People and Place Engagement Events

Feedback Report 2019

Foreword

One of the key successes of People and Place has been collaboration. As highlighted in the evaluation the Partnership model has brought together people with different experiences, knowledge and skills, in order to accomplish common goals and provided an effective basis for tackling social and economic disadvantage within deprived communities.

The evaluation also recognised that the delivery of the People and Place Strategy has not been without its challenges and the evaluation has provided insight of what we could learn from those. One of its main conclusions was that the principle of focusing resources on those areas most in need, is widely accepted as being appropriate, but it is how we best identify need and target those resources that is the key.

The 2018 stakeholder engagement events gave us all the opportunity to take stock, recognise the successes and the challenges, and consider new evidence to help inform the way forward in terms of reshaping the Strategy and refocusing funding. As consistently reported at these stakeholder engagement events, the main driver for change must be the intended beneficiaries of the Strategy. We must all seek to ensure that we deliver high quality services that provide value for money.

In presenting this feedback the Department recognises that the events are only part of a process of wider engagement with a range of different stakeholders to develop an overarching Anti-poverty Strategy. The Department will ensure that the findings from the People and Place evaluation and feedback report are fed into the thinking underpinning the Anti-poverty Strategy. Likewise the emerging suggestions and ideas about the future of People and Place will also help to inform the Anti-poverty Strategy.

Content

Summary

The Department's Community Empowerment Division organised and facilitated a round of stakeholder engagement events between October and December 2018 at venues across Northern Ireland; with two in Belfast, and one each in Derry/Londonderry, Ballymena, Portadown and Omagh.

These events were attended by around 200 representatives, with a range of participants including delivery partners from the voluntary and community sector, other NI Departments and political representatives.

Overall the feedback from the engagement event substantiates the findings of the 2014 People and Place Evaluation.

The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that investment has made a difference in the targeted areas; this was very evident throughout all events as well as via feedback from consultees of the Evaluation.

When asked to use one word to describe the programmes, the majority of participants used positive descriptors with 22% stating essential, just under 12% vital, 8% positive and 6.5% beneficial, critical, and invaluable. Against 1.3% who were more sceptical with descriptors of piecemeal, underfunded and under-supported.

Again when asked to use one word to describe the impact of the programme within their communities; the majority used positive descriptors with just under 15% stating positive, just under 11% empowering, with 9% vital and 7% supportive, essential and life changing. Against those who were less convinced with 2% stating limited and 1% stating patchy and restrictive.

These viewpoints of the Strategy are found throughout the 2014 Evaluation consultee's feedback.

27% of participants disagreed, or strongly disagreed, that boundaries were detrimental to the delivery of the programme. This would support the lessons learnt from the Evaluation that there is a need to provide flexibility to include other areas in any further programmes.

62% of participants agreed, or strongly agreed, that the assessment of the impact of the programme had been impeded by the absence of robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Whilst the Evaluation of the programme recognised and highlighted a number of improvements in these areas, it did note that they were introduced too late to enable full assessment of the impact of the programme from the outset.

Throughout the events participants raised the need to measure the success of the projects and the impact they have made at a community and individual level – that cannot be solely measured by quantitative data. Whilst not within the Evaluation lessons learnt it is felt that this is an important element of the programme and should be considered further.

83% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that all the relevant Statutories played a key role in developing and implementing the programme. One of the key findings of the Evaluation was that all Partnerships noted a lack of buy-in from one or more statutory agencies which they believe limited the extent to which they could implement activities against their action plans and develop a fully integrated approach.

92% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the process of short term funding was detrimental to the delivery of the programme. Again feedback from the Evaluation highlights that although NR was strategic by design, funding uncertainties and the need to bid annually for funding undermined a strategic approach.

Finally in the context of the existing Strategy and its implementation participants had an opportunity to consider and feedback on:

Things that had made a difference

46% of the working groups stated that collaborative working had made a difference, with 39% stated the varied, vital and specialised services supported through the programme with 34% who believed core

resources and continuation of funding and the improvement in their communities and people's lives. Only 5% of the working groups said building capacity and 2% stated buy in from statutories and agencies.

