence in the town enabled it to aid victims of the flooding by providing food and assistance. These recent challenges have seen the community uniting to help one another:

That's what it's about, resilience. The floods were... a gift to us, because we're a natural group that can respond. We've got communication systems, we've got devoted people, passionate community...so it's great. (P9)

Alongside increased pride in improving the appearance of the town was a perceived **reduction in vandalism**:

The crime rates for criminal damage came down. Whether you can attribute it all to IE I don't know, but...what you can attribute it to, is that there was, like, an ownership. So this is our town and this is our police station and we're not going to smash it up, we're going to take ownership of it. And if you walk round, it's not just at the police station, at the railway station, the community college, the fire station, at the health centre...it's all around the town...If you live here, look after it, treat it right, treat it with respect and be part of it...And yes...crime did go down. I think [IET] helped, I think it played a contributory factor in that. (P13)

Todmorden in Bloom, which exists alongside but began prior to IET, had several incidents of vandalism in the early days of the project, but IET has not, to date been affected by similar incidents.

Todmorden has Enhanced Reputation and Popularity

Community survey respondents commented that IET is “an amazing project that has transformed Tod for the better, both visually and socially,” whilst interview participants noticed an improved perception of the town from others – a shift in how Todmorden is perceived as a result of IET which has in turn improved residents’ perception of the town:

I think that we are a town that has its positiv[ity] reflected back to it is more significant...and people may not know why that’s happened but there is now a difference...people comment a lot about how they’re all over the place and people have heard of Tod when they hadn’t before. (P3)

4.3.2 Business

Incredible Edible Todmorden Used as a ‘Brand’ for Business and Tourism

IET was recognised by interview respondents as supporting local producers and having a visible presence, demonstrated by signs in the market and by the increased amount of locally-sourced food appearing on menus of local cafes and restaurants:

In the indoor market, there’s the local produce signs, which...was an Incredible Edible initiative...about saying exactly where things are sourced and that. I know, I’ve eaten a few times at [a local restaurant]...it’s fabulous, it’s really, really good. And I know they try and source as much as possible locally. And last time I ate there the starter was called, Incredible Garden...and all of the salad stuff was all, came from the AquaGarden. (P22)

Key IET personnel are regularly called upon to give guest talks elsewhere in the UK and internationally and there has also been a noticeable increase in ‘vegetable tourism’ due to the lure of IET, with the visitor centre reporting that IET is the most frequent attraction for international visitors and second only to hiking for British visitors:

Most of the foreign visitors who came into the information centre, they spoke very little English, the only two words that they seemed to know are ‘IE’, how famous!...They’re coming here, specifically in some cases, because they’ve heard about IE and they want to see the sign. And a lot of them have then come back on repeat visits to see what else is happening in the town, and they seem to go away pretty pleased. (P26)

Todmorden has Enhanced Reputation and Popularity

IET is widely regarded as being a positive influence for the town, as one survey respondent put it, it has been “fantastic for putting Todmorden on the map.” The media presence generated means that it has attracted a global audience to Todmorden. Respondents frequently referred to the ‘vegetable tourists’ and others who visit the town in order to experience or learn more about IE:

I think IE has done amazing things to put Todmorden on the map. Suddenly...it’s a place, where some things happen. It’s a destination town, people go to Todmorden to see a thing, to see an event...to walk around and see how IE do it. (P27)

The interviews and focus groups suggested that IET has enhanced the desirability of the town, a perception that was to some extent supported by the community survey, with respondents commenting “the community aspect of IE was a factor in deciding to move here” and “I’m now looking for a property in Tod because of IE.” IET features on estate agents’ websites and

Todmorden's increased desirability has had a knock-on effect of increasing property prices and allowing more local businesses to develop. The increasing visibility of IET and the use of locally-grown and sourced food produce in shops, cafés and restaurants has coincided with these increasing sources of income in the town:

The population's changing, it's slap bang in the middle of Manchester and Leeds, so we're getting all the commuter people...[As] it's slightly cheaper housing...you get people that want to live in Hebden Bridge [a popular local town] come to Todmorden. So the town's improving and shops are opening I think, including food businesses and pubs. So in general, it is improving and IE does help that...the population that's coming in, they've got money to spend and things, even though they're working outside of town. (P24)

Whilst it is acknowledged that there may be a certain degree of myth-making that goes with the enhanced reputation, this does not affect the very real impact it has economically:

It's got a kind of subculture community good place, 'the good life place'. Whether it's true or not, it's good for the town, it's good for business, it's good for property, definitely. (P9)

Incredible Edible Todmorden 'Brand' as a Significant Income Generator for Local Businesses

Although some community survey respondents suggested that more could be done to involve a range of local businesses, when interviewed, local producers spoke of the advantages to being associated with the IET brand in terms of marketing their products:

Joining IE does help us to a certain degree because we're standing out as being a local producer... I think they are buying it from the market because they do tours for tourists. And [IET tour organisers] do stop off in the market and they want to buy something local and there's not very much available, so they buy [our product]. (P24)

However, the data also suggested some historical tensions between the market and IET [see 4.6.2].

Incredible Edible Todmorden Related Business Innovations and Spin-Offs Set Up

The two main business organisations referred to by respondents were the spin-offs Incredible AquaGarden and the Incredible Farm. As social enterprises both require income to maintain their operations. To this end, the Farm sells produce in addition to receiving some grant income:

We sell half a ton of salad...it goes to restaurants and we package it for retail...it's eleven and a half months, or ten and a half months of the year, with the salad and mustards and stuff. So we get more or less continuous production. (P1)

For the AquaGarden, where learning is their prime activity, they have taken on a dedicated member of staff to address funding issues:

We had to find alternative mechanisms because chasing grant funding is not sustainable...We put a business plan together and got some funding from Power to Change [who] allowed us to put in place a business development manager, so some collateral investments that were badly needed, the original [funding] didn't allow us to do...and we are now looking at selling modules around...three different types of urban growing. (P3)

Crucially, both spin-offs are trying to stay focused on the local community:

We're interested in top-slicing whatever we earn...so that we can help people, who can't afford to pay...for a course, to do it. Just trying to, all the time, recycle it back...we were created for local people...this is what needs to be replicable, this localism stuff. (P3)

'Buy local' Ethos Promoted

With motivations related to carbon reduction, animal welfare and broader sustainability and resilience concerns, IET has increased awareness of the value of buying locally-sourced produce:

I think there's definitely been a positive impact on the thing about local food, the understanding of the importance of it. (P7)

One respondent was of the opinion that, culturally, this was already present in Todmorden. However, the perception was that this has further enhanced by IET:

They've made people aware...it's always been there but because of IE, they're more aware. (P29)

'Buy local' Ethos Established Among Residents and Local Businesses

Interviewees suggested that this raised awareness has been translated into practical action – identifying an upward trend in Todmorden towards the purchase of locally-sourced foods, which was seen to be in part attributable to IET:

I think it's...made people aware of buy local, very much so, you know, and we're lucky that we've got a cheese man that lives just down the road. So we promote him...and yes, it's made people aware that they're better off buying 'what you know'...'I think that's certainly, one thing that's come from [IET].

This has manifested itself in customers wanting more provenance over the food they are buying in the market, and it has become more of a cultural norm for traders to be asked about the origins of the produce they are selling:

They want to know where it's come from and, you know, where we get it, how we do it, how it's looked after...it's always been there but because of IE, they're more aware. (P28)

Alongside this optimism, the community survey highlighted challenges and constraints in making 'buy local' a reality. Whilst some expressed enthusiasm for the idea, respondents also commented that "it's not always possible" and "I can't afford it." Alongside this, some questioned the 'buy local' message, with one respondent suggesting that its simplicity does not take full account of the complexity of sustainability and the carbon foot-printing of foodstuffs.

4.3.3 Learning

'Buy local' Ethos Promoted

As outlined in the previous section, IET is perceived to have had an influence in raising awareness of the importance of purchasing locally sourced produce in relation to both sustainability and resilience.

Enthusiasm and Opportunities to Learn about Food Growing, Cooking and Food Production

IET developed as a mixture of keen food growers and those with no experience whatsoever:

I became interested in growing food as a result of Incredible Edible, having never grown any food in my entire life. (P11)

In order to promote community learning, IET members have placed signs around growing areas and along the Incredible Todmorden Way. This information includes the types of food being grown and when it is ready to pick along with more general information about growing, pollination and other information connected with the IE model such as the importance of supporting local businesses. These signs are intended to serve as an initial point of contact to draw the community in and enable informal learning. Whilst viewed as effective by many, a number of community survey responses suggested that this information and learning is not reaching everyone or achieving clarity – with people commenting “I am unable to identify things” and “I'm not sure when things are ready to be picked and I wasn't fully aware that anybody could pick them.”

Increased Engagement with Food Growing and Wider Food-Related Issues

Achieving cultural change and a shift of ‘mindset’ in the local community – to get people to think about food and their relationship to their environment differently – is evidently a slow process. However, people have begun to observe such transitions in the local community, and one of the main drivers to this is seen to be an understanding that fresh food is healthy and inexpensive:

So many people go to the doctors with so many illnesses that food plays a huge role in remedying or exacerbating. And so many doctors overlook that and prescribe. And so there's a huge need for people at the moment...who wrongly interpret buying and cooking food as troublesome and expensive, and, as a result, buy a lot of pre-prepared and processed food. The negative effect on their health and their children's future health is massive. So food's essential from that point of view. (P2)

As well as highlighting positive examples of community members engaging with IET and picking the produce, the survey revealed reticence on the part of some respondents to pick and eat the food. Fear of contamination arising from the growing beds being close to roads was a particular concern: “[I wouldn't pick the plants] due to high pollution from traffic being absorbed by fruit and vegetables growing in such a polluted location;” “have the plants ever been measured for toxicity?;” “I see people using the beds as public toilets.” For others, the reluctance arose from a sense that they were not really entitled to the food, or that others had a greater need: “I enjoy watching them grow but it would feel wrong to take them”; “I leave them for people who may need them more than me;” “the person who has been tending them carefully should have them.”

IET appears to have impacted most strongly on young children, developing interest in growing and gardening and raising knowledge about where food comes from and about nature and the environment:

It's about sort of making people conscious of where the food comes from. I mean we've had lovely situations in here, where I've had a child one day trying to do this with a cucumber, he'd picked for ages, you know. He's standing here...he's about four. I said, ‘what are you trying to do?’ He said, ‘I can't get the plastic off’. He'd never seen a cucumber that wasn't vacuum packed, which is totally understandable. And I went, ‘there's no need because there's none’...It's that initial thing of just sort of getting people to connect with your food right at the source of where it's growing. (P2)

The visibility of food growing in the town has led to a shift in local children's regard for food growing, which has been normalised as part of everyday life:

I mean here, just children walking past those beds in the street going to school, are learning without realising it every day, because they're seeing vegetables growing in the dirt. Because when we first started, [the] little kids didn't understand that vegetables came out of the dirt. (P10)

My son [now] knows how to grow food and my son has an expectation that one grows food if you have a garden or a green space, that's just what you do (P11).

Whilst those interviewed recognised that children are more malleable and tend to learn more easily than adults, they highlighted the importance of adults learning in a variety of ways, for example about their local community assets:

More and more people are thinking, actually, I've lived here a long time or I've lived here all my life and I never realised just what's going on in the town, and I think it's educating people. (P26)

Although many key IET personnel were focused on local issues, some tried to link this to developing the community's world-view and achieving a greater understanding of and engagement with macro-level issues of sustainability and resilience, particularly relating food and the environment:

That is very much where something like IE will come in... we have a wonderful ... natural environment here, and we want to have a...sustainable future around, things like our air quality is an issue, our transport is a problem, and our rates of obesity and...health and wellbeing. (P14)

With regard to resilience, many respondents were positive about being involved, but there was also a vein of scepticism about the rhetoric of self-sufficiency among some members of the community. For example, community survey respondents commented: "I do not think local self-sufficiency is feasible, I do not hark back to a lost rural idyll"; and "I'm sceptical about the whole 'self-sufficiency' aim which is neither practical nor necessarily environmentally responsible."

Some participants suggested that IET has changed perceptions about buying locally sourced food, particularly among volunteers, and it also enabled individuals who were already aware of such issues but felt disempowered to take action, by taking small steps within their own community:

I find climate change and all of that...huge...issues that you feel, individually, quite powerless about...We know that there are things we can all do about energy saving and stuff, but you need somehow to get some 'glue' and get people to [believe they can make a difference]...This 'small action thing' appealed to me. (P7)

There are also people who have been using IET as a means of spreading awareness of veganism and its health benefits. IET events are used as opportunities to let volunteers and community members sample vegan food:

When we did a bit of gardening and that...having that vegan lunch afterwards, and the range of people that are there who are eating...that's that short-term educational drip, drip, and we actually do eat more vegan food as a result of that. (P22)

Established Learning and Training Opportunities for Young People, Wider Community and Marginalised Groups

A growing enthusiasm for learning about food combined with the informal educational opportunities created through propaganda planting provided a foundation for developing further learning activities that connect growing with cooking:

I think food is very much, yes, the base of everything...we give out recipes whenever we can and...encourage people to think about cooking, rather than...buying ready meals. And to show them that you can grow things quite simply, even if you've not got a lot of space, and you can actually eat what you grow. And, you know, just do it cheaply and easily...we've kind of missed those through generations, where...they weren't being taught to cook in school like they were in the good old days and...everything else...discouraged people from cooking, basically. (P21)

Linking with local organisations has been a key means by which IET has consolidated this learning focus and enabled community engagement, and cooking classes have been organised in several key local **community settings**:

When IE started to grow, then there was a clear realisation that a lot of people didn't know what to do with raw materials and didn't recognise some vegetables. So alongside the growing went some classes in preparation. (P4)

Schools were an obvious means to reach young people and at the same time offered access to outdoor space for food growing. This has changed the appearance of their grounds as well as influencing how they teach about food:

There's a lot more 'hands on' with the schools than there's ever been before. It was fantastic seeing the veg patches coming up in the junior school and high school, really good.... they had loads of planters in their playgrounds, which was great, made out of old tyres and stuff...really super. (P15)

This focus has been strengthened and developed through integrative **intergenerational** work, encouraging parents to learn alongside their children:

Bringing families together for cooking classes at high school...that's great...across the generations and getting children to think about food. (P15)

IET has also reached the community through funded work with the Children's Centre, although this had been discontinued. More recently, IET has worked with families in disadvantaged local areas to encourage healthier eating outside of term-time at schools:

Over the summer holiday, they've been doing this kids eat free...Where [IET has] been working in one of the...more impoverished areas in Todmorden. And they were just basically, putting a stall out and cooking at lunchtime and the kids could just come along and eat. It's that whole issue of children in the summer holidays, if they're not getting a free school meal. (P15)

