

September 2020

Big Local and Community Economic Development

This briefing contains detailed case studies and thumbnail sketches of some of the many great examples of Big Locals designing and implementing community economic development initiatives. Together, they highlight the huge potential of communities when they are given the power and resources to improve their local economies and build positive economic, social and environmental change for the people who live, work and do business in the area.

Introduction

The Big Local programme is supported by Local Trust and represents a commitment of over £200 million from the National Lottery Community Fund to 150 neighbourhoods across England. Each Big Local receives at least £1m funding over a period of 10 – 15 years, which can be spent in any way and at whatever pace residents believe will make their area a better place to live.

In many communities, residents of Big Local have been seeking to influence and improve their local economies. Community Economic Development (CED) is the process of economic development within a specific geographic area to benefit the community. At its core, it is about local collective action to resolve economic and social challenges identified by those living, working and doing business in a community.

Research by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) (2020) reveals that more than half of areas are adopting CED approaches to improve the economic and social prospects of residents, build community assets and grow locally generative forms of business.

We have collated this collection of case studies from across Big Locals to provide a picture of the breadth and depth of work delivered by residents to build the skills, assets and opportunities necessary to turn things around in their neighbourhood.

Case Studies

Ambition Lawrence Weston

Lawrence Weston is a post-war housing estate in north west Bristol, built in the late 1940s and early 1950s, with a population of approximately 7,000 people. It is an estate dominated by families and young people. Poor transport links have left the estate cut off both socially and economically. 30% of children are living in poverty, compared to an average of 14% across the South West of England. Unemployment is significantly higher than the national average and the housing stock has been neglected. With Big Local money, the estate is now being transformed. Funding has been invested into a new housing development on a derelict area within the estate, a Lidl supermarket has been attracted to the area and numerous local services have been developed. This all follows work on the area's resident written Community Development Plan and Community Economic Development (CED) Plan, supported by the then-Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Controlling its own future

Ambition Lawrence Weston (ALW) is the resident-led Locally Trusted Organisation helping to administer funding on behalf of the community-led partnership. It facilitates the 'Lawrence Weston Community Network', which brings together all of the 45+ organisations in the area to encourage joint projects and initiatives. The focus has been on creating and keeping more wealth locally, ensuring that money invested circulates around as many businesses and people in the area as possible and subsequently remains within the local economy. In practice, this has resulted in the creation of sustainable sources of employment and income (including through a new community hub providing employment and training services) and the development of a solar farm in partnership with the Bristol Energy Cooperative (BEC) and Bristol City Council – and these are merely selected highlights of ALW's plan for localised economic development:

1. *'Growing Together' – proactively shaping its own built environment*
 - Residents created planning policies promoting better quality housing, incentivising a supermarket to come to the area – addressing a local need for better access to affordable and fresh food.
 - This was achieved through the Partnership supporting residents to write a Neighbourhood Development Plan through the Lawrence Weston Planning Group.
 - The Plan Ensured that all social and affordable new housing developments built in the area guarantee a 50% allocation to local people and families in housing need.
2. *Circulating wealth locally*
 - A vital component of CED is economic development which generates human wellbeing, at a community level, and within environmental limits – a concept clearly adhered to by the Partnership.
 - Bristol Energy Co-op (BEC), in partnership with Ambition Lawrence Weston, built its first community solar farm in Lawrence Weston (in 2016) on land owned by Bristol City Council - this makes BEC the largest community energy company by capacity.