Things that have not been so successful

100% of the working groups stated that funding and contract periods had not been so successful with 77% stating current programme management and or functions and 54% linkages with other Departments, Statutory Bodies, Private Sector.

Things that could have made a difference

54% of the working groups stated that a better outcome/evidence base would have made a difference in terms of accountability and impact similarly 45% stated better programme management with 27% stating statutory buy-in. More surprisingly only 7% stated funding. In conclusion there is a strong correlation between the findings and conclusion of the Evaluation and the reported feedback from the engagement events.

This validates the 2014 Evaluation, its lessons learned and associated recommendations. Going forward these aspects will be a major consideration in the development of an overarching Anti-poverty Strategy, the foundation of taking forward any enhancement in the delivery of the existing programmes and the development of any future programmes to tackle deprivation.

Introduction

1.1 The stakeholder engagement events gave us all the opportunity to take stock, recognise the successes and the challenges and consider new evidence to help inform the way forward, in terms of reshaping the Strategy and refocusing funding.

1.2 Feedback was gathered throughout the event by:

- online software 'Mentimeter' which captured feedback in real time

- discussions within participants in Group settings.

1.3 The purpose of the engagement events was to gather feedback from delivery partners and consider that feedback against the lessons learnt and recommendations of the 2014 Evaluation of the People and Place Strategy.

Mentimeter

2.1 Attendees were asked five questions which were generated from the lessons learnt and recommendations of the 2014 People and Place Evaluation.

Attendees were asked a specific question and responded using Mentimeter to select 1 of the following statements:

- Strongly agree

- Agree

- Neither agree or disagree

- Disagree

- Strongly disagree

2.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree funding awarded through the programme has made a difference in your areas?

Figure 1

Strongly Agree · Agree · Neither Agree or Disagree · Disagree · Strongly Disagree
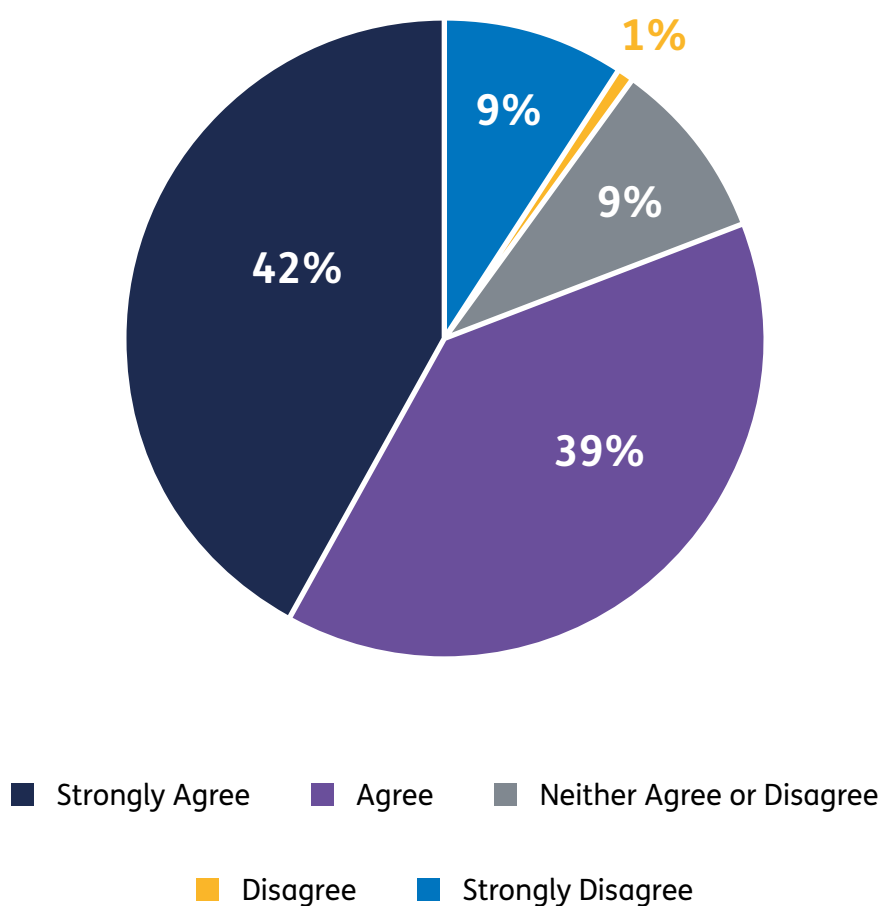
81% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the funding awarded through the programme has made a difference in their areas.