Whilst not the focus of this evaluative research study, the IET **spin-off** social enterprises are perceived to have been a valuable asset in terms of learning. A number of those interviewed understood the **Incredible AquaGarden** to be the core IET learning centre in the community:

The AquaGarden...to all intents and purposes is delivering the learning plate in the model...in practical terms, [Incredible AquaGarden are] doing that, either with the possibility of upskilling

around urban farming or the work that [the] ‘food inspirer’ does going out into communities and doing that wrap around family stuff. (P3)

This quote refers to ‘**food inspirers**’ hired by the Incredible AquaGarden on fixed-term and part-time contracts, funded by third party sources. Their role has been to increase awareness of the connection between growing, cooking and wellbeing, and increase interest in growing and cooking local food, through setting up and delivering events, workshops and courses in local schools, businesses, services and community settings:

The food inspirers did great things. I mean the way that IET has developed has meant, effectively, that some of the core work that defines IE has actually been done by the satellite, you know, by [AquaGarden] or the Farm. (P7)

The AquaGarden has been used extensively to bring in groups of children from local schools, with an explicitly educative focus:

All our children, right from reception through to year six, accessed at least one, if not two, lessons down at the Aquaponics Centre, and again, that was woven into the curriculum. So it has really enhanced learning for children because, obviously, it’s hands on and it’s there in their community. (P23)

Children’s parties have also visited the **Incredible Farm**, and the visceral experience appears in some cases to have had a profound effect. The learning experience has been markedly different, being informal as opposed to didactic, an approach that works well with children who might not respond positively to more traditional methods:

[The children] scream at these animals or get excited by them...You get all these bored kids going in there... and you get them to eat something and they just go all sparky and alive, and that’s all you need...We get a new person organising school trips and they want to develop curriculum and have a plan. And I just say, ‘you don’t need any of that. That’s all going to go by the wayside, you’re wasting your time’...We get them in, we show them the poly tunnels, we’ll talk to them again, taste something, and that will fire them up. And that’s more than enough and it just wows them. (P1)

4.4 COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

This section presents the results from the community survey and where possible compares them with the 2009 survey results conducted by Charlotte Lee-Woolf. All the data presented are percentage figures unless stated otherwise. The tables below summarises the sample characteristics and compare them with corresponding data from the 2009 survey and 2011 population census. In both cases the demographics are broadly similar with males and over 65s slightly under represented.

Table 2: Community Survey – Sample Comparison

	2016 Propagating Success	2009 Imperial College
Sample Size [number]	320	111
Gender		
Male	38	43
Female	62	57
Age Group		
18-24	6	8
25-34	13	11
35-44	27	15
45-54	21	24
55-64	19	26
65+	13	15
Todmorden Residency		
0-10 years	33	36
More than 10 years	67	64

Table 3: Community Survey – Sample versus Population Comparison

	2016 Propagating Success	2011 Census Data for Todmoden Parish
Size [number]	320	15,481
Gender		
Male	38	48
Female	62	52
Age Group		
18-24	6	9
25-44	40	33
45-64	40	37
65+	13	21
Tenancy Status		
Owned Outright	34	32
Mortgage	30	35
Private Rent	23	19
Social Rent	11	14

Note: Tenancy figures from census based on percentage of total households. The community survey may have sampled more than one person per household.

4.4.1 Awareness of Incredible Edible and the Model

Are you aware of Incredible Edible in Todmorden?

	2016	2009	change in % 2009-2016
Yes	97.5	89	+8.5
No	2.5	11	

Awareness of Incredible Edible in Todmorden is almost universal, with only 8 individuals stating no knowledge of the initiative.

What do you understand its aims to be?

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Increase the amount of food grown locally	31.3	13.0	73.9
Raise awareness of how to grow food	14.7	16.9	70.1
Strengthen community relationships	12.8	15.8	64.5
Encourage people to eat more fruit and veg	11.4	15.3	61.6
Change the appearance of the town	4.3	16.1	56.9
Reduce the environmental impact of food	8.5	14.2	55.0
Become self-sufficient	17.1	8.7	45.5

Of the available categories, 'increasing the amount of food grown locally' was by far most frequently identified as the primary aim with nearly twice as many people citing this as the second most popular reason ('become self-sufficient'). The prevalence of becoming self-sufficient is noteworthy as this is not a formal aim of the group, although it was an aspirational goal earlier on in the groups existence (Graff, 2011).

What do you understand its aims to be? Longitudinal comparison

The table below compares the proportion of respondents who indicated the respective aims (either as a primary or secondary reason) in 2009 and 2016

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
Increase the amount of food grown locally	68.6	73.9	+ 5.3
Raise awareness of how to grow food	11.2	70.1	+ 58.9
Strengthen community relationships	19.6	64.5	+ 44.9
Encourage people to eat more fruit and veg	16.2	61.6	+ 45.4
Change the appearance of the town	2.1	56.9	+ 54.8
Reduce the environmental impact of food	5.4	55.0	+ 49.6
Become self-sufficient	11.2	45.5	+ 34.3

Understanding of the breadth of aims of IET appear to have broadened significantly since the 2009 study, moving beyond equating the initiative solely with local food growing (although it should be noted that differences in the way the respective surveys were conducted, and in particular the prompts given, may influence these figures).

4.4.2 Community Engagement with Incredible Edible Todmorden

Do you pick plants from the edible growing beds/orchards in the town centre?

	2016	2009	% change 2009-2016
Yes	44	16	+ 28%
No	56	84	

The survey indicates that picking plants from growing areas is widespread among the general population with 44% of people responding positively to this question. Moreover, this has increased significantly compared to the 2009 study when only 16% of those asked said they picked plants grown by IET.

If you answered 'Yes', which of these reasons apply?

	Most Frequent Reason	Other Reason	Total
To take home and use as flavouring or a garnish	61.4	17.9	79.3
To take home and use as a main ingredient	26.4	25.0	51.4
To nibble on as you pass	28.6	14.3	42.9
To take home and snack on	10.0	23.6	33.6

The most common reason for picking produce is clearly to 'use as a flavouring or garnish', with over twice as many respondents indicating this option. This would appear to reflect the fact that herbs are the primary food type available. Over half of people cited 'using produce as a main ingredient', however, albeit evenly balanced between a 'frequent' and 'other' reason.

Caution should be taken when equating this information to overall usage of IET produce as it excludes absolute frequency of use. It could be that those that pick produce as a main ingredient, for example, are also more likely to pick produce overall compared to more casual pickers who may limit their usage to herbs for flavouring.

This question was not asked in the 2009 study so no longitudinal comparison can be made.

If you answered 'No', which of these reasons apply?

	Most Frequent Reason	Other Reason	Total
I feel uncomfortable about picking them	25.0	16.1	41.1
I am concerned about the risk of pollution/contamination	21.7	9.4	31.1
I am just not interested in picking them	16.1	6.1	22.2
I don't have time	9.4	10.0	19.4
I am not able to identify which plants are edible	7.2	11.1	18.3
I didn't know they were there	6.7	1.7	8.3
I think flowers should be grown not food	3.3	2.2	5.6

It would appear that many people in the town (41% of the survey respondents) feel uncomfortable about picking produce. Just under a third cited concern about pollution / contamination as a reason behind not picking.

If you answered 'No', which of these reasons apply? Longitudinal comparison

The data below compare the proportion of respondents who indicated each reason (either as frequent or other) in 2009 and 2016.

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
I feel uncomfortable about picking them	38.8	41.1	+ 2.3
I am concerned about the risk of pollution/contamination	21.3	31.1	+ 9.8
I am just not interested in picking them	13.8	22.2	+ 8.4
I don't have time	6.3	19.4	+ 13.1
I am not able to identify which plants are edible	7.5	18.3	+ 10.8
I didn't know they were there	33.8	8.3	- 25.5
I think flowers should be grown not food	1.3	5.6	+ 4.3

Most of the reasons given grew in frequency over the two studies, although methodological difference may account for a greater propensity to give secondary reasons in 2016. 'Not knowing the produce was there', however, decreased significantly as a factor. By excluding those who are unaware that produce can be taken, an indication of 'informed' reason can be given, as set out in the table below.

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
I feel uncomfortable about picking them	43.7	29.8	- 13.9
I am concerned about the risk of pollution/contamination	23.9	22.5	- 1.4
I am just not interested in picking them	15.5	16.1	+ 0.6
I don't have time	7.0	14.1	+ 7.1
I am not able to identify which plants are edible	8.5	13.3	+ 4.8
I think flowers should be grown not food	1.4	4.0	+ 3.6

The data shows that the proportion of non-pickers for whom 'feeling uncomfortable' is a factor has fallen by nearly 50%, indicating perhaps a greater acceptance of IE produce in the town.

Have you taken part in any activity involving Incredible Edible over last 12 months, and if so, how often?

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
Yes	30.5	31.9	+ 1.4
No	69.5	68.1	

Although the category options provided differed between the two surveys, they can be equated by rounding up the 2016 study:

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
Never	69.5	68.1	- 1.4
Once a quarter	16.2	26.5	+ 10.3
Once a month	12.6	1.6	- 11.0
Weekly	0.9	1.3	+ 0.4
Daily	0.9	0.3	- 0.6

Assuming the survey is representative of Todmorden as a whole, nearly one third of residents took part in IE related activities in the 12 months prior to the 2016 study. Moreover, this is broadly similar to the 2009 study, suggesting consistency of involvement by the community.

What type of activities have you taken part in?

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Visiting stand at local food event	64.1	16.3	80.4
Planting edible plants or trees	18.5	8.7	27.2
Attending meetings/seed swap	10.9	15.2	26.1
Involvement with school growing project	6.5	12.0	18.5
Other	17.4	4.3	21.7

Of the 92 respondents who interacted with IET over the preceding 12 months, 80% had visited their stand at a local event. It is notable that 27% had been involved in planting which equates to 7.8% of the total sample.

What type of activities have you taken part in? Longitudinal comparison

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
Visiting stand at local food event	82.4	80.4	- 2.0
Planting edible plants or trees	11.8	27.2	+ 15.4
Attending meetings/seed swap	23.5	26.1	+ 2.6
Involvement with school growing project	5.9	18.5	+ 12.6

A comparison with the 2009 study indicates a constant level of community reach through stands at local events and attending meetings/seed swaps, whilst growing activities grew in popularity.

If not, why haven't you taken part?

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
I don't have time	39	42.4	+ 3.4
I have never heard of it	31	24.6	- 6.4
I am not interested	25	16.3	- 8.7
Other	5	16.7	+ 11.7

Lack of time was reported as the largest factor for not interacting with IET and is consistent with the findings of the 2009 study. Just under a quarter of respondents cited not knowing about these opportunities as being their main factor.

Have you visited the Incredible AquaGarden at the high school, the Incredible Farm in Walsden, or walked the Green Route around town?

	Yes, once	Yes, more than once	Yes (total)	No
AquaGarden	12.2	5.6	17.8	82.2
Incredible Farm	15.6	11.3	26.9	73.1
Green Route	13.8	20.9	34.7	65.3

The Green Route/Incredible Edible Way had been visited by over a third of respondents and was the most popular of the three attractions. This could partially be due to the fact that it is more accessible (the Incredible Farm is located outside a neighbouring village whilst the AquaGarden is based in the High School which is out of the town centre).

4.4.3 Community Engagement with Local Food

How often do you buy food specifically because it is locally produced?

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
Every time I buy food	21.5	11.9	- 9.6
At least once a week	42.3	42.5	+ 0.2
At least once a month	12.6	25.9	+ 13.3
Never	23.5	19.7	- 3.8

Over half of all respondents stated that they buy local food at least once a week, with 11.9% claiming they always buy local food. Although the proportion of people who state they always buy food has almost halved compared to the 2009 study and the proportion who buy on a weekly basis is only slightly higher than 2009 those than never buy locally has decreased.

How often do you buy food specifically because it is locally produced? National Comparison

Bord Bia, the Irish national food marketing board, conduct a biennial survey of around 1000 British consumers with respect to their behaviour and attitudes towards food (Bord Bia 2015). Among the questions asked is ‘How often would you buy local produce, i.e. products produced in your local area?’ The following table compares this UK average data from 2009 and 2015 (as no study was conducted in 2016) with the Todmorden data from 2009 and 2016.

Todmorden Categories	Bord Bia Categories	2009		2016	
		Todmorden	UK	Todmorden	UK (2015)
Every time I buy food	Daily	21.5	2	11.9	2
At least once a week	Few time / once a week	42.3	38	42.5	39
At least once a month	Few times / once a month	12.6	22	25.9	22
Never	Never	25.5	37	19.7	37

This data indicates a clear difference in local food purchasing between Todmorden residents and average UK consumers with just under 20% never purchasing local food in the town compared with 37% for the UK as a whole. Moreover, 54.4% of Todmorden consumers purchased food at least once a week compared with a UK average of 41%.

Although these are not absolute measures of the amount or proportion of local food consumed, Mintel (2013a) estimated that the growth in the value of the locally sourced food sector was slightly lower than the food sector as a whole between 2007 and 2012, supporting the Bord Bia figures that also show little change in the market. Taken together, the suggests that consumers in Todmorden are significantly bucking national trends in their consumption of locally produced foods.

If you answered 'Yes', which of these reasons apply?

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Support the local economy	67.3	19.8	87.2
Quality/freshness	24.1	38.5	62.6
Traceability	26.8	34.6	61.5
Environmental benefits	23.0	31.9	54.9
Health	9.3	26.1	35.4

Supporting local businesses was the clear leading factor for purchasing local food in Todmorden. Nearly 9 out of 10 survey respondents cited this as either a primary or secondary reason. Of the options given, healthiness was the least cited with less than 1 in 10 giving this as a primary reason.

If you answered 'Yes', which of these reasons apply? Longitudinal comparison

	2009	2016	% change 2009-2016
Support the local economy	57.6	87.2	+ 29.6
Quality/freshness	47.1	62.6	+ 15.5
Traceability	8.2	61.5	+ 53.3
Environmental benefits	24.7	54.9	+ 30.2
Health	20.0	35.4	+ 15.4

As before, a comparison with the 2009 study indicates a broadening of understanding. In this case, all the suggested qualities were more frequently cited and could be due to differences in the way the surveys were administered. Strikingly, however, traceability was indicated as a factor nearly 8 times more frequently than in 2009.

4.5 VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVES

This section presents summary data from a survey of 28 IET volunteers. All the data presented are percentage figures unless stated otherwise.

4.5.1 Demographics

The tables below outline the sample characteristics and compares it with the community survey and 2011 census where data allows.

