

# Productivity Insights Network

**RSAI-BIS Special Sessions,  
17<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Cambridge**



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# Introduction & Overview

Professor Philip McCann  
PIN Co-Director



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productivity  
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Session 1

# Productivity, inclusive growth & wellbeing

Chair: Professor Vania Sena



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# The UK Futures Programme: a longer-term evaluation

Anne Green

City-REDI, University of Birmingham

Research conducted with Carol Stanfield and George Bramley

Email: [a.e.green.1@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.e.green.1@bham.ac.uk) @Anne\_E\_Green

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RSAI-BIS Conference Special Sessions, Downing College, Cambridge

# Overview of presentation

- Context
- Case Study of the UK Futures Programme – a co-designed programme for boosting productivity
  - initial real time evaluation (2014-2016)
  - *two years on* (late 2018)
- Key findings
  - sustainability
  - engaging employers
  - enhancing productivity – including the role of place
- Lessons for policy

# Context and Scope

## Context

- ‘Productivity puzzle’
- Sub-national variations in productivity are particularly pronounced in the UK
- Concerns about low skills and relative lack of investment in workforce development
- Management & leadership

## Scope

- Case study of *UK Futures Programme* as an innovative initiative encouraging collaborative employer solutions to address these challenges – **follow-up interviews after termination of programme**

# Objectives of the Programme

- Support employer collaborative solutions to workforce development problems
- Encourage innovative solutions to these problems
- Identify ways to address new or persistent market or system failures which act as a brake on UK competitiveness
- Identify ‘what works’ for wider adoption



# What was the UK Futures Programme (UKFP)?

- Run by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) between 2014 and 2016
- £9 million was co-invested (£4.4 million public funding) in 32 projects
- A ‘test and trial’ programme challenging groups of businesses
- Aimed at tackling workplace productivity through improvements to skills (focused on management and leadership) and workplace practices



# UKFP – Five challenges

- Skills in the off-site construction sector
- Management and Leadership in Supply chains
- **Progression pathways in the Retail and Hospitality industries**
- Skills for innovation in manufacturing
- **Developing leadership and entrepreneurship in small firms through local anchor institutions**

# The projects – retail and hospitality

- **Living Wage Foundation** (*Retail*) - ‘Good Jobs’ toolkit
- **Timewise Foundation** (*Retail*) - clearer routes and opportunities for promotion for part-time & flexible working
- **Realm** (*Retail*) – on-site skills academy
- **Fifteen Cornwall** (*Hospitality*) - advancement in the sector
- **National Coastal Tourism Academy** (*Hospitality*) – worked with hotels in Bournemouth
- **People 1<sup>st</sup>** (*Hospitality*) - recruitment and progression of low paid staff
- **Rocco Forte** (*Hospitality*) - developed an ‘app’ to support training and progression for staff

# The projects – leadership & entrepreneurship in small firms

- **Teesside University** - challenging the low value attributed to leadership by local small businesses by developing a community of experiential and shared learning via workshops, coaching, site visits to large employers and peer learning sessions
- **Newcastle University** - large regional employers providing support to micro and small businesses by releasing senior managers to provide 1:1 support to micro and small business owners as part of a structured programme
- **Chamber of Commerce in St Helens** – leadership and management seminars for micro firms wanting to grow and mentoring by medium-sized employers

# Evaluation: short-term

## 2014 – 2016 evaluation (UKCES)

Findings	Lessons
Attracted new partners (employers and stakeholders)	Identify the right problem and generate the right solution
Collaboration and co-creation required a lot of stimuli	‘Warm’ networks/products facilitate engagement
Some level of innovation	Managers drive change and collaboration
Time-consuming to manage	A wide range of factors contribute to sustainability