- Significantly, the farm will generate enough electricity, each year, to power 1,000 average homes.
 - Profits are now being invested into projects run by the Partnership, ensuring that the money remains within the community.
 - The Partnership isn't stopping there and has a plan in the works to build a community-owned wind turbine, (with Local Authority planning permission now secured) bringing significant investment back into the local community, whilst reducing the areas' carbon footprint.
3. *Economic development generating human wellbeing at a community level*
- A new community hub has been created, offering training and careers advice for young people, with the Partnership also supporting training providers to increase the levels and type of training available locally.
 - A new £1.8 million health and community centre is planned for 2022.
 - An employment hub at the local youth centre has also been set up to support residents into full-time, permanent employment.
 - A partnership between ALW and private companies has seen a new bus service delivered to transport residents to places of employment where public transport did not operate.
 - Further, a number of local green spaces have been saved from development.
 - 3 new large play parks, and a BMX Track with facilities has been delivered.
 - Funding has been provided for a community crafts shop, the 'Rock Community Centre', Lawrence Weston's out of school services, the Baptist Church Café and community facilities, Blaise Weston Court Sheltered Housing and a number of other small groups.
4. Connecting with the wider local economy
- A good CED approach takes into consideration how the local economy connects with the wider world around it (in this case – the wider south western economy)
 - ALW's partnership with BEC brought in over £9 million for a range of solar projects, with the money generated funding approximately £4 million of social projects across Greater Bristol and Somerset.
 - The Partnership's work has also brought an additional £5.5 million of investment to the local area.

Collyhurst Big Local

An inner-city area north of Manchester City Centre with a population of approximately 3,000 people, Collyhurst was once at the centre of Manchester's industrial heartland. Generating wealth through coal mining and manufacturing, de-industrialisation has led to the loss of factories, mills and industrial plants, resulting in severe decline and profound multiple deprivation.

There are now very few local shops, facilities or community assets, with unemployment rates high and residents having a higher than average likelihood of having poor health and poor education and skills outcomes. The area is also marked by higher rates of child poverty, crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Collyhurst Big Local area is spread across four Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), three of which are within the 10% most deprived in England – with the remaining LSOA within the 20% most deprived.

Increasing local ownership and building wealth

Collyhurst became a Big Local area in 2013, building a partnership between local tenants, businesses, schools and other agencies. Having taken part in the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Community Economic Development (CED) Programme (April 2015 – April 2016), it has developed work rooted in a participative approach to economic change, bringing together a wide array of community-based stakeholders:

1. *Supporting community businesses and community assets*

- Audited empty buildings and land within the area, finding opportunities to acquire them for the benefit of the community.
- Acquired land adjacent to a parade of empty shop units – made available through housing stock clearance – and acquired a set of shipping container units.
- Together these have been turned into a business incubation space – an organic food growing business, designed to address local issues around food poverty and healthy eating, is the first local business to take up the incubation space.
- Funded two-community focused businesses to-date including a furniture upcycling business – which has begun trading – benefitting the community by providing affordable furniture for those on low incomes and up-skilling people through furniture courses and workshops.
- A community café will soon be opening, also taking up an empty unit on the same parade, providing a hub for residents, helping to tackle social exclusion and providing more opportunities for healthy eating.
- The Partnership is looking to fill all the units with businesses which have community benefit remits and are offering administrative/legal support on issues such as leases, planning permission and rent.

2. *Targeting activities to support local people into employment*

- Established a construction academy providing training and support to local people, enabling them to access employment in Manchester's booming construction sector – hosted on the Collyhurst estate.
- The medium-term goal is to equip local people with the skills and experience to secure work in the upcoming redevelopment of the Collyhurst area as part of the Northern Gateway regeneration programme, enabling people to work in their local area.
- Since opening in Spring 2019, 80 people have passed through and found work in the nearby city centre. The plan is to bring skills/jobs back into Collyhurst when the Northern Gateway scheme begins.

3. *Partnering with Manchester City Council as a local anchor institution*

- The Partnership has agreed to work with the City Council to ensure sufficient training and upskilling opportunities are put in place locally to allow residents to benefit from developments due to occur in Collyhurst.
- One possibility is local residents raising funds to build affordable housing stock.

- The Council is targeting current suppliers in its most deprived neighbourhood to increase recruitment of local residents.
- This is part of a strategy to direct the flow of wealth from an anchor institution – the Council – into more deprived areas such as Collyhurst.