Table 4: Volunteer Survey – Sample Characteristics

Sample Size	28 volunteers
Gender	
Male	50
Female	46.4
Prefer not to say	3.6
Age Group	
Less than 18	7.1
18-24	7.1
25-34	14.3
35-44	14.3
45-54	7.1
55-64	25.0
65+	25.0
Todmorden Residency	
Average	8.3 years
0-10 years	68.0
More than 10 years	32.0
Tenancy Status	
Owned Outright	14.3
Mortgage	14.3
Private Rent	50.0
Social Rent	17.9
Other	3.6

Table 5: Volunteer Survey – Sample Comparison with Community Survey and 2011 Census

	Volunteer Survey	Community Survey	2011 Census
Gender			
Male	50	38	48
Female	46	62	52
Age Group			
Less than 18	7		
18-24	7	6	9
25-44	29	40	33
45-64	32	40	37
65+	25	13	21
Resident in Todmorden for more than 10 years	32	67	
Tenancy Status			
Own Home	64	64	67
Private Rent	14	23	19
Social Rent	18	11	14

Due to the small sample size, caution should be taken when comparing the volunteer sample with the community survey and Todmorden census data. Bearing this in mind, the volunteer demographic is broadly similar to the census data in terms of gender, age and tenancy status. A clear divergence exists, however, when comparing the length of time residing in Todmorden between the volunteers and the community sample (unfortunately this data is not collected by the census). The data suggests that volunteers are twice as likely to have moved to Todmorden in the past 10 years than community residents in general.

4.5.2 Nature of Involvement

How long have you been involved with IET?

Average Length of Involvement	4.5 years
Average Hours Involved	170 hours
Average Hours excluding core members	59 hours

The average length of time that the respondents had volunteered for IET was 4.5 years. Among the sample were 6 who had been involved since the beginning and 5 who had joined in the past year. When asked to estimate the amount of time they spent volunteering with IET in 2016, the average was 170 hours. The median, however, was 50 hours, indicating a small proportion of people who spent a lot more time volunteering than the rest of the sample. Subsequent question responses confirmed these individuals as IET coordinators. The average number of hours excluding this group was 59 in a year, which equates to just under 5 hours a month.

How has your involvement with IET changed since you started volunteering?

Increased over time	61
Decreased over time	11
More or less the same	29

Nearly two thirds of respondents have increased their involvement over time, suggesting either greater connection with IET, it's aims or the benefits of participating to the individual, or an overall increase in demand for their time from IET.

Which activities do you get involved in?

	Virtually Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Planting Days	68	7	14	4	7
Cooking Demonstrations	11	7	36	4	43
Events	54	18	21	7	0
IE Coordination	21	7	11	11	50
Meetings	21	14	18	21	25

Unsurprisingly, the planting days, held every second Sunday, were the most frequent form of engagement by IET volunteers. If 'Virtually Always' and 'Often' are combined, an almost equal number of individuals get involved with IET events (72% versus 75%). Only 3 individuals stated that they were 'virtually always' involved with cooking demonstrations, no doubt reflecting the few

number of people needed to help out with such events. Six individuals stated that they are virtually always involved in IE coordination again reflecting the size of the IET Ltd. committee (currently seven individuals).

Which of these activities do you do outside of IET?

Gardening at home	64%
Volunteering with other groups	64%
Part-time employment	25%
Full-time employment	14%
Study	21%

These responses indicate an existing disposition to both growing food for personal consumption and community volunteering. This information, of course, doesn't indicate whether these tendencies are a result of IET volunteering or led to IET volunteering. The proportion of respondents in full time employment is significantly lower than the average for Todmorden as indicated by the 2011 census (14.7% compared to 36.3%) whereas part time employment is higher (25% compared to 14.7%).

4.5.3 Impact of Involvement

Has your involvement with IET had an effect on any of the following?

	Increased Significantly	Increased Somewhat	[Total Increased]	No effect	Decreased Somewhat	Not Sure
Physical Health	0	72	[72]	12	0	16
Activeness	19	58	[77]	15	0	8
Quality of Diet	32	32	[64]	32	0	4
Sense of well-being	44	52	[96]	4	0	0
Sense of belonging to a community	79	18	[96]	0	0	4
Friendship circle	52	48	[100]	0	0	0
Food growing knowledge	33	44	[77]	15	0	7
Cooking/preparing food knowledge	25	36	[61]	25	4	11
Understanding of food issues	26	41	[67]	22	0	11
Understanding of environmental issues	36	39	[75]	18	0	7
Understanding of community issues	43	36	[79]	11	4	7
Understanding of local economic issues	41	33	[74]	19	0	7

The respondents overwhelmingly reported a positive relationship between their IET involvement and a range of health, wellbeing and knowledge accumulation factors. In particular, positive impacts on their sense of well-being, sense of belonging to a community and friendship circle were near universal. The proportion of positive relationships for the other categories ranged from 61% for knowledge of preparing and cooking food to 79% of the understanding of community issues.

4.6 INCREDIBLE EDIBLE TODMORDEN: ENABLERS, CHALLENGES AND WIDER DEVELOPMENT

Alongside data regarding outcomes, the interviews and focus groups (along with comments from the community survey) revealed a number of themes offering insights into factors that served as enablers and/or challenges for IET, and for the wider development of the IE movement.

4.6.1 Local Enablers

Reflecting on the evolution and perceived success of IET, many people commented on the pivotal roles played by the inspirational **individual personalities** that came together to create IET:

[The Community Lead and IET Founder Member] are amazing, charismatic, different and...they can hold a crowd. (P13)

Perhaps influenced by these champions, IET members were described as **proactive**:

[If] IE see a job that needs doing, they'd roll up their sleeves and do it...If you wait for somebody to do it for you, it'll never get done. (P25)

This culture of **proactivity** appears to have been a significant enabling factor that has allowed IET to develop and run successfully – the notion being that as long as you have enthusiasm, anybody can be involved:

It's respected as being an organisation that does a lot of things....you don't need any sort of education except to be observant and to be prepared to get your hands dirty to participate...in that sense, it's sort of a leveller really. (P4)

The **three 'spinning plates' model** was widely endorsed, its simplicity described as a key strength and described as a useful metaphor to explain IET's aims. Overall, it was understood to have been influential in guiding its evolution and underpinning its distinctiveness and success:

I do think...it was absolutely genius. When we came up with those...spinning plates...because it has to involve those three things. (P8)

However, although the simplicity of the model was celebrated by many, it was at the same time played down as merely being a way to articulate a basic idea:

I'm absolutely wedded to it...it works, I think, perfectly for us...you need a 'model' to make it look posh [but] it's three things, I mean it's hardly a model, is it? (P9)

Alongside this, others questioned the necessity of a 'model', raising concerns that adherence to such a concept was normative, fitting uncomfortably with IET's counter-cultural identity:

We only invented a model because it sounded grown up! (P10)

4.6.2 Local Challenges

Many of the stories told in the interviews and focus groups suggested that Todmorden has not been as straightforward a place in which to operationalise IET as it may initially appear. There were different forms of local **resistance to change** which required much persistence and diplomacy to overcome.

Although as argued earlier, the town has demonstrated a spirit of togetherness and resilience, there remains a noticeable **division** between **'incomers' and longer-term residents**. The latter were perceived to have shown some resistance to change and to have tried to prevent new ideas being implemented:

There are probably some older residents who – and it can happen, not just with IE – if people come to the area with new ideas, it's like, "well we've lived here all our life, we don't want that fancy new stuff, we want to continue as we were". But to continue as we were, [the market] would have died a death. So whether you like it or not, maybe you should just listen a bit more and look at what they're trying to do. And yes, there is some resistance and supporters because it's, "oh it's them again is it?" Well at least they've got off their backsides and done something about improving the area that we live in. (P26)

This vein of resistance and reluctance to embrace change appears to have emerged from Todmorden's historical identity of being socio-economically and geographically isolated. There was a sense that although this sense of distinctiveness has helped IET flourish, it has also made some parts of the community less flexible and open.

Against a backdrop of overwhelming positivity from respondents, the community survey revealed some concern that IET "does little for normal working people." Alongside this, several of those interviewed questioned the underlying motivations of some individuals involved for example that "IET aims to get the IE gang on television", that it "exists to line the pockets of a few people" and that there is "a veneer of working for the community...most people in Tod recognise this, it's tourists that think it's all dippity-doo". Those actively involved in IET are aware of these negative and malevolent perceptions:

There's myths that go about: 'There's a reason [the IET Community Lead] gave up her work, that's because she's getting paid' ...It's natural, but slightly irking. (P9)

As documented above [see 4.1 and 4.3.2], IET has had a great deal of positive **media** coverage, which has been pivotal to its success and its local, national and international visibility. However, the success in gaining media exposure has led in some instances to its reputation exceeding what was actually being implemented:

At some point it was spreading faster than what we could show anyone. Because at one point it was just bare land and we had people flying over looking at a field. (P6)

Linked to this, there is concern that negative perceptions of IET may be exacerbated by the high degree of exposure it has received:

The profile is very high in the town and I can imagine that people who don't get it probably get quite fed up of the fact that it is almost iconic...and Todmorden is known as being, you know, it's 'IE'. So yes, I can see how maybe too much coverage has disengaged some of the people that don't get it, but that's no reason not to continue, is it? (P23)

Another challenge concerns the relationship between IET and a perceived **lack of community cohesion**. Some expressed concern about the increased desirability of Todmorden for the middle classes working in Manchester or Leeds, leading to fears of **gentrification**, and felt that IET was contributing to the problem:

There's more and more people wanting to move to the area. It then becomes a problem, like in lots of different areas across the country, it becomes impossible for the person to afford, the affordable housing aspect...I think that's where you can then start again, resentment...“well we can't afford to live here now, I'm going to have to move somewhere else that's cheaper, while you take my house in my town that I was born and brought up in”. (P26)

IET has also been perceived by some members of the business community as potentially affecting the economy by supplying free food, rather than increasing prosperity:

They actually sort of saw them as a threat and something...‘if they're giving free vegetables away, that's not going to do my business any good'. But the amount of free vegetables they're actually giving away, they're not doing that much damage to anybody. (P25)

Historically, the market has been reluctant to engage with IET. Coupled with the above perceived economic threats, there was the further issue of market stall holders being unable to see it's potential:

Anything that threatens their trade is something that they need to be really up in arms about because...it's very hard to survive as a market trader nowadays...but...if you look at...the bigger picture...it's bringing an incredible amount of energy, publicity...it's actually going to be good for the entire town, even if it is different. (P27)

IET has clashed with the local market stallholders over a number of issues, including the organisation of local events in which IET has provided food, and the amount opportunity IET tours allow for tourists to purchase local goods in the markets:

They don't bring a lot of trade to the market, let's be honest...They just walk through...there out of the door before they've had time to look at [the produce] (P28)

However, as IET has become more established, it appears to be becoming more accepted by the market stallholders:

I've nothing against it. I think it is a good thing. (P28)

Although changes in property prices and increases in the purchase of fruit and vegetables cannot all be attributed to IET, its influence is clearly perceived by some as being an important contributory factor. The dedication and persistence of those centrally involved in IET was understood to be central to overcoming negativity and **scepticism** within the community:

There will always be cynics, when it comes down to it, it's about what wins through...can people remain motivated, to keep doing what they're doing and kind of ignore the negative press?...Because it still feels good and it still feels right, and at the moment that has prevailed. (P2)

4.6.3 Differences, Tensions and Creative Innovations

To a certain degree, IET has been borne out of, and thrived, on differences. Several key stakeholders viewed the innovation, dynamism with inspirational and charismatic leadership characterising IET as going hand-in-hand with creative tensions:

Amazing things happen because of amazing people, and amazing people are quite difficult...And the conflict that comes out of that... So it's a pay-off and I don't see it as a negative thing but it's something that you just have to be pragmatic about... creative people aren't going to behave, they're going to do their own thing. (P11)

Linked to this, there was concern about the marked divisions that exist and persist with IE in Todmorden. These were understood to have undermined its coherence as a movement:

It's sort of splintered off into different groups and I think that's, I mean that's good because people can do what they want but then...it doesn't seem a collective whole anymore... but that's...inevitable with the different types of personalities involved. (P15)

For some, however, there were pragmatic reasons explaining why the different entities (see 2.3) need to be seen as distinct. IET Ltd., for example, aims to be self-sufficient and does not want to rely on public money to fund activities. However, for many, the divisions appear to run deeper than this, and some respondents expressed concern about what they saw as damaging 'silo working'. Of particular note was a perceived schism between the philosophies of key individuals – some focused inward towards the local community, others focused outwards and aiming to make a difference at policy and global levels.

I think the real danger is going away saying 'there's a movement'. What is a movement?... I worry about all of that spin. (P9)

The big danger is that it kind of settles down to being community vegetable growing...that's worthy and great, I'm all for it, but that isn't changing the world. (P7)

Todmorden is regarded as a town with strong **community organisations**. Whilst IET was seen to be well-connected with key public services, there were differing perspectives on how strongly or harmoniously it has **linked** with other organisations and initiatives. Whilst one community survey respondent commented "it is Incredible Edible which initially grabs my attention and points me in the direction of all the other cultural activities in Todmorden," some of those interviewed expressed concern. The key congruent organisation mentioned most frequently in interviews was Todmorden in Bloom, which was founded before IET and is focused on improving the environment of Todmorden through horticulture. IET and Todmorden in Bloom collaborate for certain events (e.g. the Harvest Festival) and some key IET personnel have also been involved in Todmorden in Bloom. Each has a quite distinct ethos and identity, essentially beautification and sustainability respectively. Members of the community tend to gravitate towards one or the other, but the boundaries can sometimes be indistinct for those involved in both:

The more popular that IET got, the more kind of threatened, I suppose, Todmorden in Bloom got. So there was a little bit of rivalry there...Two years down the line, there wasn't really enough time for us to do both. So we did less, we just kind of petered out with the Todmorden in Bloom stuff and did the other stuff instead. It was a bit difficult at times...The edges [were] a

bit blurred because we were thinking “oh, were we in Tod[morden] in Bloom then or were we in IE?” (P8)

In some ways the split between the two organisations is seen to mirror the division between ‘incomers’ and older residents highlighted above:

Todmorden in Bloom...is sort of a little bit more of the older style community organising, and it’s very different. And to some extent, it doesn’t, it doesn’t excite or adapt as well enough to incorporate the newer community...it’s organising volunteers in very, very different ways, and it appeals to different people in different ways. (P27)

Reflecting on the perceived divisions and tensions, some of those interviewed argued strongly that more could be achieved with greater cooperation:

I wish the two of them would work together... I think it’s simply because they’re all busy people, and I like the people from Tod[morden] in Bloom, they’ve done fantastic stuff around Tod...I usually see them, I often see them on a Sunday morning doing bits of, as it were, public gardening around Tod. And I mean most people’s gardens are a mixture of flowers and fruit and veg... (P12)

There were also issues with specific sub-groups wanting to use IET for specific purposes. For example, some key IET stakeholders are also active in local Vegan groups, and IET caters for events with an almost exclusively vegan selection of food. Whilst the health benefits of a vegan diet are accepted, there is some disagreement about whether or not **veganism** is wholly compatible with IET, especially in relation to business and the local economy:

There’s a real message that vegan is the way and...it’s quite difficult to challenge that and there’s quite a moral position from the vegan people on it...but...there’s pressure in the background about being vegan, and that’s not the way to strengthen the economy. That’s not the way to encourage production. A lot of our production is meat and cheese. (P11)

Contrasting with this, a survey respondent commented: “Having worked in Todmorden for over 10 years I have seen IET grow from the start despite the cynics. This scheme has benefitted the town and brought many benefits to the community, it has helped break down barriers and bring people together.”