2.3   To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Neighbourhood Renewal Area boundaries were detrimental to the delivery of the programme?

Figure 2

5%   5%

22%

42%

26%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree or Disagree

■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
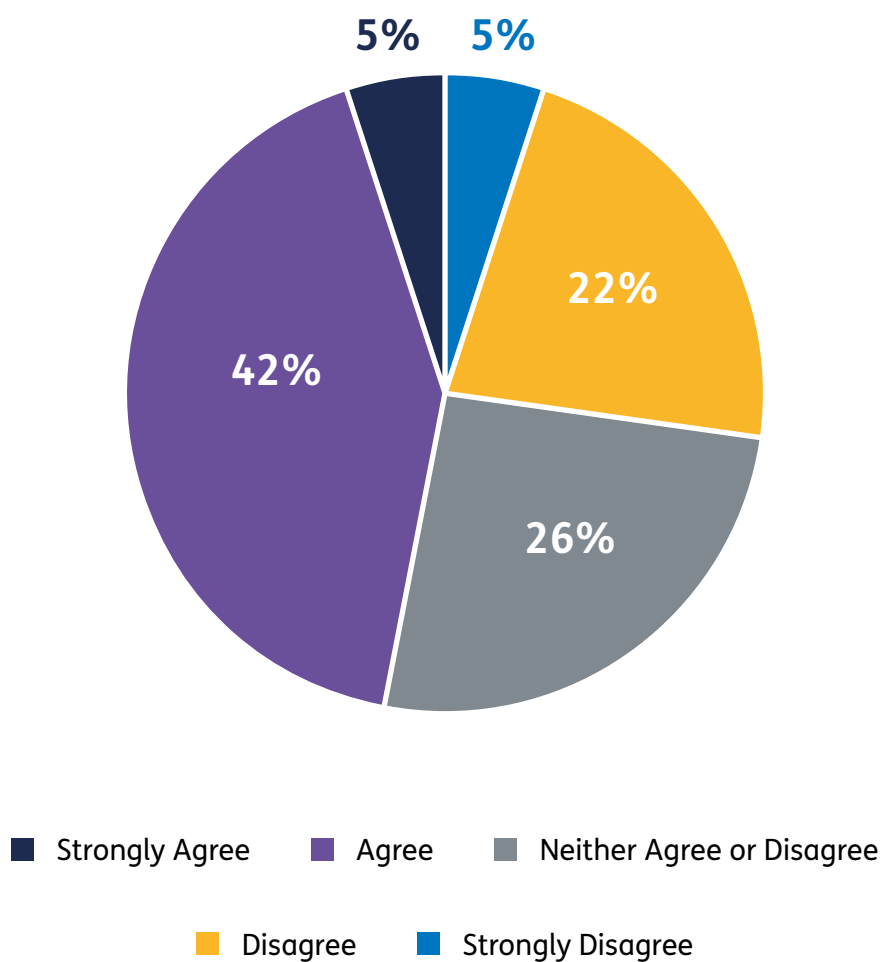
47% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the Neighbourhood Renewals Area boundaries were detrimental to the delivery of the programme with 26% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed.

2.4   In your opinion has the assessment of the impact of NR been impeded by the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation system?

