|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Discussion guide: Community business leaders follow up interviews | |
| Client: | Power to Change |
| Project: | Community Business Market Study 2022 |
| **Date:** | May 2022 |
| **Author:** | John Higton |

# Sampling approach

Up to fifteen interviews will be conducted with community business leaders who have completed the CBM2022 survey and confirmed their willingness to participate in a follow-up telephone interview.

A purposive sampling strategy will be adopted to select community businesses which (seek to) positively impact the environment and take climate action and whose work has been affected by the rise in cost of living.

We will aim to select interviewees representing community businesses which reflect a broad range of organisation types and ensure representation from the most popular categories.

# Interviewer guidance

*Prior to interview, the interviewer is to look at the responses submitted by the interviewee to the CBM2022 survey, particularly those highlighted in yellow in this topic guide. The interviews should be conducted in an open-ended way, using this script as a guide, but with discretion to pursue issues which the interviewees raise.*

# Introduction for the interviewee

The purpose of this interview is to explore in more detail some of your survey responses to help us understand a little more about how your community business operates. In particular, we are interested in finding out more about:

* Exploring the importance of improving the environment and issues of climate change.
* Understanding the enablers/barriers for community businesses considering expanding into retail properties on the high street
* Views on the levelling up agenda and the impact of the rising cost of living on community business operations and the needs of those the organisation supports
* The determinants and benefits of different company structures
* Creating and adapting technology within community businesses.

This interview will inform a wider review of the community business market for Power to Change which will culminate in a published report.

# Interview details for the participant

## PRIOR TO COMMENCING INTERVIEW

Have you had chance to read the privacy notice sent to you?

## IF INTERVIEWEE HAS NOT READ THE PRIVACY NOTICE

The interview will be conducted according to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and will last approximately 45 minutes. It is important to note that there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers; it is your thoughts and experiences that we are interested in.

You have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions and you can leave the interview at any point without giving a reason. All information captured will be handled in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which means it will be kept confidential and all the information you provide will be anonymised before being used in reports and deleted once the report is published.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO ALL INTERVIEWEES

Do you have any questions before we begin?

With your permission, I’d like to record the interview to assist us in reviewing and accurately analysing your responses in more detail. Do you consent to this?

## [If no, start the interview questions and take notes of the interviewee’s responses]

## [If yes, switch on the recorder and read out the following]

For the recording, could you confirm that you’re okay for me to record our conversation today?

# Background (5 mins)

1. From your survey response we understand the main function of your community business is a [INSERT Q11 survey response]. Could you please outline:
   1. the key activities of your community business
   2. the services or products offered
   3. your organisation’s most important contributions to the local community
2. What is your role in the community business and how long have you been involved with the organisation?
3. How do you define “community” in the context of your organisation?

# Environment (10 mins)

SAMPLING NOTE: Select a mix of response from Q12\_E – “Improving the environment and taking climate action”. Split roughly evenly between those stating: “no impact / does not apply to us” | “some impact” | “a lot of impact”.

Also ensure a selection of actions taken at Q14 – “Do the activities of your community business aim to improve the environment or address the climate crisis in any of the following ways?”

You mentioned in the survey that your community business had / did not have [Response from Q12\_E] an impact on improving the environment and taking climate action. Can you describe what prompted this response?

* 1. What approaches does your organisation take to mitigate its operational impact on the climate?
     1. How is your organisation taking action in relation to the environment and climate action e.g. through your products and services offered to the community, or through changes to your internal processes and policies?
  2. Can you provide examples of specific environmental or climate actions that your organisation takes and what happens as a result?

PROMPTS IF REQUIRED - ASK INTERVIEWEE TO DESCRIBE ANY ACTIONS TAKEN:

* + 1. Internal environmental training for staff or volunteers
    2. Carbon neutrality or foot-printing policies or activities
    3. Policies or activities covering transport, vehicle use and travel
    4. Policies or activities covering the use of your buildings and the resources your building use
    5. Waste management and recycling policies or business activities
    6. Policies or activities that improve the natural environment, biodiversity and land use
  1. Do the services you provide to your community positively impact the environment?