4.6.4 Engaging Different Demographics and Connecting Outwards

A continuing question for some is to what extent the community is **aware** of and has **engaged** with IET:

I think there’s a surprising number of people who don’t really know anything about IE. And we forget that most people don’t read the local newspaper, they may not be involved in any of these organisations in the town. I think they see the vegetables but whether they know very much more than that...the challenge is always going to be to reach beyond the natural audience. (P7)

Set against the positive and optimistic responses about the reach and inclusivity of IET (and linked to observations concerning a perceived divide between **incomers and longer-term residents**), some argued that overall, the members of the community who had actually bought in to IET were still in the minority. The community survey highlighted some negative perceptions here, suggesting that IET

“is typical middle-class do-goodery which fails to understand working class people and real food need,” that “it’s all very cliquey” and that “it doesn’t offer much to the wider community.” Likewise, some of those interviewed questioned the breadth of IET’s appeal within the town:

If you look at all the Todmorden chat forums and Facebook things, it’s only a few people who actually get it, the rest of them think, ‘what are all these weirdos doing planting peas in the police station?’ But yes, so it was a great social idea and it is, it has spread very quickly all around the country I’ve seen, but most people [in Todmorden] don’t get it. (P24)

IET has established strong partnership links with organisations such as the Recovery Centre (Tod Well), the Staying Well mental health project and the Job Centre, which all facilitate engagement of disadvantaged communities. Additionally, there has been enthusiastic participation by people with learning difficulties in assisted living schemes. However, there was a sense that reaching marginalised and minority communities was a challenge still facing IET:

“It’s certainly a big challenge...reaching to the heart of those other communities...I think that’s been a major challenge...with the best will in the world, we’re always the white middle class group.” (P7)

IET appears to be most popular with women, young children and older members of the community, with examples of **intergenerational** activities. However, there appears to be less engagement with teenagers and young adults. This may be partly explained by a lack of suitable settings in which to engage this demographic. Whilst trips and activities with the local Youth Club have taken place, the young people interviewed remembered IET as something with which they were involved at primary school age rather than as teenagers. They were aware of the propaganda gardens, but had no interest in picking any of the fruit and vegetables:

I just wouldn’t think of...waking up and going, “you know what, I’ll walk down...Tod and get some veg and then go home and then wash it.” No...basically, I just wouldn’t, I don’t know why. (P19)

Part of the challenge in assessing the impact of IE lies in determining what has actually influenced and what was already occurring in the region and nationally. In schools, for example:

I think there’s a number of factors and it’s hard to just say this is IE because there’s been changes to the curriculum, which has meant that...making food and cooking with children, like food tech, has a higher profile in primary now, as well as secondary. (P23)

A number of factors were identified as important in ensuring the long-term **sustainability** of IET: ensuring that new volunteers are recruited regularly, learning to manage without funding (although others commented that it is unsustainable without donations), and an ongoing concern for improving the local environment and food production/consumption in the community. It was argued that there is still work to do in Todmorden to bridge the gap with the members of the community who haven’t bought in to its ethos:

With Tod, you’ll get vanguard [of] enthusiastic people and how do you bring more people in? How do you do that legacy and transition? How do you bring people into ...your vision? (P5)

Once members of the public have been engaged, **retaining volunteers** is another challenge due to other commitments:

The biggest issue with a lot of different groups, across the board, is the volunteer aspect, people just haven't the time. (P26)

It is also imperative that whoever is involved in an IE project has links that extend beyond the group to those in a position to have influence locally and help the project to grow. According to one respondent:

It would be very, very difficult to do what they've done in Todmorden, without a friendly relationship within the council...They would have come across much more conflict in lots of little practical things that they do. (P11)

4.6.5 Reproducibility of the Incredible Edible Model as applied in Todmorden

A key issue concerning the spread of IE nationally and globally is the extent to which the IE model, as developed and applied within Todmorden, is reproducible. Whilst linking success to the enabling factors identified above – and, in that sense, questioning to what extent Todmorden had in place a unique set of components – it was argued that IE initiatives need to be able to take control of their own identity and development and have the flexibility to evolve as they wish, within their particular contexts:

[We] started it as a little small thing that was very controllable from the kitchen table in the beginning, and then it's that sort of juxtaposition between enabling it to scale or grow and create replicability all over the world, but you can't do all that from the kitchen table anymore. So you have to accept that sometimes it's not always going in the direction you wanted...You have to give it to people to take as best they can, but then you have to let it grow in whatever way is right for that particular community or that particular environment. (P2)

From this perspective, it was argued that IE is easy for other groups to implement elsewhere, as long as they embrace the core principles and are prepared to 'start small' – linking incremental change to a bigger vision of what's possible longer-term:

I think it's totally replicable. I think it's a case of inspiring people to realise that you don't always need a lot of money, or any, if needs be, and that you don't always need reams and reams of planning permission and paper and to be given things...You get people who come sort of from the angle of, 'I can't grow food because I don't have half an acre'. If you've got a windowsill you can start...I think what we're conscious of here, is trying to keep it simple... (P2)

Some of those interviewed also suggested that it is important for IET to highlight the challenges they have had to overcome. There was concern that existing and potential IE groups may regard Todmorden as a place primed for IE to flourish, without realising the significant difficulties the group has faced and continue to face.

Whilst widely promoted as the defining framework for IE, the **three 'spinning plates' model** was viewed as an ideal rather than a necessity for other IE projects:

There's no patent, other than on the little sprout logo. Anyone can be an IE...What we say to people, is we'd love you to embrace the three plates, and that's important to us...Everybody interprets it in the way that's right for their community or their setting, or the particular group of people they have who are keen. And so some will be way, way, way more dynamic and really organised and...others are very kind of organic...The key thing is to not be restrictive and

prohibitive...to get as many people as we can doing this, in as many places, in as many ways.
(P2)

Appreciating the importance of inclusivity and self-determination, the model was viewed by some as something that had worked for Todmorden, but should not be viewed as prescriptive:

You have to do something in learning, something in community, something in business, but you can start with whichever one you can start with, and you have to aim...[for] all three. But everybody does it differently, there isn't a one size fits all. So I don't see how there can be a model that will replicate, because everyone will take bits of it. (P10)

One suggestion was that once projects are up and running with one 'plate', they can then concentrate on the other plates, and can draw on the **IET Network** as a resource from which to find out more information and draw support:

The three...plates are important and then once people establish that they want to be an IE, they can see that by connecting in with those who are already established. And some people do business in a phenomenal way but say, education in a really poor way. Others do community in a huge way. It's fine and no one's keeping tabs but people are sharing, and that's really what it's about. (P2)

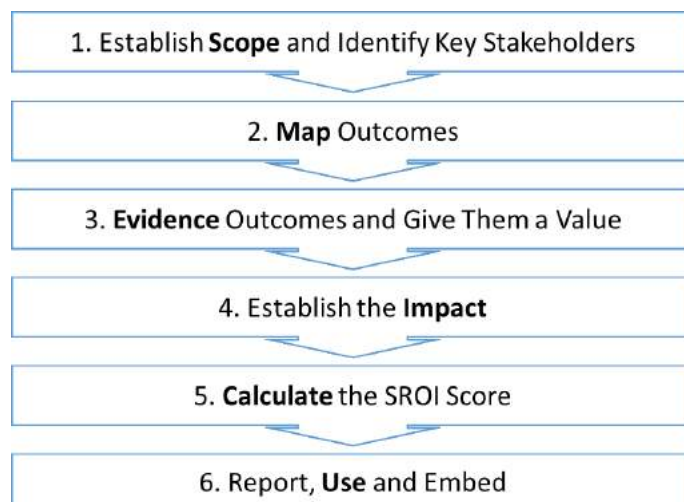
However, the flipside to this flexibility and focus on self-determination is that some people question whether the IE movement has coherence, and view other IE projects as essentially disconnected from IET:

They just, they get the idea and they pick up on all the logos and everything and what to do, and then they're all completely independent, aren't they? They just go and do their own thing.
(P24)

4.7 SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

4.7.1 Introduction

Figure 2: The Social Return on Investment (SROI) Process



A Social Return on Investment study (SROI) is an established methodological framework that provides an estimate of the financial impact of a phenomenon in a way that incorporates the value

of social, environmental and other non-economic impacts alongside the economic contribution. In essence, this is achieved by identifying a financial proxy for non-financial costs and benefits through consultation with stakeholders.

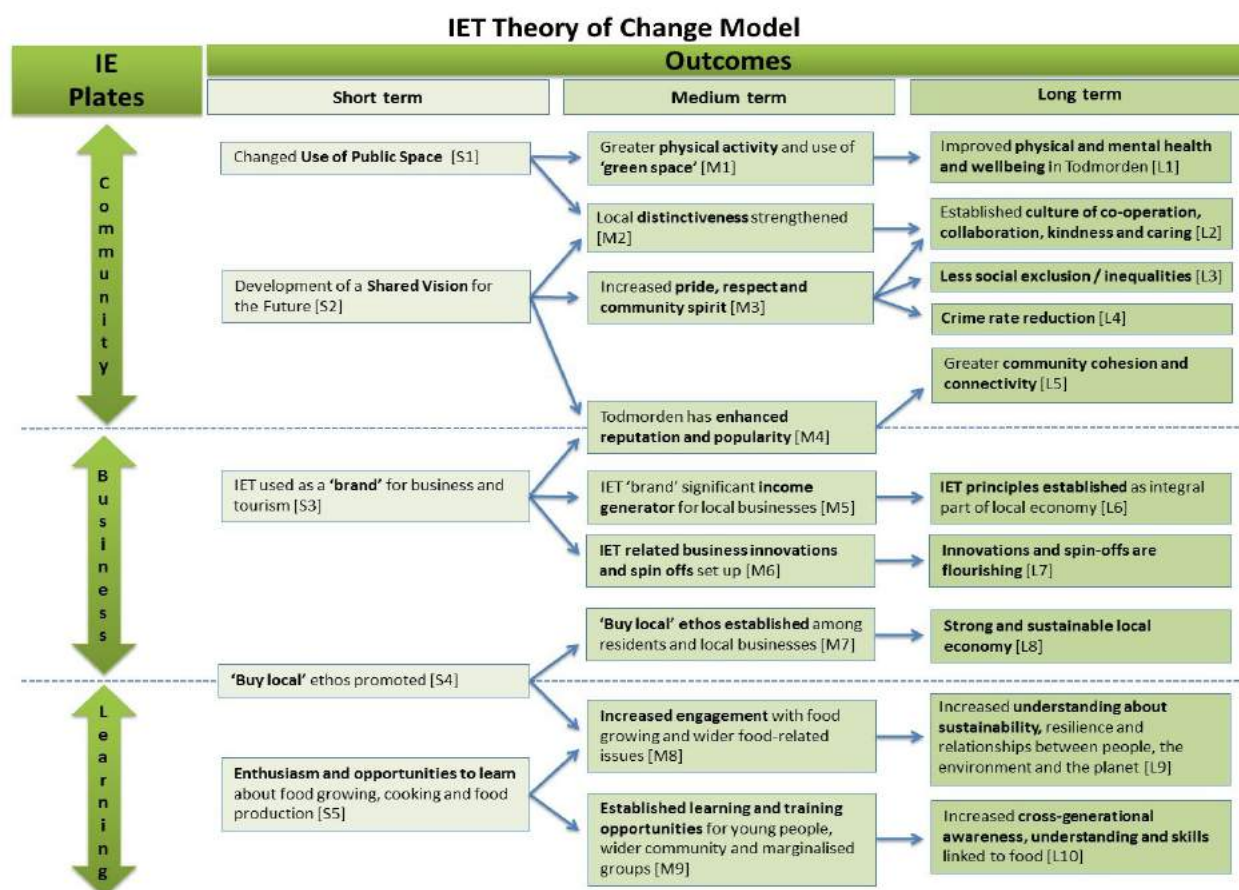
This section broadly follows the reporting conventions for SROI analysis. As the method relies on a series of 'judgement calls' by both researchers and consulted stakeholders it is important for interpretive reasons that assumptions and other estimates are made clear. Therefore, the scope and assumptions made for the analysis are outlined initially. This is followed by the SROI calculations which broadly follow the convention set out by The SROI Network in the 2012 publication 'A Guide to Social Return on Investment'. Figure 2 sets out the six stages to SROI analysis as defined by the SROI network.

4.7.2 Rationale and Scope

Given the research focus on understanding the universal aspects of the IE model, the scope of the SROI exercise is limited to the activities of **IET Ltd.** in Todmorden. It therefore excludes the impact of the Incredible AquaGarden and Incredible Farm along with activity overlaps in the town with the Incredible Edible Network and Incredible North.

As IET is well-established (having been operating since 2007), the SROI is **Evaluative** rather than forecasting. In other words, it focused on actual activity and impact rather than predicted activity and impact. Given the practical challenges of accurately capturing impact over an extended period of time within an evolving and complex initiative, it is appropriate to calculate an **annual impact** rather than attempt a summative impact since the model's inception (SROI Network 2012).

The conceptual reference for the SROI analysis is the **Theory of Change** (ToC) model as detailed in Section 3.2 and, for convenience, reproduced below.



Through being co-produced with IET volunteers and stakeholders and subsequently refined through the primary data analysis and further consultation with IE stakeholders the ToC is assumed to represent an accurate representation of the main relationships between activities and outputs in the IE model. The ToC attempts to understand the IE model as a whole, however. As such it incorporates the activities and impacts of the spin-off social enterprises that are excluded from this SROI analysis.

The following table describes the hypothesised inputs and outcomes elicited by IET according to broad stakeholder type. The framing of the outcomes differ from the ToC as they are stakeholder specific and are intended to aid the elucidation of potential metrics that can be considered for the SROI analysis.

Table 6: SROI – Incredible Edible Todmorden Inputs and Outcomes by Stakeholder Type

Stakeholder Type	Potential Inputs	Potential Outcomes
IET Volunteers	According to the IE model, volunteer time, energy and skills are the overriding input to IET community and learning activities.	Better mental and physical health through better diet, more physical activity, increased social networks, skill attainment, understanding of food and community issues.
Todmorden Residents	Economic impact through purchasing local food. Time spent attending events and visiting IET initiatives.	Similar to volunteers but less pronounced, more variable and potentially shorter in duration.