Long term – keeping wealth local

Looking ahead, the Partnership's long-term objectives are to:

- Set up a local Community Land Trust (CLT) run by local residents to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to the community (such as community enterprises).
- Work with Manchester City Council who, in partnership with Northwards Housing, has committed to building new housing in the area – a commitment has been made by the council for a community-led housing scheme to be included in this development.
- One objective is to fund community initiatives through rent generation.

Dover Big Local

Dover Town sits within a valley, split from the seafront by the A20 dual carriageway. Its population has tended to be transient, though this is increasingly changing as more people settle in the town. Though driven by its role as a major port, the area has suffered from a significant lack of investment. Martina White, former chair of Dover Big Local and now co-director of the Co-Innovation project, explains: "it's a bit like the stuffing has been knocked out of Dover. It's been in decline for 45 years, people haven't had much work, they've not been consulted, they've not had ambition. They've lost their confidence."

Boarded up shop windows litter the town centre, with little in the way of local, independent stores. A proliferation of fast-food outlets, betting shops and pawnbrokers dominate the landscape. The town has high unemployment and increasing issues with anti-social behaviour. 33% of children are living in poverty and 30% of people have no qualifications.

Stimulating local economic activity

The Dover Big Local Partnership's plan is twofold: for the town to become a hub for tourists (with many, currently, driving through without stopping) and to provide targeted support for local businesses – from both a growth and an employment (of local people) perspective. Measures are being taken to incubate local businesses – through an innovation warehouse and co-innovation space – deploying the knowledge, priorities and assets of people in the community:

1. *Developing tourism for the community, by the community*

- The partnership has brought together key community stakeholders including English Heritage, Dover District Council and Dover Council to work on a major new coordinated tourism project, 'Destination Dover'.
- Local residents came to a consensus that developing tourism is a key priority for the town

- The initiative is funded by the town and district council, as well as by local employers such as P&O, the Port of Dover, English Heritage and the National Trust.
- The Big Local partnership has committed £25,000 per year for 5 years for the project.
- The project now has an employee tasked with 'coordinating the town's tourism offer', this has already increased visitor numbers.

2. *Supporting local businesses*

- The Partnership has focused on regenerating the town through the provision of workspaces and a package of support for local, small businesses.
- It has invested in incubator spaces – known as the innovation warehouse – which can be rented to local businesses for up to 12 months.
- The businesses are also provided with expert support, mentoring and training to help them develop and grow.
- The support is aimed at helping local people into paid work and, in the words of the Council leader, Keith Morris, "to enable small businesses to try out their ideas (which) represents a vital step forward in our ongoing investment to rejuvenate the centre of Dover."
- Furthermore, the Partnership is providing grants – small and large (up to £500 and up to £50,000) – and applications are open to anyone with a project idea that they can demonstrate will improve the lives of residents in the Dover Big Local area.

3. *Keeping wealth local*

- The Council has purchased a large unit (an old co-op supermarket) for the Partnership as a 'Co-Innovation Space for Opportunities'.
- For affordable rents and just a one-month notice period – so little financial risk - local start-ups can try out their business idea.
- The co-innovation programme's progress was highlighted in BBC's 'Inside Out' Programme in February 2020.
- In the space of three months, 23 businesses signed up and are now operating out of the unit – they include: a stamps and collectables shop, an arts and crafts shop, and a wedding and events management business.
- The Partnership has also co-founded a week-long 'Pop Up Business School', with participants able to turn up with or without an idea. The intention? For participants to have made their first sale by day five – 40-50 people regularly attend.

Thumbnail sketches

North Yorkshire

Barrowcliff Big Local – stimulating local economic activity

In order to stimulate local economic activity, the Partnership provided £20,000 in funding to set up the Barrowcliff Business Loan Scheme, administered by the South Yorkshire Credit Union – the first loan was approved in 2017.