PROMPTS IF REQUIRED - ASK INTERVIEWEE TO DESCRIBE ANY POSITIVE IMPACT:

* + 1. Improving buildings (e.g. renovating buildings; energy efficiency)
    2. Energy collection or supply (e.g. measures to generate or store renewable energy locally)
    3. Improving or protecting the natural environment (e.g. biodiversity conservation, land use/management, connecting with the natural world)
    4. Supporting adaptions to limit a community’s impact on the climate
    5. Transportation (e.g. active travel, public or community transport, electric vehicles, last mile delivery)
    6. Waste management and/or resource consumption (e.g. recycling, composting, food waste, repair and reuse, retail and consumerism)
    7. Food growing, provision or education (e.g. community food growing and provision, diet and education, farming)
    8. Adaptation to climate impacts (e.g. resilience measures)
  1. If so, please can you give examples of how do they impact the local community / how do they impact the environment?
  2. How effective have these actions been?

**ASK ALL:**

1. What barriers does your organisation face devising and implementing environmentally beneficial actions?
2. What barriers does your community face in taking climate action?
3. What external support has your community business already received to help address climate change and environmental issues?
   1. Who provided the support?
   2. How useful was this support to your organisation and why?
   3. Was any support more useful than others? Why was this?
   4. How do you think the support you received could have been improved?
4. Power to Change is committed to supporting community businesses address the climate and nature crisis. What could Power to Change do to support community businesses transition to a fairer and greener economy?
   1. What is it about this support that would help the community business?

# Levelling Up and the cost of living (5-10 mins)

1. What do you interpret by the term “levelling up”?
2. How does this interpretation relate to the work of your community business?
   1. Is levelling up relevant to your community business? Why do you think that?
   2. What does your business “levelling up” mean to the local community? What happens to the local community when your organisation levels up?
3. Has your organisation accessed any levelling up funds?
   1. Which funds has your organisation accessed?
   2. Can you talk through the process of applying for and accessing these funds? What about the process was easy or difficult?
   3. How have / will any funds benefit your organisation?
4. How has the cost of living crisis affected…
   1. …your organisation?
   2. … your community?
   3. INTERVIEWER: To consider increasing bills for food, fuel, energy or other items.
5. Are you concerned about how the cost of living crisis will affect your organisation in the future?
   1. How do you think it will affect your organisation? E.g. ability to pay bills, keep assets, provide services, pay staff, income through trading etc.
   2. And how do you think it will affect your community in future?
6. Can you describe any actions your organisation has taken to mitigate the impact from increases in the cost of living?
   1. What changes are you making as a result of the cost of living crisis?
   2. Which actions have had greater impact and why?
   3. How effective do you think the changes will be? What other impacts do you see?

# High streets (10 mins)

SAMPLING NOTE: Recruit a mix of those who do and do not have a presence on the high street (Yes and no at Q34). Also a spread of agree / disagree across Q35a “A high street is, or would be, a suitable location for our business” and Q35c “High street shops, services and activities are important to our local community”.

INTERVIEW NOTE: Explain our definition of high street to the interviewee:

The next set of questions are about high streets. We define a high street as both an established retail centre of a village, town or city as well as secondary high streets that you might find at the edges of village, town or city suburbs.

1. [IF NO AT Q34] Has your organisation tried to secure a high street property for business use? What was your experience of this?

[IF YES AT Q34] Did your organisation relocate to the high street from another location?