Local Businesses	Time and Resources to support IET activities. Marketing resources.	Increased income, better understanding of consumer demand, networking opportunities.
Public Service Providers	Direct resources and resources in kind. Permission / facilitation of action.	Potential cost savings (more volunteerism leads to less demand for services), greater community well-being (health, economic development, environment benefits).
Visitors	Direct finance through paid tours and purchasing food from local businesses, other indirect spend in the community, spreading the word.	Education, inspiration and action in other locations

4.7.3 Material Outcomes

The SROI methodological framework prescribes that only outcomes that have a material impact within the defined scope of the exercise should be considered in the analysis. Given that the SROI framework was applied to the 8th full year of IET operations, the long-term Outcomes identified in the ToC were excluded from analysis. The following table summarises the remaining 14 outcomes and the assessments made regarding their materiality with respect to the SROI approach.

Table 7: SROI – Outcome Assessment

Outcome Code	Plate	Description	Assessment	Verdict
S1	Com	Changed Use of Public Space	The change and maintenance of growing areas in public spaces was considered a clear and measurable outcome.	Include
S2	Com	Development of a Shared Vision for the Future	This was seen to be difficult to measure and attribute impact from.	Exclude
M1	Com	Greater physical activity and use of 'green space'	Increased physical activity for volunteers was considered to be potentially important.	Include
M2	Com	Local Distinctiveness strengthened	Although cited by interview respondents, this was excluded due to a lack of comparative data from equivalent towns and challenges to measure impact.	Exclude
M3	Com	Increased pride, respect and community spirit	Despite convincing qualitative evidence, it is very challenging to isolate the impact of IET on this outcome.	Exclude
M4	Com/ Bus	Todmorden has enhanced reputation and popularity	Likewise, this was seen to be difficult to attribute impact to IET due to the existence of multiple influencing factors.	Exclude
S3	Bus	IET used as a brand for business and tourism	Mentioning IET or displaying its logo was considered an important outcome, as it demonstrates that businesses regard it positively.	Include
S4	Bus/ Learn	Buy local ethos promoted	This was identified as a clear and measurable aim and outcome of IET.	Include
M5	Bus	IET brand significant income generator for local business	Beyond the spin-off organisations, the research hasn't identified any businesses who attribute 'significant' income to IET.	Exclude
M6	Bus	IET related business innovations and spin offs set up	The decision was taken to exclude the spin-off businesses from this analysis as they are not considered 'universal' aspects of the IE model.	Exclude
M7	Bus	Buy local ethos established among residents and local businesses	The similarity of this outcome to outcome S4 suggested these should be conflated to minimise double counting.	Exclude
S5	Learn	Enthusiasm and opportunities to learn about food growing, cooking and food production	This a key aspect for both volunteers and the wider community; it was conflated with M8 due to similarities.	Exclude

M8	Learn	Increased engagement with food growing and wider food-related issues	This was seen to be a core outcome with immediate effects on volunteers and community (conflated with S5).	Include
M9	Learn	Established learning and training opportunities for young people, wider community and marginalised groups	These were considered to be an important outcome; as the spin-off enterprises are excluded from analysis, training and learning opportunities predominantly arise through volunteering.	Include

Six outcomes were therefore taken forward for analysis, two from each plate and three representing both short and medium outcomes.

4.7.4 Indicators and Proxies

The next stage in the SROI process is to identify appropriate ways of measuring each Material Outcome and then finding a financial proxy that equates to the cost of providing an equivalent outcome through commercial means. The following table presents the respective indicator (or measure) and proxy for each outcome.

Table 8: SROI – Outcome Assessment

	Outcome	Indicator	Proxy
S1 Com	Changed Use of Public Space	Area of maintained growing spaces	Cost to commercially maintain growing spaces
M1 Com	Greater physical activity and use of 'green space'	Additional volunteer gardening hours Resident green route exercise	Cost of two-hour exercise class Cost of guided walk
S3 Bus	IET used as a brand for business and tourism	Number of IET visitors	Average tourist spend
S4 Bus / Learn	Buy local ethos promoted	Frequency of purchase compared with national average	Average local food spend
M8 Learn	Increased engagement with food growing and wider food-related issues	Number of people who took part in IET activity	Cost of educational event for community
M9 Learn	Established learning and training opportunities for young people, wider community and marginalised groups	Number of volunteers	Cost of education course for volunteers

4.7.5 Rationale, Deadweight, Displacement and Attribution

This section outlines the rationale used to identify the measures and proxies for each output and considers the appropriate levels of deadweight and attribution for each score. The deadweight measure is a proportional estimate of the level of an outcome if IET wasn't in existence. For example, whether volunteers would be volunteering, and therefore accruing similar benefits, elsewhere. Displacement is a similar measure that accounts for any existing activity that ceased due to IET, for example the organisation of other community events or other groups and individuals growing edible plants in public areas. Attribution, on the other hand, measures how much of the outcome can be put down to IET. For example, increases in local sourcing may be due to other factors such as increased media attention to the issue or better labelling / availability. A short description of the judgements made concerning measures, proxies, deadweight and attribution for each Outcome follows.

Changed use of public space

The clearest measure for this outcome is the area of growing beds that are maintained around the town. This was estimated by visual inspection and comparison with IET's own estimates. Some of these spaces were previously maintained for the public good principally as flower beds. The cost of maintaining these spaces by commercial means is an obvious proxy. This can be calculated by estimating the number of volunteer hours spent maintaining growing spaces and making the assumption that the volunteer groups are as time efficient as professional gardeners. The deadweight measure for this outcome accounts for the proportion of time that would have been spent anyway by council employees on the spaces that were previously maintained with non-edible plants / grass verges etc. The displacement score estimates what proportion of the growing spaces would have been maintained for this purpose by other groups or individuals. Attribution is assumed to be 100% for this measure as the growing spaces are wholly maintained by IET.

Greater physical activity and use of 'green space'

For this outcome there are clearly different levels of associated activity for IET volunteers compared with individual residents, for this reason two measures were used. Physical activity by volunteers relates the time spent maintaining the spaces on every second Sunday. This information was collected from the volunteer survey and extrapolated using IET coordinator estimates of the average number of volunteers each session. The cost of physical exercise classes at the local leisure centre was used as the financial proxy. The deadweight for this measure relates to an estimate of whether those individuals would be doing physical exercise anyway, and is based on whether volunteer survey respondents indicated that their physical activity levels had increased as a result of IET volunteering. Attribution for this outcome is considered high as the activity only takes place because of the existence of IET.

The measure of increased physical activity among community residents as a whole is taken from the number of people who indicated they had walked the IET green route in the community survey. The financial proxy for this is the cost of a local guided walk. Deadweight estimates are relatively high for the community as individuals would no doubt walk equivalent routes around the town as a leisure activity without the existence of IET. Displacement is assumed to be low for the community as there were no existing 'routes' in the town. The deadweight and displacement estimates for volunteer physical activity account for the fact that 64% of the volunteer survey respondents volunteer

elsewhere. It can be assumed that the degree of this volunteerism would be slightly higher if IET did not exist, however it is less likely to be as physically intensive as maintaining growing spaces. Attribution in this case accounts for a general growth in activity levels in the UK.

In the ToC model, this medium-term outcome is understood to lead to the longer-term outcome of improved health and wellbeing of Todmorden residents. This assumption is supported by evidence from other studies. For example, an increasing body of research suggests that contact with nature has wide-ranging benefits for physical and mental wellbeing (Barton et al, 2016). Moreover, national guidance suggests that “physical activity is not only fun and enjoyable, it is essential for good health, helping to prevent or manage over 20 conditions and diseases...[including] heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and obesity...[and] can also help improve people's mental health and wellbeing” (NICE, 2012).

IET used as a brand for business and tourism

The income generated in Todmorden by visitors who have come because of IET is a clear positive outcome for the model. The number of people who fell under this category in 2016 was estimated by combining IET’s records of the number of people who have been given a tour plus the number of green route maps distributed by the Todmorden Tourist Information Centre plus the number of maps downloaded from the IET website. An average party size per download of two people was assumed. The proxy for economic spend by visitors was taken from the International Passenger Survey average daily spend, less accommodation costs as it was assumed that few visitors stay overnight in Todmorden. Deadweight, displacement and attribution for this measure were considered as low as the visitors have signalled the influence of IET by either signing up to a tour or downloading a map for a self-guided tour.

The impact of IET as a brand for businesses was less clear cut as the broader study provided little evidence of a significant direct impact on individual businesses beyond the spin off social enterprises. In addition, there is a risk of double counting as both visitor spend and community spend on local food are already included in the SROI analysis. For these reasons, a specific measure for businesses was excluded from this outcome calculation.

Buy local ethos

It was assumed that the key manifestation of a ‘buy local’ ethos in Todmorden was regular purchasing of local food. This was quantified by calculating the difference between frequencies reported in the Todmorden community survey and national averages from a biennial food attitudes survey conducted by Bord Bia (2015), in order to account for deadweight. The proxy for local food consumption is derived from the size of the local food market, as calculated by Mintel (2013a, 2013b), as a proportion of total food spend. In order to calculate value of local food market in Todmorden, estimates were made for the proportion of locally sourced foods purchased for each given frequency category. A high attribution measure was used which assumes that IET is the main factor behind higher local food consumption in Todmorden compared to the national average. Similarly deadweight and displacement scores are minimal as other activities that would have led to a growth in the buy local ethos are difficult to identify. It is possible that a growth in incomers with an existing buy local ethos may have occurred without IET, particularly from through spill over effects from neighbouring Hebden Bridge.

The cross tabulation below of community survey respondents who have resided in Todmorden for either more or less than 10 years against frequency of local food purchase indicates that recent incomers are more likely to purchase local food. We have no way of knowing, however, whether these were pre-existing behaviours, whether they were inspired by IET when they arrived or whether IET influenced their decision to move to Todmorden in the first place.

How often do you buy food specifically because it is locally produced?

Recent incomer vs. long-term resident.

	Resident ≤ 10 Years	Resident > 10 Years
Every time I buy food	13.4	12.7
At least once a week	44.3	36.1
At least once a month	29.9	25.3
Never	12.4	25.9

It is worth noting that 'local food' was not defined for the survey and is not typically defined by IET in their literature, although it is defined in the IET Ltd. procurement policy as 'food produced within 30 miles of Todmorden'.

Increased engagement with food growing and wider food-related issues

For this measure, the community survey gives information for the proportion of residents who have walked the green route and attended IET events. This data was averaged out over the lifetime of IET to give an estimate to the number of Todmorden residents who engaged with IET in 2016. Regarding a suitable financial proxy for this impact, the challenge was to find an equivalent form of engagement that could reach a high concentration of people in a relatively small geographic area. A guide cost for a series of small-scale events was identified as a suitably equivalent measure and estimated using contract guide costs issued by WRAP for the Love Food Hate Waste campaign (WRAP 2014). Two programmes were identified: the design and implementation of food waste related experiential events across ten cities in the UK, over a seven-month period, which was fulfilled by Banana Kick Limited; and the establishment of cookery clubs (including training volunteers) across ten cities, over a two year period, which was contracted to The Children's Food Trust. These figures were then factored down according to their estimated reach and quality of engagement (it was assumed that cookery clubs provide a deeper form of engagement).

The focus of deadweight measures for this outcome would be the potential existence of other community-focused initiatives related to growing and wider food-related issues in Todmorden had IET not come into existence. Judging the likelihood and degree of such events is clearly very difficult. The low level of existing activity in the town at the time of IET's conception and multiple anecdotal 'evidence examples' of resistance from key parts of the community, local authority and business community suggests however that deadweight would be relatively minor. Displacement is assumed to be zero as there are no identifiable restrictions to the number of events or other engagement opportunities related to food growing and wider food-related issues. Attribution for increased food related engagement for Todmorden residents to IET is likely to be quite high over the course of a year, particularly in relation to the measures used to quantify this outcome.

Established learning and training opportunities for young people, wider community and marginalised groups

The clearest measure for establishing this impact is quantifying the amount of IET volunteer opportunities taken up by residents. The group's coordinators estimate a total pool of 300 volunteers during 2016. This is largely focused on maintaining the growing spaces on alternate Sunday's but also encompasses cookery classes, event organisation and IET coordination. The volunteer survey indicated an average of 59 hours given per individual over a year and high levels of

increased understanding of IET related issues (food 67%, environmental issues 75%, community issues 79%, local economic issues 74%). This latter data lends weight to the notion of high attribution of IET to this growth in learning. Estimates for deadweight and displacement follow similar considerations as the previous outcome with a small degree of displacement from potential volunteer involvement in other groups if IET didn't exist. The financial proxy proposed for this outcome follows the lead of a similar SROI growing scheme study (Ireland, 2013) by using the cost of a three lesson online course in nutrition and healthy eating.

4.7.6 Inputs

Given that an SROI score is, in essence, a ratio between inputs and outputs, accounting for what is invested into the model is clearly a key part of the exercise. Potential inputs into the IE model were identified primarily through the stakeholder interviews and a review of existing literature. There is clearly a range of value-focused inputs by participants into the IE model including 'perseverance', 'kindness' and 'radicalness' that present challenges for quantification. Similarly, as outlined elsewhere in this report, IET coordinators and other key individuals in the Incredible Edible story have considerable personal skills and experiences which influence the effectiveness of the group's activities. These qualities are undoubtedly inputs but are difficult to quantify with credence within an SROI approach. For the purpose of this SROI analysis, the analysis is limited to financial inputs and volunteer time. Financial income figures were gained directly from the IET committee whilst volunteer time was calculated from the volunteer survey.

4.7.7 Drop-Off

The drop off rate accounts for impacts beyond the time period used for the SROI calculation. For example, if IET ceased to exist, behaviour change related as a result of increased knowledge of food issues in the community would be expected to continue in to the future with decreasing influence year on year. Drop-off measures are key, and most meaningful, in SROI studies of initiatives that are either time limited or have a constant cycle of beneficiaries. This aspect of the methodology is less clear, however, for this study as IET had been in existence and focused on the same community for nearly a decade. Impact is therefore cumulative and the beneficiaries largely the same from year to year.

The default assumption for this study, unless indicated otherwise, is that the impact from previous years is counterbalanced by the future impact from the year under analysis. Therefore, the net effect is zero. This assumption is backed up somewhat by the comparative analysis of the community survey with the 2009 study. Although this indicates a clear growth in impact on the local community over the seven-year period in terms of engagement, understanding and local food sourcing, the annual rates of change are relatively small. Given the reliance on proxies and estimations for the methodology as a whole it can reasonably be assumed that the additional uncertainty from this approach is minimal. Moreover, the SROI approach has been deliberately framed to understand the impact of a mature IE group rather than a newly initiated group which, at can be assumed, would have a different balance of impacts resting on more immediate outcomes and engagement with individuals and organisations primed by existing interest in food, environment and community development issues.