# Evaluation: longer-term

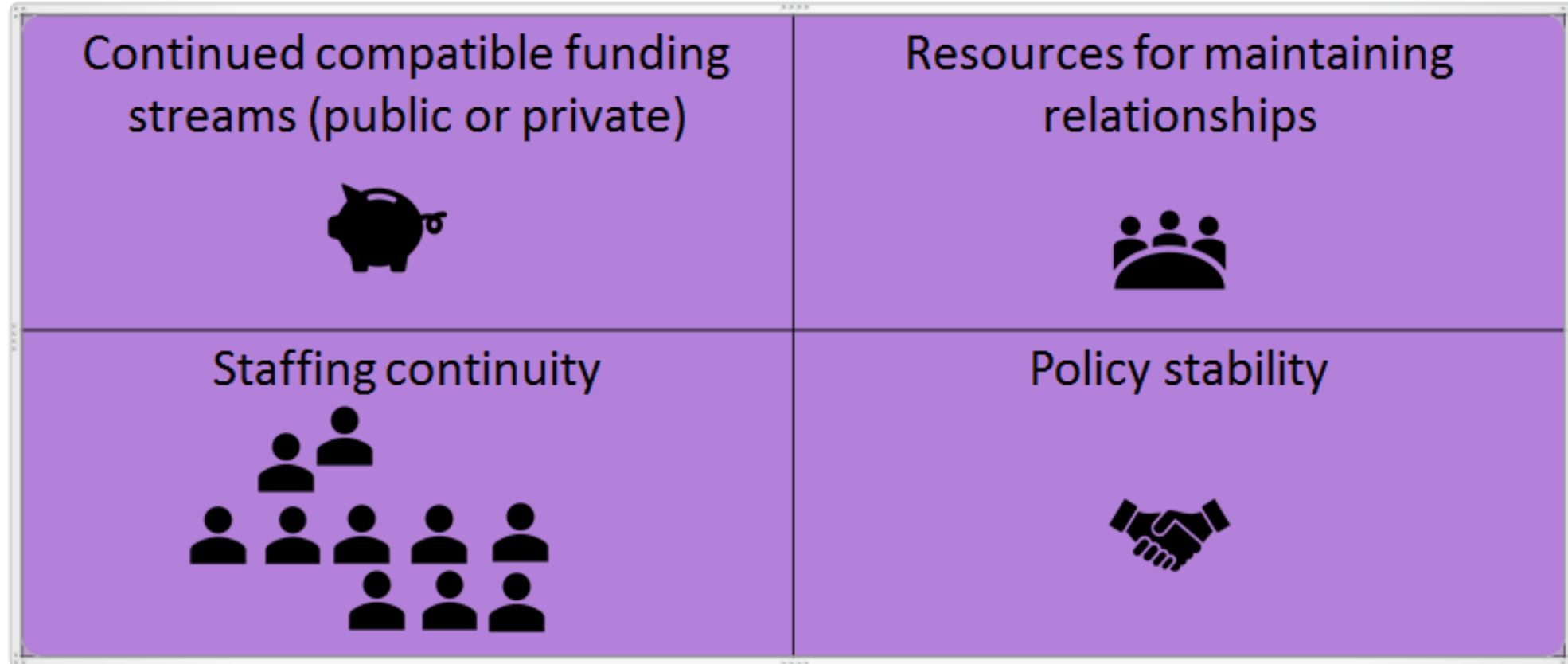
## But what happened next? (post-UKCES, late 2018)

What we did	To address these questions
Engaged with <i>Be the Business</i> and <i>Department for Work and Pensions</i> partners	What ‘hooks’ are effective in engaging business in productivity improvement? How? Why?
Acquired small grant from Productivity Insights Network	What interventions enhanced productivity/associated practices?
Interviews with 10 project leads and 5 follow up case studies	How sustainable are different approaches?
Topics covered include: current state of product/ service/ relationships; impacts; reflections	How to conduct trials on ‘what works’ in improving workplace productivity?

# Findings - overview

- The Programme added value to businesses through engaging with projects and activities which would not have happened otherwise at the time or with such scope, scale and depth
- Some form of sustained activity was found in nine of ten projects examined in late 2018
  - continuation via other funding/ self-funding
  - development and continuation of idea
  - learning morphed into other programmes

# Findings: sustainability



# Findings: engaging employers

Use of appropriate accessible language for focused interventions by trusted intermediaries



