



Make/Shift: Phase 1 Evaluation

Appendix 2: Story of Change

April 2026

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Where we began

We begin our evaluations with a Story of Change (SOC).

Similar to a logic model or Theory of Change, we feel the SOC allows us to focus on inputs and outputs, outcomes and impacts, while keeping it as simple as possible so it is as accessible as possible.

Accessibility is a core principle for us at RMR, so to expand this further, we developed a set of three SOC's to appeal to a variety of learning styles:

- A narrative text version
- A visual model and
- A diagram – our traditional model.

The narrative text version

Long term vision

Amber Valley is a place full of makers, where everybody's creativity matters and people have the power to create the changes they want to see

Who is involved?

The focus for Make/shift is all people of Amber valley, but particularly families, including young people, socially isolated, precariously employed, those from diverse communities, lone adults, as well as those living specifically within the areas of Heanor, Langley Mill, Shipley Park, Alfreton and Somercotes. In order to build relationships with people in these areas, Make/Shift will partner with local creatives, organisations, businesses, and groups who already have connections with their communities. Additionally, Make/Shift will build relationships with strategic partners and funders (i.e., consortium members, public sector organisations, borough/county councils, CVS and other investors/funders) as partners on the Make/Shift journey.

What do we do?

Make

Encouraging people to recognise and develop their own creativity, to 'have a go' at something new and to see themselves as makers



Connect

Weaving together a network of makers which will enable people, through creativity, to develop and strengthen their social connections and connection to nature, to build resilient communities and 'pride in the places they live'

Shift

Changing perceptions of what is important and moving 'more power and resources to local people to make things happen together in the places they care about'

Reflect

Regular reflection and evaluation embedded within the Make/Shift process, allowing Make/Shift to learn, change and grow throughout the life-cycle of the project.

How?

Principles and approaches

Creativity is at the heart of the Make/Shift philosophy, and this is underpinned by an emphasis on the notion that process matters.

Thus, the focus of Make/Shift's work is on making connections through building relationship and taking a value led approach as a means of strengthening communities and developing networks.

This means Make/Shift are committed to a 'by/with/ not 'to/for' approach in their work. Therefore, Make/Shift will move at the speed of trust, not rushing to find solutions or judging situations.

Make/Shift's starting point is recognising and acknowledging strengths, rather than lack in the area, and this is underlined by the premise that everybody is a maker.

Make/Shift values the lessons that can be learned from nature and importance of trying something new, both internally and externally.

They value the potential of a 'have a go' attitude of makers as a means of nurturing the belief in, being open to, and developing the imagination to see, the possibility of change.

Why?

The difference we make

Make/Shift wants to ignite people's curiosity, to explore and value their own creativity, in and of itself.

However, Make/shift also wants to expand people's understanding of creativity in a variety of ways: as a means of self-expression; as an opportunity to step outside their comfort zone, without fearing failure; as a vehicle through which to nurture social connection and develop stewardship of nature and environment, leading to pride in Amber Valley; as a tool to build confidence to make a difference, and lead on change, within their communities and places they live.

Make/Shift wants local groups, organisations, and businesses to understand the value of an arts approach to facilitating change, recognising that they, along with local creatives, have a full and meaningful part to play in developing creativity in Amber Valley.



Through increased knowledge and skills, these local organisations and groups will form part of a developing network which will support and develop projects in and across their communities.

Through exploration, Make/Shift will develop an understanding and articulation of what approaches work, demonstrating the value of bottom-up and collaborative ways of working. Evidencing the value of Make/Shift's work will enable them to secure future resources.

In shifting the perspectives of investors, funders, and strategic partners, they will be able to appreciate and trust the ideas of local communities and see the value of arts and culture for making change.

Funding can then focus on 'by/with' rather than 'to/for' approaches which will build, and support, strong networks that have the resources to thrive thus, shifting power and resource to a grassroots level.

This will foster agency and enable communities to drive forward and influence the changes they desire in their localities, creating Amber valley as a place where everybody feels able to 'make, create, do, repair, grow, share, care for and connect with, what matters to them in the places where they live'.

Opportunities and context

Amber Valley has a rich heritage associated with making, manufacturing and innovation. Local people have a strong connection to place, local heritage, stories, and land.

There is a strong history of working-class solidarity and community-organising set within beautiful landscapes, with an abundance of nature, wildlife, and green spaces.

However, Amber Valley also experiences some geographical and social disconnection. There is a lack of infrastructure in the area to aid connection thus, certain pockets of the district can be overlooked by providers and are structurally under-funded.

Resources

The primary resource is the strengths and energy of the people of Amber Valley.