4.7.8 Social Return on Investment Calculations

IET Inputs

I. Volunteer Time

Total number of volunteers in 2016 (estimated by IET committee):	300
Average number of hours volunteered (excluding IET committee members):	59
Additional volunteer hours from IET committee members:	3,436
Total Volunteer Time: [(300 X 59) + 3436 =]	21,136 hours
Financial Proxy for volunteer time: National Minimum Wage (see: https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates)	£7.20 per hour
Financial Value of Total Volunteer Time: [21,136 X 7.20]	£152,179

II. Financial Income

Income from Visitor Tours:	£4307.90
Income from talks to groups outside of Todmorden:	£3025.20
Total Financial Income: [4307.90 + 3025.20 =]	£7,333.10

IET Outcomes for 2016

I. Changed Use of Public Space

Measure: Area of maintained growing spaces:	492m ²
Proxy: Cost to commercially maintain growing areas	
On average 25 individuals spend 2 hours per fortnight maintaining IET growing spaces. Assuming 25 volunteer sessions a year this equates to: [25 X 2 X 25 =]	1250 hours a year.
Hourly paid rate (minimum wage):	£7.20
Financial Value for Outcome: [1250 X 7.20 =]	£9000

II. Greater physical activity and use of 'green space'

Measure a): Additional volunteer gardening hours (as calculated above):	1250 hours a year
Proxy a): Cost of exercise class	
Adult Membership of Todmorden Sports Centre:	£236.50 per year.
Equivalent number of individuals required:	25
Financial Value for Outcome: [236.5 X 25 =]	£5,912
Measure b): Resident green route exercise	
Percentage of residents (from survey) who have walked the Green Route once:	13.8%
Percentage of residents who have walked the Green Route more than once:	20.9%
Assumed average number for those walked more than once:	3
Population of Todmorden Parish:	15,481
Total number of individuals: [((13.8 ÷ 100 X 1) + (20.9 ÷ 100 X 3)) X 15,481 =]	11,843
Annual number of individuals since Green Route was formed in 2012, assuming constant rate across 4 year period: [11843 ÷ 4 =]	2,961
Proxy b):	
Cost of guided walk:	£5 per hour
Estimated average time to walk Green Route:	1.5 hours
Financial Value for Outcome: [(2961 X 5 X 1.5) =]	£22,207

Sources: Calderdale Metropolitan Council <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/sports-and-fitness/memberships/adult>; <http://www.yorkshiredalesguides.co.uk> (group rate)

III. IET used as a brand for business and tourism

Measure: Number of IET visitors

Visitors on guided tours: 889

Self-guided visitors (based on 200 maps distributed by visitor centre and 486 maps downloaded from IET website, assumed average party size of 2):

[(200 + 486) X 2 =] 1172

Total Number of IET Visitors: [1172 + 889 =] 2061

Proxy: Average daily overseas tourist spend in the UK: £100

Discounted estimate to account for no overnight spend and domestic travel: £40

Financial Value for Outcome: [2061 X 40 =] **£82,440**

Sources: Office for National Statistics (2015) International Passenger Survey 2015
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism/articles/traveltrends/2015#overseas-residents-visits-to-the-uk>

IV. Buy Local Ethos

Measure: Frequency of purchase compared with national average

Comparison between Todmorden residents and UK average:

	Todmorden	UK (2015)	Difference
Every time I buy food	11.9	2	+ 9.9
At least once a week	42.5	39	+ 3.5
At least once a month	25.9	22	+ 3.9
Never	19.7	37	- 17.3

Proxy:

UK market for locally sourced foods (retail sales, 2012 figures): £5.4Bn

UK total food market (retail sales, 2012 figure for comparison): £115.4Bn

Therefore percentage sales for locally sourced foods: [(5.4 ÷ 115.4 X 100) =] 4.7%

UK population estimate 2012: 63.7 Million

Average per person retail food spend in 2012: [115.4Bn ÷ 63.7M =] £1811

Sources: Mintel, 2013a, 2013b; ONS, 2013

Calculations for overall spend on locally sourced foods in Todmorden adjusted for frequencies given in the community survey:

	Todmorden community survey	Estimated % of total food spend	Number of Todmorden residents	Total Annual Spend (£)
Every time I buy food	11.9	20	1842	667,172
At least once a week	42.5	8.4	6579	1,000,823
At least once a month	25.9	4.7	4010	341,319
Never	19.7	0	3050	0

Therefore estimated total spend on locally sourced foods by Todmorden residents (using 2012 figures): [667,172 + 1,000,823 + 341,319 =] £2,009,314

Sources: Estimated percentage of total food spend calculated by adjusting proportions between frequency categories to reflect hypothesised propensity whilst retaining the overall national average of 4.7%; Number of Todmorden residents calculated using community survey percentage multiplied by total population; Total annual spend calculated by multiplying Average UK Retail Spend per person by Percentage Spent on Local Food by Number of Todmorden Residents

Calculations for baseline spend on locally sourced foods in Todmorden if reflected the national average:

	UK Bord Bia 2015	Estimated % of total food spend	Number of Todmorden residents	Total Annual Spend (£)
Every time I buy food	2	20	310	112,282
At least once a week	39	8.4	6038	918,524
At least once a month	22	4.7	3406	289,908
Never	37	0	5728	0
Therefore estimated total spend on locally sourced foods by Todmorden residents (using 2012 figures) if IET did not exist: [112,282 + 918,524 + 289,908 =]				£1,320,714
Financial Value for Outcome: [2,009,314 - 1,320,714 =]				£688,600

V. Increased engagement with food growing and wider food-related issues

Measure:	Number of people who took part in IET activity in 2016		
Number of Todmorden residents walking Green Route (as calculated above):			2,961
Percentage of respondents who have had involvement with IET:			31.9%
Percentage of these who have visited an IET stand:			80.4%
Estimated number of Todmorden residents who visited an IET stand in 2016: [(31.9÷100) X (80.4÷100) X 15,481 =]			3,970
Total number of residents estimated to have walked the Green Route or visited an IET stand in 2016: [2,961 + 3,970 =]			6,931
Proxy:	Cost of an educational community event		
Tender guide cost for Wrap Love Food Hate Waste commissions:			
Design and execution out of 10 experiential events across the UK:			£75,000-£100,000
Establishment of 10 cookery clubs across the UK:			£200,000-£250,000
Cost of delivering 2 experiential food events and setting up 1 cookery club in Todmorden (based on mid-range cost estimates): [(£87,500 ÷ 5) + (£225,000 ÷ 10) =]			£ 40,000
Financial Value for Outcome:			£40,000

Sources: ONS, 2011b; WRAP, 2014

VI. Established learning and training opportunities for young people, wider community and marginalised groups

Measure:	Number of IET volunteers		300
Proxy:			
Cost of enrolling on an online 3-lesson course on nutrition and healthy eating:			£259.99
Financial Value for Outcome: [300 X 259.99 =]			£77,997

Table 9: SROI – Impact Map for Incredible Edible Todmorden

	Outcome	Measure	Proxy	Value	Dead-weight	Displacement	Attribution	Impact
S1 Com	Changed Use of Public Space	Area of maintained growing spaces	Cost to commercial ly maintain growing spaces	£9,000	10%	0%	100%	£8,100
M1 Com	Greater physical activity and use of 'green space'	Additional volunteer gardening hours	Cost of 2 hour exercise class	£5,912	20%	10%	100%	£4,257
		Resident green route exercise	Cost of guided walk	£22,207	30%	0%	100%	£15,545
S3 Bus	IET used as a brand for business and tourism	Number of IET visitors	Average tourist spend	£82,440	0%	0%	100%	£82,440
S4 Bus / Learn	Buy local ethos promoted	Frequency of purchase compared with national average	Average local food spend	£688,600	0%	0%	95%	£654,170
M8 Learn	Increased engagement with food growing and wider food-related issues	Number of people who took part in IET activity	Cost of educational event for community	£40,000	0%	0%	100%	£40,000
M9 Learn	Established learning and training opportunities for young people, wider community and marginalised groups	Number of volunteers.	Cost of education course for volunteers.	£77,997	0%	5%	100%	£74,097
Total Impact								£878,609

4.7.9 Overall Social Return on Investment Ratio

Net Social Return for IET activities in 2016:	£878,609
IET Inputs in 216:	£159,512
SROI Ratio: [1 : 878,609 ÷ 159,512 =]	<u>1:5.51</u>

In other words, for every £1 invested through volunteer time and financial contributions, £5.51 is returned to the Todmorden community.

4.7.10 Social Return on Investment: Reflections

According to this analysis, the local business community are clearly the main beneficiaries according to the measures included. The uplift in local food demand from residents alone accounts for nearly 75% of the net social return. In addition, a further 9.4% comes from the financial contribution of visitors. This high proportion of benefit accruing to the business community is partially a consequence of the method used and the fact that purchasing is a relatively demonstrable benefit (albeit one in this case which still requires a number of assumptions to be made). The impact of IET's work on health outcomes in Todmorden, for example, are extremely difficult to identify given the indirect nature of impact outlined in the Theory of Change. The potential benefits, however, are very high given the costs of addressing dietary related ill health. If just one or two individuals from the community are inspired to change their lifestyles and therefore avoid one of these conditions then the potential 'saving' to public service providers could be significant. For example, one survey respondent stated that they pick herbs from IET growing spaces to make a tea that alleviates symptoms of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME).

The preceding SROI analysis adopted a cautious approach in order to prevent overclaiming. Given the range of outcomes excluded from the analysis and the potentially high but isolated impact on individual health, it is likely that the actual impact is significantly greater. With regard to the contribution to the local economy, for example, we have excluded the economic multiplier effect of spending money in local economies. Studies of the impact of local sourcing policies on local economies have indicated that this can add more than double the financial benefit to a community due to the fact that a proportion of the income to business will be spent locally (NEF 2011). Associated with this are benefits from securing local jobs and lower food miles.

Given the significance of the impact of greater local food sourcing on the overall SROI score, the most sensitive aspects of the analysis (aside from the potential inclusion of new outcome measures) are the assumptions and data used for estimating the impact of a 'buy local ethos'. These key assumptions include:

- Todmorden survey respondents are giving accurate accounts of their behaviour and their understanding of local food is appropriate.
- There are no key methodological differences between the community survey and the Bord Bia research that may significantly impact the proportion of consumers within each behaviour category.
- That the Mintel financial proxy data is accurate and also methodologically consistent with this research.

- That the proportion of locally sourced food estimated for each behaviour category is accurate.
- That local food demand in Todmorden would reflect the UK average if IET had never been in existence.

As mentioned, we have taken a cautious approach with the assumptions made for all outcomes included in the SROI. Nonetheless the findings of this aspect of the research should be interpreted in light of the method and associated estimations used.

5. DISCUSSION

This study was designed to elicit a wide range of data on IET – a complex and dynamic community initiative. By combining research methods (Brannen, 2005) and consulting with a range of stakeholders, it has proved possible to build a picture of the impact of the IE model as it has been developed and applied in Todmorden. The multiple strands of data collection – the ToC workshop, the community survey, the volunteer survey, the interviews and focus groups and the SROI analysis – provide a convincing account of the achievements and impacts of IET. This account is also largely coherent, with few conflicting indications beyond what would be expected when consulting with a wide range of individuals within a small community.

This section reflects on the empirical work and findings, identifying and exploring a number of key themes that relate to the original aims and objectives of the research.

5.1 SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The research revealed a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence of IET's social, economic and environmental impacts on daily life in the town.

As is common with this kind of research, a key challenge for the research design has been isolating actual impact from subjective appraisals skewed by people being too close to the IET 'cause', either through involvement or shared values. For this reason, it was important that alongside the interviews, focus groups and volunteer survey, the community survey penetrated as deeply as possible into the wider community and was therefore able to give voice to opinions not readily engaged with, or in opposition to, IET. These 'dissenting' views were thus clearly articulated in the findings – although, on the whole, the views elicited across all data collection strands was overwhelmingly positive.

In terms of material impact, there can be little doubt that IET has had a significant effect on the town in a number of ways. As the community survey illustrated, awareness of IET is almost universal in Todmorden and nearly a third of respondents have actively engaged with IET over the previous 12 months and nearly half have picked plants from the growing spaces around the town. All these figures show an increase since the 2009 survey, and they represent a considerable achievement and are testament to the long-term work of the volunteers.

The ToC framework, derived from the initial stakeholder workshop, mapped perceived short-, medium- and long-term impacts. Whilst framed in terms of the three 'spinning plates' of

community, business and learning, these impacts clearly addressed social, economic and environmental dimensions. For example:

- **Social Impacts:** These included increased physical activity and use of green space; strengthened local distinctiveness; and increased community cohesion and connectivity.
- **Economic Impacts:** These included the IET 'brand' being used as an income generator for local businesses and tourism; IET-related business spin-offs; and an established 'buy-local' ethos.
- **Environmental impacts:** These included increased engagement with food growing and food-related issues; changed use of public space; and increased understanding about sustainability.

The ambitious ToC outcomes suggest a confidence in the IE model and were further evidenced by the interview, focus group and survey data, in which stakeholders spoke persuasively of the various activities undertaken by IET, its perceived successes across the three 'spinning plates', and its wide-ranging impacts. IET volunteers – estimated to number around 300 individuals – are an important beneficiary group and the volunteer survey was overwhelmingly positive about the range of benefits. Whilst some of these, such as increased social connectedness and sense of wellbeing, may be universal to volunteering, there are also impacts more particular to IET – such as increased awareness and understanding of community issues, local economic concerns, and environmental and sustainability challenges. Additionally, although IET is clearly focused on local community action, the findings pointed to successes in developing a 'think global, act local' ethos – an early aspiration of key actors (Smales and Warhurst, 2016).

It should be noted that, unfortunately, the impact of IET on health and wellbeing proved difficult to address in any great detail. Representatives of the local health centre were unsuccessfully sought for the stakeholder interviews, whilst parish or town level statistics for health outcomes are limited and attribution is complex. The volunteer survey, however, reported favourably about the impact of IET participation on their own physical health, activeness, diet and sense of wellbeing.

Evidencing outcomes in quantitative terms is inevitably a major challenge, as illustrated by the SROI process. As outlined Section 4.7 of the report, this is partially due to the complex nature of the phenomenon under investigation and either a lack of existing data or challenges involved in capturing new data. In this respect, the interviews, focus groups and surveys were key in both illustrating the outcomes proposed in the ToC and informing the decision whether to include or exclude them from the SROI analysis. Whilst this adopted a cautious approach, excluding ToC outcomes that could not clearly be attributed to IET or for which proxies could not be robustly identified, the resulting return on investment ratio of 1 to 5.1 reinforces the finding that IET has impacted positively on Todmorden. Furthermore, as made clear, it is very likely that the actual impact SROI ratio is significantly higher.