Figure 3

6%

11%

27%

56%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree or Disagree

■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
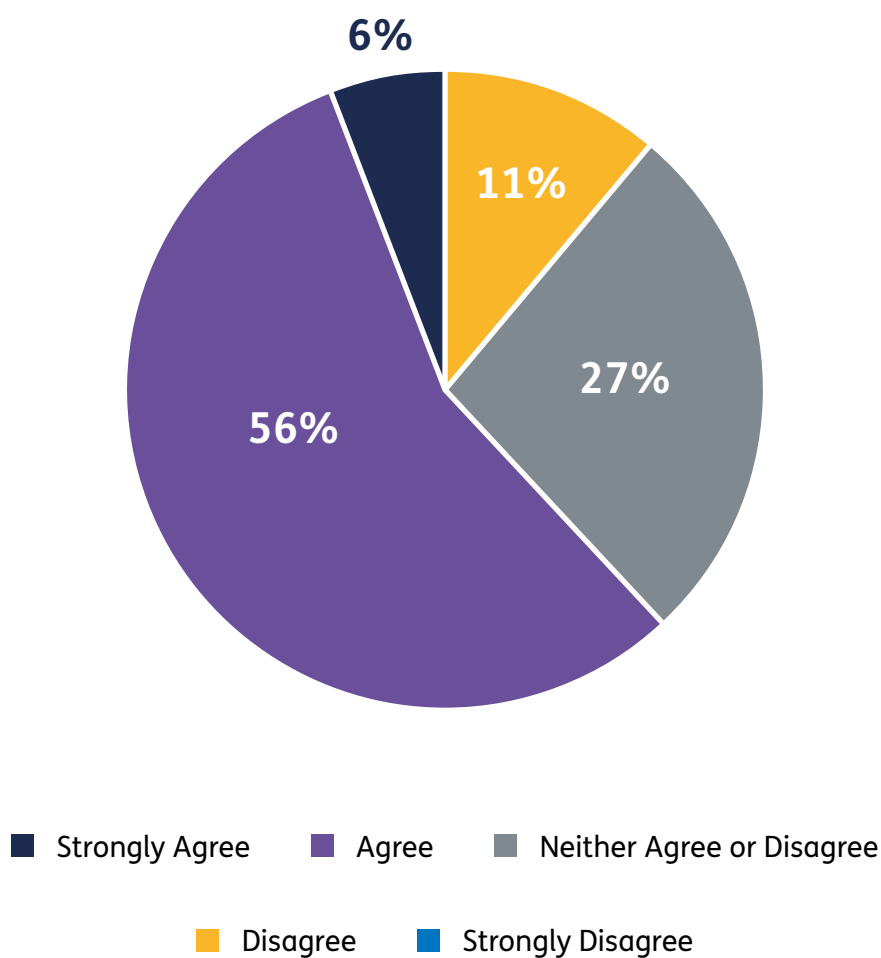
62% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the assessment of the impact of NR had been impeded by the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation system. 27% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed.

2.5 As an Executive Strategy do you think all relevant Statutories played a key role in developing and implementing the programme?