The Big Local Partnership has also founded the Barrowcliff 'BIG Starts Programme' with UnLtd, supporting social entrepreneurs over a three-year period with access to specialist support and finance. It invested £50,000 of funding in the initiative which was launched back in January 2018.

Tang Hall Big Local – fostering social enterprise

Tang Hall Big Local has been helping to foster opportunities for social enterprises in the community. The Partnership is working on the 'Enterprise Communities Project' with Community Catalysts CIC – a social enterprise working across the UK to ensure that people who need care and support to live their lives can get help in the most appropriate manner possible. The City of York Council is another delivery partner. The Big Local is focusing on community enterprises that:

- Provide care or support services for the elderly, or those with a disability, illness or general vulnerability.
- Have 8 or fewer full-time equivalent staff or volunteers.
- Are totally independent of any larger organisation.
- Need general support or advice.

The partnership has also played a role in bringing together individuals and local enterprises on the Tang Hall Food Co-op initiative, running from Tang Hall Community Centre, with food grown by a cooperative of local people and sold from a no waste, zero-packaging, not-for-profit wholefood shop.

The initiative has spawned a number of projects including Food Circle's Sunday local food stall and Meet & Eat. Food Circle York. Run by the people of Tang Hall, they aim to create a better food system, providing access to ingredients, tools and knowledge, and support and investment in sustainable growing. The partnership puts on cooking workshops and field trips, along with community dinners. It is a clear example of a programme focused on economic and social development which improves local wellbeing, within environmental limits, at a community level – with the added benefit of being community run and led.

Tees Valley

North Ormesby Big Local – controlling local assets

North Ormesby Big Local has partnered with a range of local stakeholders to improve housing and environmental conditions in the local area, making it a better place to live and work.

North Ormesby Big Local has undertaken a major housing project to tackle poor housing. The Big Local has partnered with the North Ormesby Neighbourhood Development Trust (NONDeT), 13 Housing Group and Middlesbrough Council to support the acquisition and refurbishment of property and establish a Community Land Trust.

Establishing the Trust was a means of ensuring that local residents have a stake in housing provision and that any income from new houses directly benefits the local area. A housing committee was put together to manage the Land Trust on a day to day basis, comprised of local residents, Big Local members and existing NONDeT Board members.

The Trust has now purchased six houses, securing financial support from 13 Housing Groups' empty homes scheme. The houses have been refurbished to a high standard, setting a standard for other providers in the area. Two of the houses are occupied and the other four will be ready to rent in the coming months. The Big Local is also in the process of setting up a group for new tenants, ensuring that they have wrap-around support to enable them to make the most of their new home, including access to literacy and numeracy classes and budgeting and financial health workshops.

Big Local has also developed the former Pavilion site as 'an attractive space for children, young people and families'. In partnership with Middlesbrough Council, the Big Local joined with the North Ormesby Neighbourhood Development Trust (NONDeT) and commissioned work from Groundwork Trust to develop a local playpark on Esk Street in North Ormesby. The Council gifted the land to the community group on a 25- year lease, with the Big Local providing £100,000 to develop the land. The play park enables children and parents alike to connect with one another.

Big Local also carried out a 'Faceliff' project, whereby nearly 200 properties received cosmetic improvements to restore neighbourhood pride. This included restoration and repairs to terrace houses in addition to the 'Green and Gorgeous' project, which introduced floral baskets and planters on the front of the houses. Carried out by local builders and craftsmen, this boosted spirits in the area.

West Yorkshire

Keighley Big Local – encouraging social enterprise

The Partnership is working with UnLtd and 18 other Big Local areas to accelerate social enterprise and increase local job creation over a three-year, co-funded support programme. This has culminated in the 'Keighley Social-Lights' programme, providing up to £50,000 of grants for ventures with direct social benefits for local residents.

Greenmoor Big Local – increasing aspiration and local health and wellbeing

The Partnership Board has been keen to provide children and young people provision in an effort to inspire them to do well in school and find suitable employment when they are older. Greenmoor have invested in junior Football Clubs, sports projects and a 'Youth Action Group' where young people are trained in leadership skills and learn about community work and governance. Recently the group fundraised money for a trip to Blackpool, this involved the young people writing the bid and presenting to a panel of funders.