1. [IF CONSIDERED OR HAVE RELOCATED ABOVE] What external influences or actors encourage or deter community businesses taking up opportunities to relocate to high streets?
   1. Can you describe the experiences of your organisation when relocating or trying to relocate? What were the main challenges you faced?
   2. From where did you receive support for high street relocation? What was helpful about this support?
   3. What (further) advice, guidance or support about relocating to a high street would have been useful to you? Why would this support be useful?
2. In the survey (Q35c), you [agreed / disagreed] that high street shops, services and activities are important to our local community. Can you explain why you think this way?
   1. Is the idea of a high street still relevant to your local community? Why is that?
   2. [IF AGREE AT E Q35c] Is there a relationship between a strong local high street and community cohesion? And regeneration? Why do you think that?
   3. [IF AGREE AT Q35c] Which groups in the local community place more importance in a high street? Why are high streets important to this group?
   4. [IF DISAGREE AT Q35c] Why do you think high street shops, services and activities are not important to the local community?
3. You also [agreed / disagreed] [Q35b] that that placing your organisation on the high street could regenerate your area. Can you explain why you think this way?
   1. [IF AGREE AT Q35b] How does / would operating from the high street benefit local regeneration?
   2. [IF DISAGREE AT Q35b] Why does / would operating from the high street not help local regeneration?

# Asset ownership / management and company structures (5-10 mins)

SAMPLING NOTE: We want a spread of community businesses that own and or manage buildings or land – Codes 1 to 3 at Q6. Questions below are experiential, so are less relevant to those who do not own or manage assets.

[IF CODE 1 TO 3 AT Q6] In the survey, you said your owned and/or managed buildings or land (we defined these as assets).

1. Can you describe how your organisation came about owning and/or managing its assets?
   1. Who owned / managed the asset before?
   2. Why did you move into the ownership / management of the community business?
2. What support is useful for your organisation in relation to owning and/or managing assets?
   1. Who offered any support received? What were the strengths of those offering support?
   2. What (other) support would be useful? What impact would this support have on your organisation?
3. Why do you think community ownership of assets is important?
   1. What are the benefits of the community business owning or managing these assets?
   2. How does your ownership / management specifically benefit the community?

SAMPLING NOTE: This question is relevant to all

1. What is your community businesses ownership structure?
   1. PROMPTS: Do you have a cooperative ownership model? Do you offer community shares? Etc.
   2. What are the reasons behind using the ownership and organisational structure of your organisation? What impacts accrue?
   3. What are the benefits of the model you have adopted to the community?
   4. Did you consider any other ownership or business models? Why were these rejected?

# Digital and community technology (5-10 mins)

SAMPLING NOTE: A spread of businesses that have undertaken one or more of the options at Q36. Prioritise those selecting Q36c: Creating or adapting new technologies to support your community; then Q36b: Digitalizing existing or introducing new digital services.

We are interested in community businesses digital development and the growth of community technology.

Here, “community technology” means hardware or software that is created or adapted by a community business for the benefit of the community. This might be technology you’ve used to improve your services to the community, technology that the community can access or use itself or infrastructure that supports local people or businesses.

1. Can you describe what technologies your organisation has created or adapted to support your community?
   1. Has any technology been created specifically for your purposes? If so, can you describe how the technology was developed?
   2. Has your organisation adapted any existing technology for community benefit or use? If so, what technology have you adapted and how did you make those adaptations?
   3. What are the benefits and drawbacks of managing technology yourself rather than using “off-the-shelf” products?
   4. How has the wider community benefited from these changes?
2. Is your organisation planning any further technological initiatives?
   1. If yes, can you describe what the purpose of these new initiatives will be? What is their intended impact on the community?

**ASK ALL:**

1. What technology do you use to run your organisation / deliver its activities?
   1. Is it fit for purpose?
   2. How could technology for your community business be improved?
2. Would any of your organisation’s activities benefit from the application of new technology? If yes, how could technology improve the delivery and/or outcomes from these business activities?
   1. What barriers exist to using more or different technology?
   2. What support could help you circumvent these barriers?
   3. Would you use community-owned technology if available to you? What would stop you from using it?

# Closing comments (2 mins)

**[INTERVIEWER to ensure that this section is also recorded.]**

1. I have come to the end of my interview questions. Do you have any further comments to make that you think are relevant to our research of the community business market?

Close interview

Thank you very much for your time today.