Figure 4
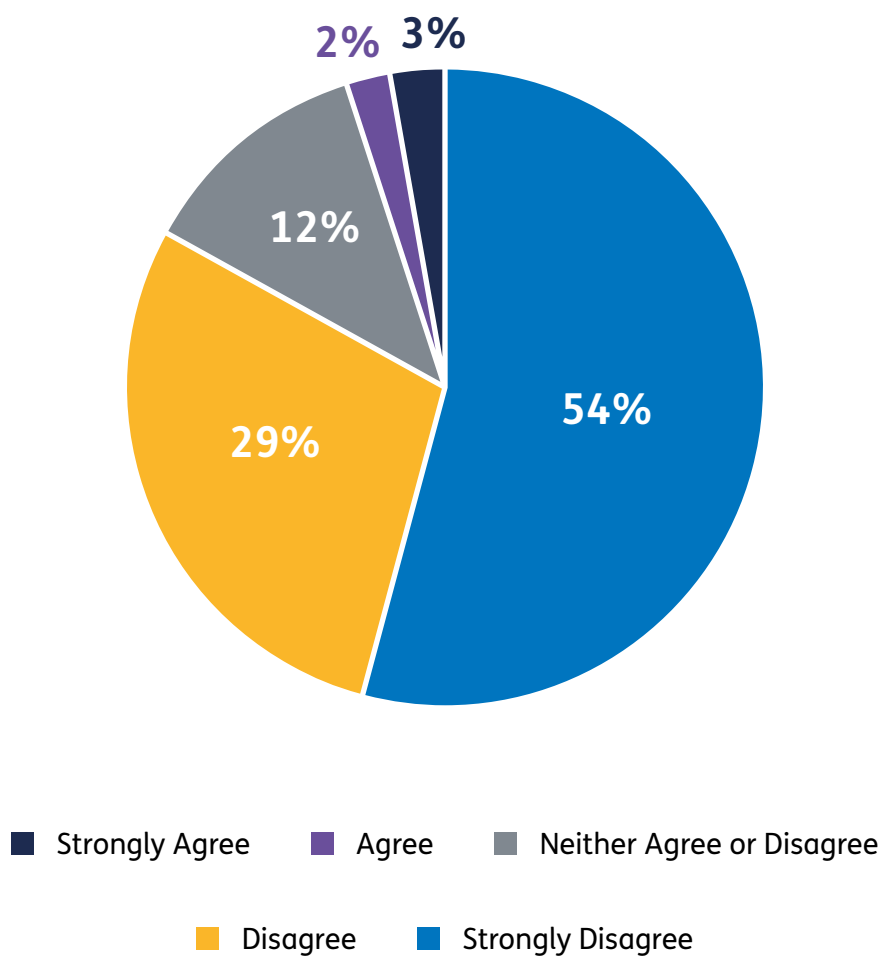
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

83% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that all the relevant Statutories played a key role in developing and implementing the programme.

2.6   To what extent do you agree or disagree that the process of short term funding was detrimental to the delivery of the programme?

Figure 5
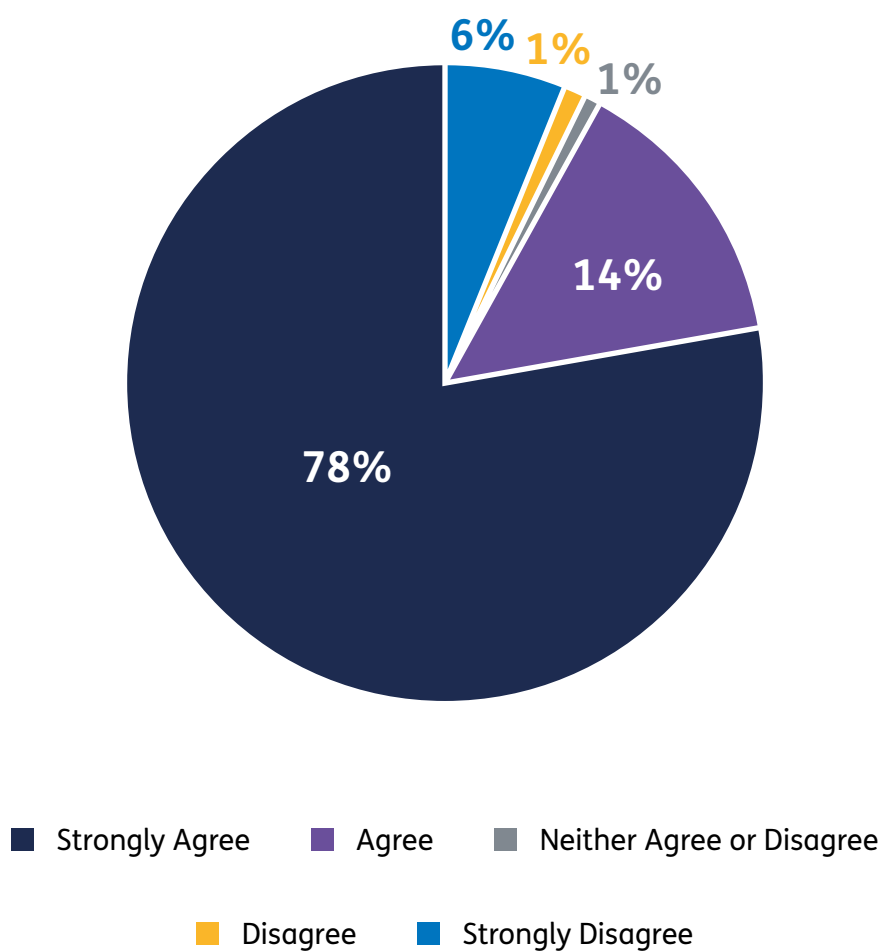
92% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the process of short term funding was detrimental to the delivery of the programme.