One of the most striking findings that came out of the community survey data was the higher degree of stated local food purchasing by Todmorden residents compared with the UK as a whole. It follows that this will have a direct impact on the local economy – and the SROI study estimates this to be more than £650,000 extra each year. Again, this lends support to the IE model and the prominence given to business interests. It also appears to back up the ToC model and particularly the business 'stream' and its underlying assumptions. The community survey indicated that the primary focus for purchasing local food was to support the local economy, again suggesting success in relation to this

particular 'plate'. The strong resonance of the business 'plate' with the community as a whole would seem to be supported by concern about economic decline in the area, as highlighted in the interviews and focus groups.

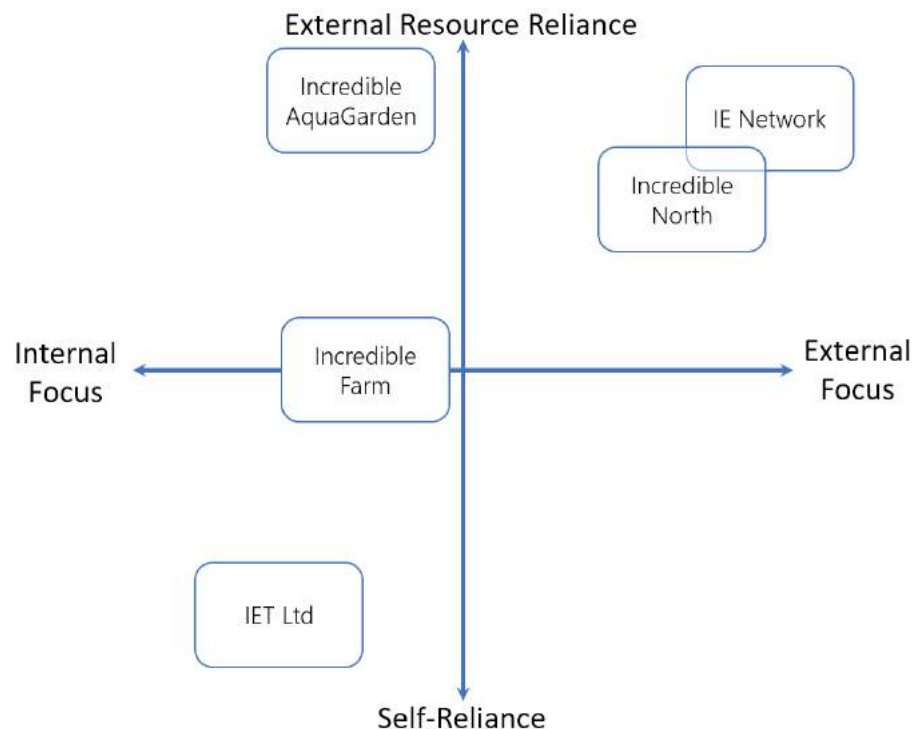
5.2 ORGANISATIONAL EVOLUTION

It is unsurprising that issues related to the organisational evolution of IET were recurrent in this research. The duration and relative success of the IE model has led to a number of organisational challenges connected with the need to cope with the growth of activities and external attention. With this success have come choices about individual priority areas for the founder members and other core individuals.

In 2017, IE in Todmorden is complex and, for some, confusing – comprising a group of interrelated organisations, each with their own focus and challenges. This reflects earlier questions raised in previous literature (Paull, 2013). Whilst this research project has primarily been concerned with the community activities of IET Ltd., it is very difficult to separate the activities and influences of each grouping. Whilst this complexity no doubt strengthens the IE model, particularly in terms of resilience and reach, it also presents challenges for stakeholders, particularly external ones, who wish to engage with and understand IET and learn about its model.

Broadly speaking, two core axes can be identified to characterise the difference in ethos between the organisations in the IET institutional family: focus (internal / external) and resourcing (reliance on external funding / self-reliance). Figure 3 presents each organisation on a map to illustrate the divergence between different organisations:

Figure 3: Incredible Edible Todmorden organisational 'map'



Whilst the positioning of each organisation is essentially dynamic and ever-shifting, and requires a degree of characterisation and simplification, some overall distinctions are clear. IET Ltd., including co-founder Mary Clear, is clearly focused on local community-led action within Todmorden and prides itself on its ability to work without grant assistance, relying instead on a low level of income from tours and speaking engagements combined with a heavy reliance on resourcing through volunteers and little requirement for capital outlay. This accords with early commentaries emphasising how IET's 'just do-it' mentality consciously avoids waiting for permission or funding to make things happen (Paull, 2011). Incredible North and the Incredible Edible Network, on the other hand, under the stewardship of IE Ltd. and the other co-founder, Pam Warhurst, are primarily concerned with spreading the IE model outward beyond Todmorden and – whilst still relying heavily on volunteer time and energy – also rely on funding for professional support services to meet the demands of external engagement.

Both social enterprises focus predominantly on providing an educational resource for Todmorden and the local area and were established through grant funding. Both have, however, sought to address the challenge of long-term sustainability. The Incredible Farm generates income through selling produce to local businesses and, to maintain its operations, relies on volunteers largely drawn from outside the Todmorden area. The Incredible AquaGarden relies more heavily on funding as well as volunteer time.

The interview process in the research leaves no doubt that the evolution of this organisational structure and divergence in 'mission' is a reflection of the individual motivations and philosophies of the original core members, influenced by contextual factors, opportunities and challenges over time. The broad splits between internal and external focus and between self-reliance and external resource reliance also reflects deeper and wider distinctions in social and environmental movements: for example, between what can be characterised as grassroots community-based activists and political activists engaged in wider societal change; and between initiatives primarily concerned to mobilise 'bottom-up' community action and those concerned to engage with and secure policy and action commitments from local, regional and national governance bodies (Hardt, 2013; Patrick, Poland and Dooris, 2016). These distinctions also resonate with current discourse and debate about the value and appropriateness of asset-based approaches to community development. Whilst widely championed as progressive, they have also been subject to criticism – viewed as a convenient approach to lever and mobilise 'free' resources in a time of austerity (Friedli, 2012).

5.3 INCREDIBLE EDIBLE TODMORDEN: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INITIATIVE AND PLACE

As outlined throughout the research findings (see Section 4), the evolution and impact of IET are intimately tied to its relationship with Todmorden and the town's human and social capital. The interviews and focus groups highlighted the distinctive ethos of Todmorden as a place, rooted in its geography and history, particularly its peripheral location and industrial decline. Respondents talked about the town being on the edge or outside of the mainstream, and profiled self-reliant characteristics that suggest a receptiveness to ideas and community-led action. Reflecting findings from other community-based research (Allen, Clement and Prendergast, 2013), the research uncovered dissenting voices, suggesting some cynicism and a vein of resistance to change – perhaps related to divisions between new and longer-term residents. However, the research suggests that Todmorden, on the whole, has welcomed IET's establishment and development. Examples of how

the wider community has actively facilitated IET include the use of branded blackboards by market traders; and permission granted to plant outside the police station, health centre and railway station. Also, as demonstrated by the community survey, IET has achieved extensive community engagement, resulting in upward trends in both IET produce-picking and wider local sourcing.

Whilst this suggests that the success of IET is in part a product of Todmorden as a distinctive place with a distinctive community, it is also clear from the research that it has its roots in the vision and actions of dynamic, resourceful and persuasive individuals at a particular point in time. The role of leadership in driving community development and effective social movements is long recognized (Onyx 2011). The significance of the 'incomer' status of many of those involved with IET is less clear, but is discussed in the literature (Allen, Clement and Prendergast, 2013). The majority of those actively involved in IET hail from beyond Todmorden, albeit having lived in the town for a significant period of time and become well integrated into the local community. Moreover, around two thirds of volunteers who responded to the Volunteer Survey have lived in Todmorden for less than 10 years compared with around one third of the Community Survey sample.

More broadly, analysis of the data revealed the rich ways in which IET as an initiative has interacted with and changed Todmorden as a place. This occurred not only through the 'tangible' creation of food growing areas, but also through the conscious focus on highly visible 'propaganda planting', an approach that uses food as a vehicle to catalyse conversations and empower people to discuss, explore and question their relationship with their local environment – a finding that echoes earlier commentators (Lee-Woolf, 2009, CABE, 2011). Beyond this, there were also signs of people 'joining up the dots' to consider how local actions interact with national policy and with global sustainability and wellbeing challenges. There is also evidence of IET challenging prevailing policy discourses. For example, group representatives have been active in promoting the provision of growing spaces in the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan for Todmorden. The draft strategic-level Local Plan currently being proposed by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (2017) includes the following policy:

All new residential developments with the exception of apartments and specialist accommodation shall include gardens or communal areas of adequate size, commensurate in scale with the development, to support household food production. Furthermore, all developers will be encouraged to explore ways to incorporate food growing into landscaping schemes and the spaces around their developments.

The research has revealed how IET, through proactive and 'can do' culture, has succeeded in breaking down barriers, engendering a stronger sense of optimism and hope, and revitalizing community – further enhancing the distinctiveness and attractiveness of the town.

5.4 REPRODUCIBILITY

Moving beyond the idea of replicability of activities within Todmorden, identified as a key characteristic of IET in its early days (Paull, 2013), perhaps the key question from an external perspective is how can the IE model, as developed in Todmorden, be translated to other areas in a similarly meaningful way? There are many other IE groups implementing or planning to implement similar kinds of actions, supported by the Incredible Edible Network. As this research did not include a comparative element, either by looking at other IE groups or a comparator community without IE activity, we do not know whether the ToC developed with IET stakeholders reflects a common

understanding across the IE movement or how successful other IE initiatives have been. Rather, we have to restrict our analysis to our research findings regarding the implementation and impact of IE in Todmorden and draw inferences from this.

The analysis from this research suggests that IET has experienced a range of enabling factors alongside significant challenges – and that, as suggested by earlier research (Paull, 2013), there is a strong belief in the potential for the IE model to be successfully reproduced in different ways in different localities. However, it is noteworthy that IET's success has in part been due to its *pioneering* nature and its creation and, therefore, 'ownership' of the IE concept. It is intuitive that some of the impacts identified in the ToC result directly from these particular characteristics. For example, Outcome S3 'IET used as a brand for business and tourism' would probably have had less potency if Todmorden had not been the 'trailblazer' and therefore a 'vegetable tourism' attraction in what has gone on to become a worldwide movement. Similarly, Outcome M2 'Local distinctiveness strengthened' is more achievable when you are initiator of what has developed into a 'brand' or there are no others in your locality. Outcome M4 'Todmorden has Enhanced Reputation and Popularity' derives in part from the 'media literacy' of key people pioneering IET (Paull, 2013), but at the same time would appear to owe much to the media-attractiveness of IET as a new idea and venture, and the inspiration it gave back to the movement thereby driving success. Although the SROI exercise indicated that the major economic contribution from IET is the stimulation of a 'buy local' ethos, the contribution from tourists and visitors to IET should not be underestimated: indeed, the income from IET tours (along with invited speaking engagements) provides the main financial support for IET Ltd. Other groups without this income would evidently have to seek other sources of income, for example greater in-kind support or direct funding from local authorities.

A question emerging from the research is how the IE model is understood and used by other groups setting up and implementing initiatives. Does it constitute a prescriptive tool whereby groups are expected to frame their project using the 'three spinning plates' and report progress against these? Does it represent an overarching banner and brand under which diverse community-led food-related projects can be developed? Or does it signify a philosophy and set of values to guide such projects, drawing on their unique set of community assets, relationships and aspirations? Whilst some interview respondents felt that the former offers more coherence to an emerging movement, the majority view emphasised 'bottom-up' approaches and highlighted the importance of IE projects finding their own way, being locally determined and responding to and enhancing local distinctiveness (Schifferes, 2014).

Undoubtedly, the huge momentum, profile and impact of the wider IE movement is due in part to those individuals and places that have been inspired by, and have adopted and adapted the IE vision, values and model. There are, now, multiple examples of excellent practice from which new and emerging initiatives can draw learning. However, it remains that its success also owes much to a mix of two elements: the inspirational example of the 'original' IE in Todmorden driven by IET Ltd.; and the work of IE Ltd. through Incredible North and the IE Network, offering a supportive and enabling environment for other initiatives across the UK and worldwide. The invaluable and visionary roles of the core individuals from each of these constituent parts were repeatedly referred to during the stakeholder interviews, affirming perspectives from wider commentary and research (Lee-Woolf, 2009). Whilst some concern and confusion were expressed about the perceived fragmentation of IE into multiple organisations, the strength and adaptability of this partnership is widely regarded as key to the success of both IET and the wider IE movement. Human capital such as this is obviously

very difficult to reproduce, either from scratch or through training. It could be suggested that these skill needs were greater in Todmorden due to the pioneering nature of IET – and that now the model has been developed, and the traction of ideas achieved, a critical balance of skills might not be so crucial for other IE-related initiatives. This reinforces the importance and value of the Incredible Edible Network and Incredible North and the support provided by IET Ltd. through its website, use of social media and related activities.

6. CONCLUSION

Established in 2007, IE remains highly active and influential ten years on. Despite revealing some critical and dissenting voices, this research points to its remarkable resilience and growing reach within and beyond Todmorden. The study utilised a combination of research methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups and a SROI analysis – which was informed by a ToC developed through consultation with key stakeholders. Together, these have generated a wealth of insightful quantitative and qualitative data.

Reflecting on the findings, it is evident that IET has provided a clear, engaging, flexible and effective overarching philosophy and framework for action. Able to accommodate variations in individual perspectives and priorities, the approach has largely resonated with Todmorden’s residents, reflecting its particular history and culture, and galvanising deep and sustained community action in the town. Whilst it is notoriously challenging to attribute particular community-based effects to specific causes, the data convincingly shows that IET has achieved a range of social, economic and environmental impacts on the town and its population. Some of these impacts (e.g. changed use of public space; buy local ethos established) are ‘tangible’, in that they are visible and/or quantifiable; others (e.g. local distinctiveness strengthened; development of a shared vision for the future) can be regarded as ‘intangible’, in that they have been revealed through qualitative data derived from the perceptions and perspectives of multiple stakeholders and are challenging to measure. However, it is important to note that this does not make these impacts any less real and points to the value of a mixed-methods approach in elucidating the breadth and richness of change.

For those looking to learn from the Todmorden experience, it is important to note that despite its overwhelmingly positive ‘story’, IET has faced a number of challenges:

Firstly, it has, like many initiatives in small communities, faced some resistance to change, seemingly linked to divisions between incomers and longer-term residents.

Secondly, it has faced a degree of scepticism and some hostility stemming from negative perceptions about the motivations of key stakeholders, concerns about a potential adverse impact on the economy, and its particular appeal to largely middle-class and ‘alternative’ sub-sections of the population.

Thirdly, the divergence and conflict that has nurtured creative innovation has also threatened the cohesiveness and coherence of the IE ‘message’. Whilst IET’s evolution into a ‘family’ of connected organisations makes sense to those actively involved, it has arguably resulted in some uncertainty and confusion more widely. There also appears to be a lack of clarity about whether IE as a movement should prioritise self-reliance and community-led action, or combine this with an

external focus to engage and lever leadership and support from organisations and those in positions of power.