As Make/Shift begin to embed themselves within Amber Valley they are building relationships and developing resources from within the communities of the borough and further afield.

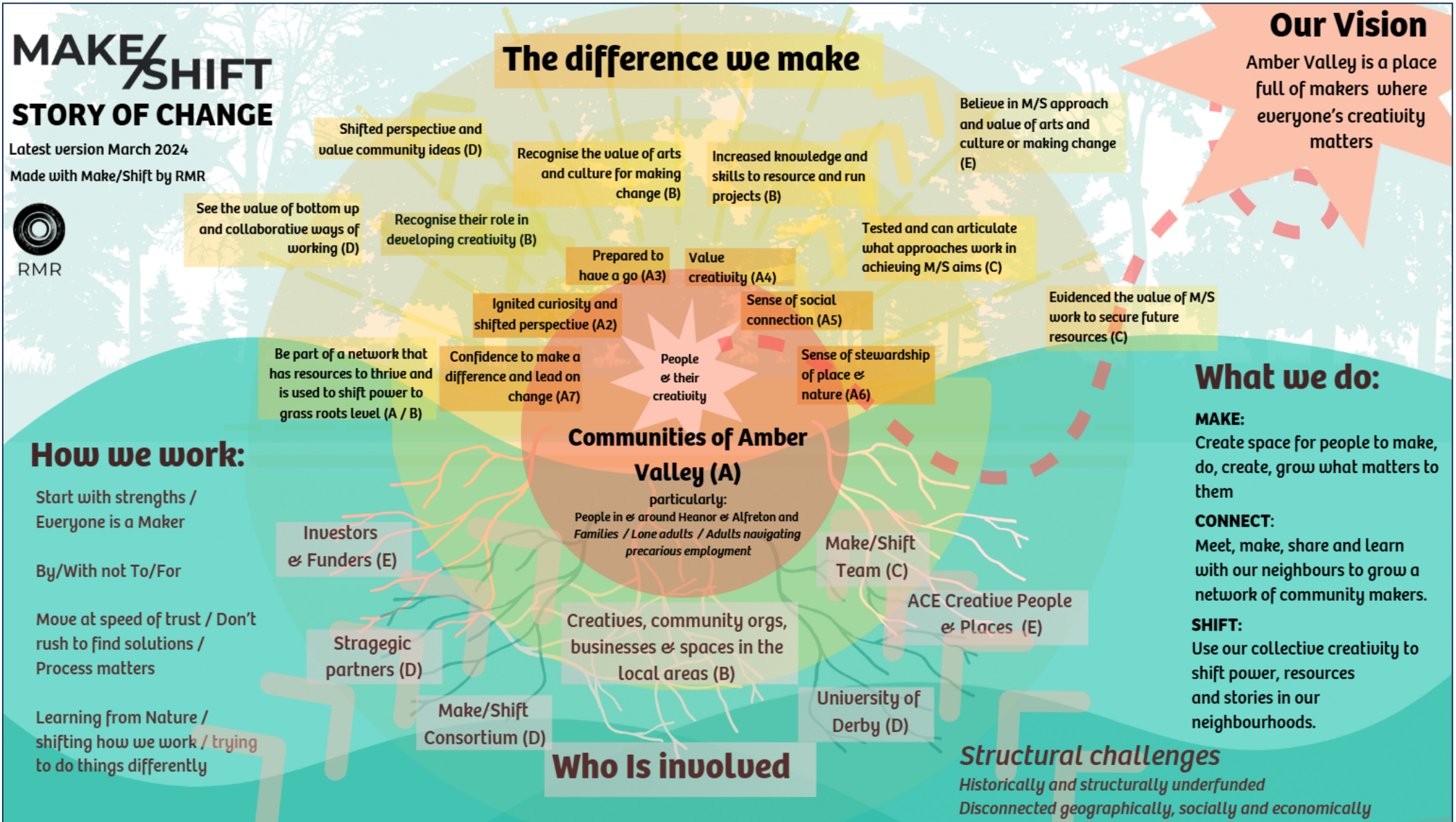
To date these include, local arts organisations, Amber Valley CVS, community centres, local voluntary and community organisations and groups, the Borough Council and County Council, to name but a few.

These relationships have been assisted, in part, through the *Understory* mapping tool devised by the Onion Collective. Through workshops, a map of existing networks has begun to be developed highlighting local community resources and this work will now be developed by all those who have become part of the Amber Valley Understory network.

The Make/Shift team, who are funded by the Arts Council's *Creative People and Places* fund, are supported a Consortium which is administered by Derby University.



Visual model





Diagram