2.7 Participants were asked to use one word to describe:

- Neighbourhood Renewal and Areas at Risk programmes; and

- The impact of Neighbourhood Renewal and Areas at Risk programmes on your communities.

Figures 6 and 7 display the breadth of opinions which demonstrate the participants views of the programme and its impact in their communities.

Figure 6 – Use one word to describe Neighbourhood Renewal and Areas at Risk programmes

Support Worthwhile Transformative Under-supported Progressive
Disadvantage Meaningful Need Intervention Innovation Improving
Needed Important Enriching Positive Lifeline
Partnership Accommodation Life-changing Community Income
Firefighting Potential Frustrating Vital Linking Indispensable Helpful Impactful Oil Needy Development
Invaluable Essential Necessary Deprived
Productive Beneficial Change Useful Critical Duplication
Tailored Effective Opportunity
Piecemeal Bureaucratic Anti-poverty Fundamental Crucial Complex Life-saving
Long-lived Infrastructure Deprivation Challenging Investment
Transformational Good Enhancing Successful
Underfunded Improvements Grassroots Supportive
Paramount Needs-led

Figure 7 – Use one word to describe the impact of Neighbourhood Renewal and Areas at Risk programmes on your communities

Breakout Sessions

3.1 Participants were asked to work in groups and in the context of the existing strategy and its implementation consider **"3 things"**:

- that have made a difference

- that have not been so successful

- that could have made a difference

Across the events 56 Groups provided feedback. The structure of the feedback sessions allowed for constructive and insightful conversations. All participants benefited from these breakout sessions which provided a channel of open communication between key stakeholders and officials.