Greenmoor Big Local are planning delivery of a £140,000 Anti-Drugs Programme. The large-scale initiative has been in development for nearly a year. It will take a co-ordinated approach to dealing with the drug issues which have been prevalent in the area for many years. The project will focus on providing support to those families and friends who have been affected by a loved one who takes drugs or deals drugs. The work will also include drugs education in schools and places of worship, creative activities for young people as diversionary methods and liaison with the police to reduce the dealing of drugs in the area.

The Partnership Board recognises that this is an ambitious project but they have developed it on the basis of advice from professional bodies to ensure the goals and targets are realistic and achievable. The Programme will be delivered by CNet, the previous LTO for Greenmoor Big Local. The West Yorkshire Police, Bradford Council, Councilors, the Bridge Project (the main drugs service in Bradford) and community groups are core partners in this project. This gives the Partnership Board confidence that this, 2-year initiative, will have a major positive impact in the area.

Rastrick Big Local – ‘building opportunity in our community’

In 2018, Rastrick Big Local launched its ‘Big Impact Fund’ -to invest in large-scale, community-led projects which can demonstrate will leave a legacy beyond the Big Local time frame. In 2019, the Partnership granted £150,000 to the refurbishment of Space@Field Lane, which acts as a hub for local residents, providing a wide array of community-focused services – hosting businesses, youth events and providing employment and skills support services. The Partnership is focused on creating new economic opportunities for local people, while generating increased ‘general wellbeing’ at a community level.

The Community Small Grants fund is a rolling programme of grants up to £1,500 used to fund small projects or allow residents to pilot an idea before applying for larger grant amounts. The process is ‘admin light’ and designed to not deter applicants with unnecessary bureaucracy.

In addition to the funding processes above the ‘Voice your Choice’ scheme has been run every year since 2015. It acts as a participatory budgeting scheme, with the community asked to vote on a number of different themes. The theme with the most votes is chosen as the ‘priority’ for the following year. £65,000 per year has been allocated to projects funded via this route, with money spent so far on: Rastrick Library, St Matthew’s Church and children’s play areas. This programme is currently on hold whilst the Big Impact Fund is being developed.

Humber

Winterton 2022 Big Local – supporting local businesses and boosting employment opportunities

Winterton 2022 has focused on boosting local employment opportunities through its Apprenticeship Scheme, providing support to businesses in Winterton seeking to employ a local apprentice. The scheme is run in partnership with ONGO Recruitment, who are the official employer of the apprentice whilst they are training with the ‘host’ business. This provides small business with the reassurance that the the recruitment process is taken care of, so that they can concentrate on providing the apprentice with an excellent learning experience.

The scheme provides financial support for local businesses, through:

- Covering half the cost of the apprentices' salary.
- A financial contribution to training costs.
- Supporting the recruitment process (selection/job descriptions).
- Supervising appraisals and support meetings with the apprentice and their supervisor.

The Partnership has so far invested £60,000 in the scheme, which has employed 18 apprentices, providing a significant service for upskilling local residents and improving the quality of the local labour market for businesses. Having completed the scheme, a number of apprentices have been offered permanent jobs with their 'host' business.

Local residents have also been provided with much improved financial management resources, through the Big Local's partnership with Hull and East Yorkshire Credit Union. The Credit Union is now delivering a variety of services throughout the town to promote fair and affordable saving and borrowing in Winterton. A dedicated member of staff from the Credit Union holds a weekly session for residents of all ages to help with the opening of savings accounts and provides assistance with borrowing safely at an affordable rate. From 2019, the Big Local has worked with the Credit Union to deliver one-on-one sessions to residents on Credit Union services, including support with money management.