Mutual benefits espoused by peers

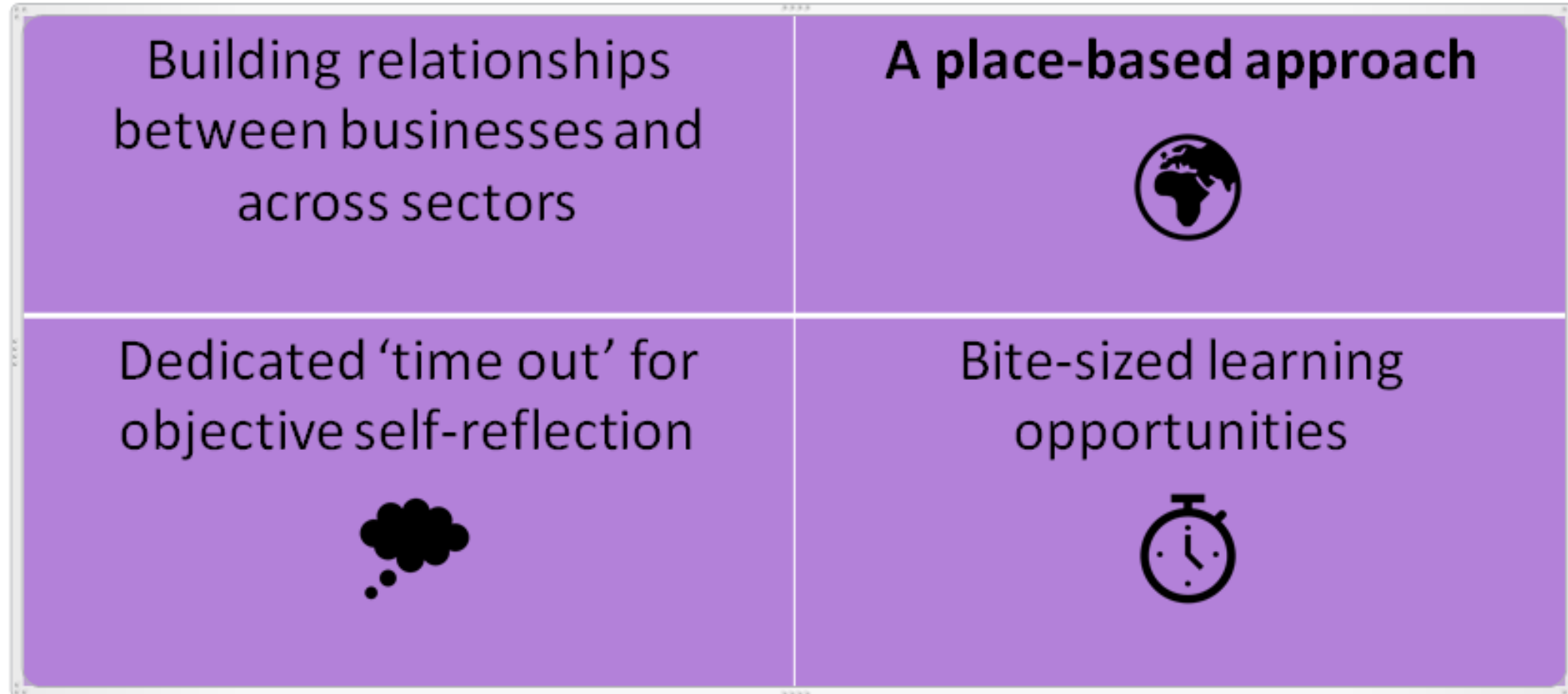


Mitigating risks – including through continuity of support





# Findings: enhancing productivity



# A place-based approach

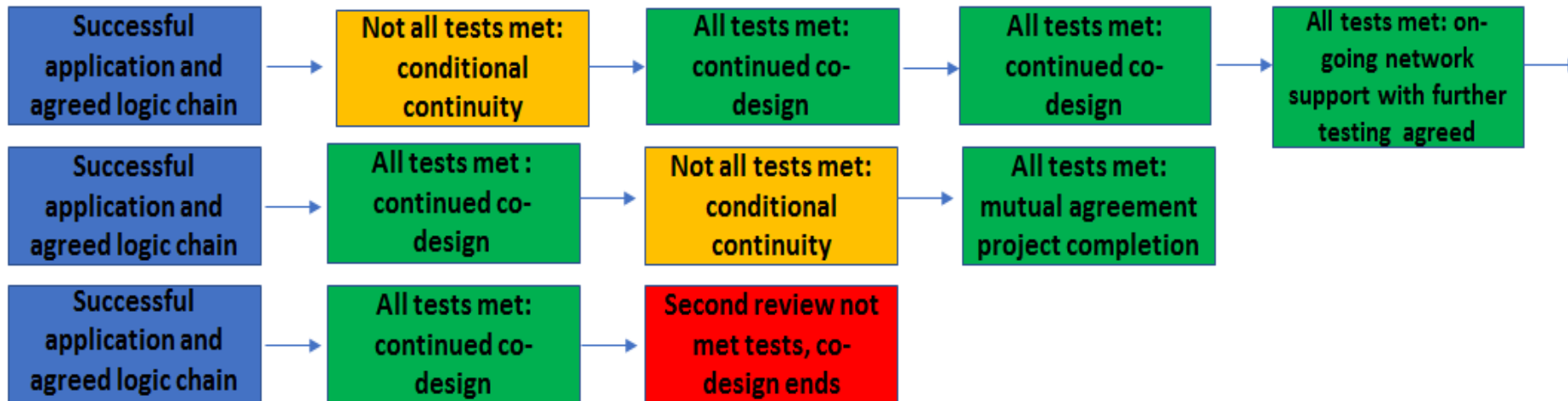
- The **right geography** is important
  - pre-occurring relationships between employers and intermediaries
  - easier to bring employers together face-to-face locally
  - trusted local anchor institutions – e.g. Chamber of Commerce, universities, etc.
  - local co-ordination and signposting
  - nature of challenge in place – common challenges, including across sectors
  - development of ***localised project ecology***

# Lessons for policy

- The need for **realism** about expectations and resourcing: longer term investment in success
  - a role for reflective learning pilots, with ongoing evaluation, operating locally involving partners with aligned goals?
- The need for **policy stability**
- Work with the **partners with aligned goals**
- The **importance of place**: geography motivates and enables
- **Serendipity** – the *right time* in the *right place*

# Taking learning forward?

Learning could be taken forward in *a series of rolling reflective learning pilots*, with ongoing evaluation, operating locally and involving organisations with aligned goals





**For more information:**

Green A, Stanfield C and Bramley G (2019) *Evaluation of co-designed programmes for boosting productivity: a follow-up of selected UK Futures Programme projects*,

[https://productivityinsightsnetwork.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/02/PIN\\_ProjectReport\\_Green\\_January19.pdf](https://productivityinsightsnetwork.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/02/PIN_ProjectReport_Green_January19.pdf)

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City-REDI, University of Birmingham, UK

@City-REDI @Anne\_E\_Green Email: [a.e.green.1@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.e.green.1@bham.ac.uk)