Alongside this 'reality check', it is, however, important to distil and celebrate the elements and influences that have underpinned IET's journey and ensured its effectiveness. It is also valuable to consider which of these can be readily reproduced elsewhere and which are more unique to Todmorden as a place, by virtue of its particular characteristics and IET's pioneering and trailblazing status. The research suggests that the success and ongoing evolution of IE in Todmorden is due to a combination of factors, which can be summarised as follows:

- The development of the 'three spinning plates model' comprising community, learning and business, which has offered a simple and engaging framework to involve multiple stakeholders, empower local residents, organisations and businesses', and ensure joined-up action with demonstrable value.
- The presence and leadership of charismatic, inspirational and entrepreneurial champions who have persuasively articulated the IE vision and model and engaged people to ensure the effective and consistent translation of idea to action.
- The facilitating nature of Todmorden's historical and (counter-) cultural context, demonstrated through a responsiveness to tackle local challenges through the mobilisation of local assets and harnessing of community spirit and togetherness, which is in turn have been strengthened by the actions of IET, which has further enhanced the town's distinctiveness.
- A commitment to bottom-up and inclusive 'people power', whereby IET has not waited for the leadership, permission and resources of government and other bodies, but instead has made things happen by harnessing the support of an enthusiastic and wide-ranging team of supporters and volunteers and building a proactive 'can-do' culture.
- The use of food not only as the focus for growing, education and business development, but also as a unifying and inclusive vehicle for societal change that can break down barriers and serve as a common language to engage people and tackle both local and global issues.
- An appreciation of the value of 'visibility' to engender community-led action. Stemming from an early, ongoing and effective commitment to communications, marketing, and public relations, this has included the creation of an attractive and innovative brand, the fostering of good relationships with local media, the effective use of social media, and the development of 'commercially' viable activities such as IET tours and promoting 'food tourism'.
- The good fortune of creating an effective concept and brand at a particular point in time that proved to be infectious. This captured the 'zeitgeist' by seemingly feeding into latent interest across many communities – allowing IE to go 'viral' and catalyse a national and worldwide movement that further spotlighted IET and the town.
- The identification and effective use of a clear pathway to success. The use of 'propaganda gardening' to grow food in public spaces helped to improve the appearance of the town, at the same time creating awareness, catalysing conversations within the community and encouraging people to re-evaluate their relationship to their local environment. This in turn has stimulated broader reflection outside of Todmorden, notably within public policy discourse, prompting re-

appraisal about what is 'normal' and what is 'possible' and ultimately about the relationship between people and the public realm.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

Public policy related bodies (including local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and NHS trusts) should:

- facilitate the development of self-starting community groups through the creation of enabling environments that promote peer-to-peer interaction both within communities and between communities
- enable and encourage community initiatives to harness potential assets within the public realm, particularly in terms of potential growing areas, but also as spaces for community expression that promote distinctiveness and collective belonging
- maximise the potential for medium- and longer-term community impacts, acknowledging the complexity, unpredictability and immeasurability of certain outcomes arising from holistic community-led approaches such as IE (as illustrated by the ToC)
- value and support community-led initiatives such as IE within the context of social prescribing and the growing evidence base concerning the role of horticulture and nature connectedness in improving health and wellbeing.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

IE and related initiatives should:

- be responsive to their own particular context, valuing and utilising the IE 'three spinning plates model' as it relates to their own distinctive culture and assets
- reaffirm their commitment to bottom-up community-led action, but also appreciate the value and potential influence of forging connections outwards to local democratic structures and policy-making bodies
- consider developing their own ToC as a means of clarifying and achieving a consensus concerning their vision, aims, expectations and assumptions
- consider engaging in evaluative research, appreciating the potential value of reviewing processes and measuring and communicating impacts for reflecting on progress, guiding future development and changing the perceptions of key stakeholders
- whilst being mindful of the potential negative impacts resulting from conflict, recognise that divergence, tension and resistance can be positive assets for community action, through kindling innovation and creativity

- appreciate the value of consciously developing ‘media literacy’, recognising that external communication and engagement can have a significant impact on their success and their reach, both within and beyond their communities
- reflect on Todmorden’s experience with regard to how local food-based activity can change people’s relationship to their environment, shift conceptions of the public realm, and connect to 21st century global challenges.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Researchers should:

- consider undertaking a large-scale multi-site study to explore how the IE model has been understood and implemented in different contexts, and examine the stories and impacts of different IE initiatives
- utilise mixed-method designs and develop innovative methodological tools that can effectively capture the full range of interconnected social, economic and environmental outcomes arising from complex community-led initiatives such as IET
- seek to understand the links between contexts, mechanisms and outcomes, examining not only what works, but also exploring for whom, in what contexts, and how and why
- engage as many stakeholder groups as possible, paying particular attention to hard-to-reach populations – and also seek to distil insight and learning not only from ‘success stories’, but also from conflicts, shortcomings and failures
- consider developing a consensus-based ToC as an evaluation framework and tool when focusing on IE and related initiatives
- advocate and seek funding for longitudinal studies that span multiple disciplines, appreciating that this type of research is necessary to understand the impact of complex community-led initiatives such as IET.

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KEY WEBSITES

Incredible AquaGarden: <https://incredibleaquagarden.co.uk>

Incredible Edible Todmorden Ltd.: <https://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk>

Incredible Edible Network: <http://incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk>

Incredible Farm: <http://incrediblefarm.co.uk>

Incredible North: <http://incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk/incrediblenorth>

SusFoodNW: <https://susfoodnorthwest.org.uk>

APPENDIX 1: INCREDIBLE EDIBLE TODMORDEN SURVEY

<i>Number</i>	<i>Interviewer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>

Q1 Are you aware of Incredible Edible in Todmorden?

Yes

No

If you answered 'Yes', what do you understand its aims to be?

	Main Aim *	Secondary Aim	Not that I'm aware
To increase the amount of food grown locally			
To encourage people to eat more fruit and vegetables			
To change the appearance of the town			
To become self-sufficient			
Raise awareness of how to grow food			
To reduce the environmental impact of food we eat			
To strengthen community relationships			

Q2: Do you pick plants from the edible growing beds/orchards in the town centre?

Yes

No

If you answered 'Yes', which of these reasons apply?

	Most Frequent Reason *	Other Reason	Not a Reason
To nibble on as you pass			
To take home and use as flavouring			
To take home and use as a main ingredient			
To become self-sufficient			
To take home and snack on			

If you answered 'No', which of these reasons apply?

	Most Frequent Reason*	Other Reason	Not a Reason
I didn't know they were there			
I am not able to identify which plants are edible			
I am just not interested in picking them			
I feel uncomfortable about picking them			
I am concerned about the risk of pollution			
I think flowers should be grown not food			
I don't have time			

Q3: How often do you buy food specifically because it is locally produced?

Every time I buy food	At least once a week	At least once a month	Never
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If you answered 'Yes', which of these reasons apply?

	Main Reason*	Secondary Reason	Not a Reason
Health			
Quality / Freshness			
Environmental Benefits			
Support the Local Economy			
Traceability (i.e. you know when it comes from)			

Q4: Have you taken part in any activity involving Incredible Edible over last 12 months, and if so, how often?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	b/n 4 times and monthly	3 or 4 times	Once or twice	No

If so, what type of activities have you taken part in?

	Main Activity*	Secondary Activity	Never
Planting edible plants or trees			
Attending meetings/seed swap			
Visiting their stand at local food event			
Involvement with school growing project			

If not, why haven't you taken part?

I have never heard of it	I don't have time	I am not interested	Other
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Q5: Have you visited the Incredible AquaGarden at the high school, the Incredible Farm in Walsden, or walked the Green Route around town?

	Yes, once	Yes, more than once	Never
Incredible AquaGarden			
Incredible Farm			
Green Route			

Questions about you:

Are you a resident of Todmorden?

Yes	No
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If Yes: How many years (approx.)?

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If No: where do you live?

Within 10 miles	Further than 10 miles but visit regularly	Further than 10 miles and visit infrequently or never
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Which age group are you in?

<18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
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What is your Gender?

Male	Female
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Which of these best describes your home?

My home has a Mortgage, which belongs to myself / people I live with.	My home is Owned Outright by myself or people I live with.	My home is Privately Rented.	My home is Socially Rented.
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APPENDIX 2: INDICATIVE INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULES

For IET key stakeholders:

How did you become involved with IET? When did you become involved?

What is your role?

What are the main activities you take part in as part of IET?

Has your role changed since you began?

What do you see as the main assets of IET?

What do you consider are the biggest challenges for IET?

How replicable is the IE model? [i.e. outside of Todmorden]

What are the main challenges for Todmorden as a community?

For community stakeholders:

Can you tell me about your experience of IET?

When did you first become aware of it?

Have you noticed any changes in the local area?

Is there anything you don't like about IET [explore]?

Have you changed any of your behaviours regarding food as a result of it [e.g. diet, growing food]?

Have you become more connected to the local community as a result of IET? Can you give an example?

What are the main challenges for Todmorden as a community?

[if applicable] Are you interested in becoming active in IET?

For learning stakeholders:

Can you briefly describe your organisation / learning role?

Can you tell me about your experience of IET?

When did you first become aware of it?

Have you noticed any changes in the local area?

Is there anything you don't like about IET [explore]?

What have been the main impacts of IET on the local economy [in relation to food or more generally]?

Have you changed your approach to teaching/learning as a result of your involvement in IET?

Are there any other ways in which IE could support your organisational / personal remit?

What are the main challenges for Todmorden as a community?

For business stakeholders:

Can you briefly describe your business / organisation and your own role within it?

Can you tell me about your experience of IET?

When did you first become aware of it?

Have you noticed any changes in the local area?

Is there anything you don't like about IET [explore]?

What have been the main impacts of IET on the local economy [in relation to food or more generally]?

Are there any ways in which IE could support your business / organisational / personal remit?

What are the main challenges for Todmorden as a community?

APPENDIX 3: THEMATIC ANALYSIS: PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY THEMES

Below is a complete list of primary, secondary and tertiary themes that were developed from the thematic analysis of the one-to-one interviews and focus group data. Caution should be taken when interpreting numbers of sources or references as these do not relate to the qualitative value of the data or the subsequent weight given to the theme in analysis.

Name	Sources	References
1. Origins and Development	2	4
Distinctiveness of Tod	13	34
Cohesion	14	34
Asian community	2	4
LGBT community	1	1
Evaluations	1	3
External interest		
Enquiries	2	2
International recognition	3	5
National profile of Tod	5	5
Policy change	3	4
Wider Impact of IE	6	7
Media and Public Relations		
Newspapers	4	8
Online presence	2	2
Public Relations	8	12
Public Tour	3	5
Radio	1	1
Social media	3	3
Television	3	6
Website	2	2
'Plates' Model Development	9	21
Recruitment	4	6
Links with other organisations and initiatives		
Food4Life	1	2
Local Services		
Churches	1	2
Fire Station	2	2
Health Centre	1	1
Police	2	4

Tourist Office	1	1
U3A	2	4
Recruitment of key staff	2	2
Role changes	2	2
Self-sufficiency	1	2
Visibility of IET activities	11	20
IET branding	9	9
Propaganda and guerrilla gardening	3	13
2. 'Plates' Model		
a) Community		
Challenges for Todmorden		
Apathy	1	1
Aspiration	4	5
Crime	1	2
Economic	10	10
Inequality	2	3
Exclusion	1	1
Health Issues	4	7
Isolation	2	2
Lack of education	3	3
Lack of integration	2	4
Lack of power	1	1
Location	2	2
Self-esteem	1	1
Size	1	1
Diversity	1	1
Environmental Issues	4	4
Improvements to local area	3	4
Focus	11	18
Holistic approach	1	1
Health improvement	2	3
Nutrition		
Affect on children	2	3
Change in diet	2	3
Consuming IE produce	2	3
Impact		
Crime and vandalism reduction	3	4
Empowerment	1	1

Equal opportunities	1	1
Pride	5	5
Proactivity	4	5
Resilience	4	4
Self-efficacy	1	1
Vibrancy	3	5
Role at events	3	4
Social interaction	1	1
b) Business		
Branding	1	1
Buy local ethos	2	5
Commercialisation	1	1
Connection with IE	4	10
Connection with Tod	3	8
Events	1	5
Impact on small businesses	7	16
Innovations and spin-offs		
AquaGarden		
Connection to IET	1	1
Development issues	5	11
Finance	6	13
Interest	1	1
Underuse	2	2
Incredible Farm		
Aims of farm - food production	3	4
Connection with IET	1	1
Development	1	1
Interest	2	3
Underuse	2	2
Volunteers - international	3	3
Market Stalls	3	10
Seeing the connection	2	2
Selling produce	1	1
Shared Economy	1	2
Third sector issues	2	3
Tourism	4	11
c) Learning		
Adults	2	3

AquaGarden - Skills and learning	4	5
Young people	2	2
Cooking skills	4	10
Developing IE Staff	4	9
Engaging Children	14	30
Food	6	10
Interest in food growing	5	7
Food Inspirers	2	7
Incredible Farm (learning)	4	7
Inter-generationality	6	9
Schools	6	16
Signage	1	1
3. Enablers Challenges and Wider Development		
Appreciation of members' experience	1	1
Conflict tensions and creativity		
Different agendas	1	4
Division of IET elements	5	15
Lack of clear framework	4	8
Lack of information	3	4
Tod In Bloom	5	15
Veganism	4	6
Volunteer charter	1	2
Expansion of IE		
Calderdale-wide	1	1
IE Network		
Beacons and champions	2	7
Connection with IET	1	1
Councils	1	3
Criteria for joining IE	1	1
Development of network	1	6
Funding	2	5
Purpose of network	1	1
'The Movement'	1	3
IET Limited	2	2
Incredible North	2	4
Funding	5	11
Council Commissioned Work	1	2
Use of resources	1	1

Kindness	7	13
Inclusivity	4	7
Local Challenges		
Awareness	3	5
Cultural shift	5	6
Changing from negative to positive	3	5
Cynicism	5	9
Denial	1	1
Engagement	4	7
Division between incomers and long-term residents	13	29
Level of involvement	1	1
Fear of vandalism	1	1
Lack of desire	2	2
Lack of interest	4	6
Local Authority	1	1
Negative perceptions		
Dislike of propaganda gardening	2	2
IE as irritant	1	2
Job insecurity	3	3
Lack of Impact	1	2
Misconceptions	5	10
Phobias	1	2
Reflection of national attitudes	1	1
Resistance to change	7	13
Long-term process	1	3
Pro-activity	10	20
Provocation	1	2
Reducing inequality	1	1
Replicability	10	23
Elements needed for IE	1	1
Personalities	16	24
Sustainability	6	11
Retention	5	7
Workload	2	2
Top Down and Bottom-up approach	4	4
Trust	1	1