Work on financial management has been directly targeted at young people, with the setting up of the Winterton School Bank at Winterton C of E Infants School. The idea is to encourage young people to learn to save and manage money responsibly from a young age. The project's success has seen it extended into another local school.

Children at the schools are invited to open 'Pennies 2 Pounds Saver Club Accounts' and receive a 'Pig and a Pound' in return - £1 credit in their new bank account and a piggy bank to help them with their saving. Pupils also receive an annual dividend on their savings, with further rewards available for a certain number of deposits being made into their bank accounts.

Greatfield Big Local – encouraging social enterprise

Greatfield Big Local has partnered up with UnLtd – the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs – in order to identify local social entrepreneurs and small business opportunities. UnLtd is investing £2.8 million in building sustainable and socially-beneficial local economic growth in communities around England, through partnerships with groups such as Greatfield Big Local.

Local residents can apply for funding for up to £5,000 to get their business ideas off the ground and receive 1-1 support to help further develop their business ideas once up and running. For example help with marketing or book-keeping. Some examples of applications received include:

- A Community Swap Shop
- A Gardening Business
- A Community Radio Station
- A Community Sports Leader
- A Cycle Repair and Maintenance Unit
- A Stress Management Therapist

Funding is also available through the Partnership's 'Social Investment Fund' for residents/local groups in the area seeking support for a community project or social

business. There is no maximum amount to apply for as the Partnership felt it would like to support any good idea that would benefit the community should they have sufficient funding to make it work.

Withernsea Big Local – bring together local stakeholders to upskill residents

Withernsea Big Local, as with Winterton, has commissioned the services of Hull and East Yorkshire Credit Union, funding a Development Officer to provide advice on all Credit Union services for 20 hours per week. The Partnership has also commissioned Citizens Advice Hull & East Riding, to provide an 'adviser' for 1.5 days per week.

A further £12,000 has been provided for a new 'job club' at the Shores Centre Withersnea (launched in January 2016). It provides intensive one-to-one support to job seekers in the Withersnea area, providing access to local resources and expertise, helping local residents realise their employment and learning aspirations.

Greater Lincolnshire

Birchwood Big Local – taking control of community assets

Birchwood Big Local has formed Birchwood Area Community Land Trust (BACLT) which runs alongside the partnership, ensuring it can own and lease land and buildings on behalf of the community. The main focus is on maintaining spaces for children to play, as well as looking after the elderly and vulnerable within the community. This includes ownership of Diamond Park, which was renovated with new children's play equipment in 2017. Birchwood Big Local continues to fund the park's upkeep, and volunteers manage it daily.

Birchwood are also currently embarking on a scheme to develop affordable dwellings at Jasmin Green, having secured detailed planning permission for 49 dwellings, split between 28 accessible bungalows (specifically for people who are elderly or have a disability), 5 dormer-bungalows and 16 terrace houses for families. Jasmin Green, an open green space adjacent to the development site, will have two new children's play areas kitted out with new play equipment and restored gardens. Revenue from the housing development, through a ground rent, will be used to maintain the children's play areas to ensure sustainability in future years.

Mablethorpe, Trusthorpe and Sutton-on-Sea Big Local – support local businesses and improving financial wellbeing

Mablethorpe Coastal Community Challenge (Big Local) have focused on developing the local economy through providing high quality advice and support for local businesses and residents. Both projects ensure greater generation and retention of local wealth, building community economic resilience.

The partnership have joined up with not for profit company Experience Enterprise Ltd to provide business start-up support as well as advice to existing small businesses in the local area. Over the past few years many businesses have been involved. Currently 27 are directly engaged, receiving support and advice, principally around small business grants, furlough of staff, and the self-employed grant scheme. One emergency loan has been issued. News bulletins are issued weekly via social media and websites in order to ensure local businesses have up to date information and guidance. The programme has also been increasingly

supporting local charities and groups in the area with advice on governance and grant funding.