3.2 The feedback from this session was divided into sub headers and are shown at **Figure 8 to 10**.

Figure 8 – In context of the existing Strategy and its implementation

5% of feedback groups said Building Capacity

46% of feedback groups said Collaborative working

4% of feedback groups said Local offices

11% of feedback groups said Physical regeneration/Capital investment

29% of feedback groups said Action Plans & reporting systems

2% of feedback groups said Buyin from agencies

34% of feedback groups said Core resources & continuation of funding

Things that have made a difference

4% of feedback groups said Cross community, peace building

4% of feedback groups said Staff/ key members

34% of feedback groups said Improvement in communities & people's lives

2% of feedback group said High social return

39% of feedback groups said Varied, vital, specialised services

Figure 9 – In context of the existing Strategy and its implementation

9% of feedback groups said Decision makers

77% of feedback groups said Current programme management/functions

Things that have not been so successful

100% of feedback groups said Funding

54% of feedback groups said Linkages with other Depts, Stats, private sector etc
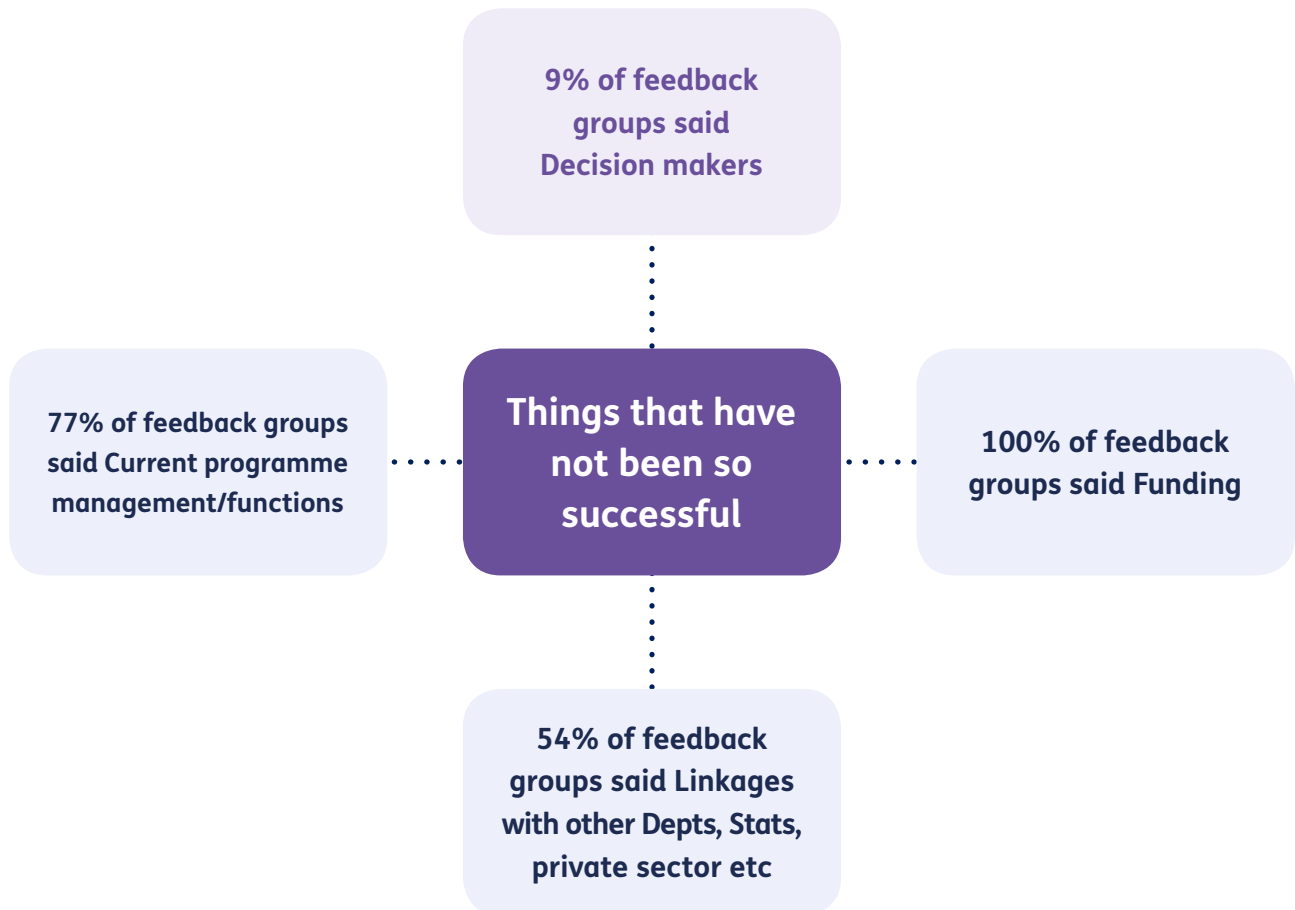
Figure 10 – In context of the existing Strategy and its implementation

20% of feedback groups said Current political situation

13% of feedback groups said Decision makers

27% of feedback groups said statutory buy-in

45% of feedback groups said Programme management

Things that could have made a difference

54% of feedback groups said Outcome/ Evidence bases

7% of feedback groups said Funding

18% of feedback groups said Communication

11% of feedback groups said Boundaries

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