Experience Enterprise Ltd also manage a small loan fund for the partnership which helps local people with domestic crises to avoid loan sharks which operate locally. ELAP have supported many hundreds of people with benefits issues, resulting in significant payments to people, most of which will have been spent in the local economy. Substantial grants have been awarded to community groups, charities and individuals, all of whom are encouraged to spend this money locally where possible. During the COVID-19 lockdown, many hundreds of individuals have been supported. Principal activities included Universal credit enquiries and appeals, tenant/landlord issues, redundancy, debt issues etc.

The partnership have also worked hard to develop relationships with other local organisations. This is demonstrated by joint working on the Boat Shed (which now houses the Men's Shed – for individuals to get together to socialise, learn new skills and work on woodworking projects) and the Coastal trail, in collaboration with East Lindsey District Council. The Coastal Trail is a project designed to attract tourism to the area.

Selby Big Local – generating and sustaining local wealth

Selby Big Local is in the process of redeveloping a derelict shop to open as a resident-led community space. There will be a focus on encouraging enterprise and skills development to enable positive change in the community, as well as a community fridge and a number of projects designed to address food insecurity and digital exclusion.

Over 2019-20, Selby Big Local formed a partnership with Community First Credit Union, offering saving accounts, loans and budgeting advice for local residents, as well as funding a Credit Union Outreach Worker to support its services.

To boost economic development opportunities within the Big Local area, the partnership has also been prioritising its 'Community Chest' grant funding for individuals and local organisations supporting activities in the community. The Community Chest is being relaunched in October 2020 specifically to encourage resident applications, with up to £1,000 funding available.

Further projects include:

- Big Aspirations - working with three primary schools in the Big Local area – Selby Community Primary School, Barwic Parade Community Primary School and Selby Abbey C of E Primary School – to deliver a bespoke, year-long raising aspirations programme for year 6 pupils. Now in it's third year, the aim is to raise career and personal aspirations through partnership with local employers, Selby College, local high schools, and the programme's delivery partner – NYBEP.
- Running a number of small resident groups, including an 'Over 50's Computer Club' to help with digital literacy skills and a volunteer run Travel Club.
- In partnership with Selby District Council and Groundwork, the development of a community garden, which will provide valuable open space for socialising, relaxing and learning.

The Black Country

Grace Mary to Lion Farm Big Local – overcoming debt and building financial management skills

In order to improve economic outcomes in the area, the residents on the Big Local partnership have prioritised reducing debt, improving financial management skills, and employability. Working with partners such as CAB Sandwell and Just Finance Black Country they have provided services that were not previously available in the local area.

The Big Local partnership has employed a part time Financial Engagement Worker in order to support local families. She has also produced attractive resources such as how to save money on your food shop, avoiding scams, myth busting around banks, etc., all badged under a "Money Talks" label.

Rolling workshops have been run in three locations across the area on the same day around issues such as Universal Credit, opening accounts, debt management, avoiding doorstep and high interest lenders, budgeting, safeguarding and helping children to learn good financial habits. There has also been a lot of one-to-one work with local families via a drop in service, which has saved local people nearly £200,000 – averaging out at over £650 per household per month.

Grace Mary to Lion Farm Big Local also funds Lion Farm Action Centre to run a job club four times per week, providing support to find employment and help with CV writing. GM2LF have also run job and volunteer fairs, workshops and information days. Most recently they have developed a social enterprise run by Young People called "Big Local Little Voices". These combine engaging young people and running a business. The area has also funded a school to develop a social enterprise, and the partnership have all been trained to support people to "Make the Most of their Money". In these ways they are increasing the skills of residents and young people whilst educating them about business and financial management.

Scotlands and Bushbury Hill Big Local – successful community asset transfer provides opportunities for residents

News about the closure of the Scotlands Adventure Playground broke just prior to a visit from the England Committee of the National Lottery in October 2014. Community members were shattered, and following that meeting chair of the England Committee, Nat Sloane, said 'if this building is saved it will be job done'. So much more has been done though.

The Big Local partnership spent £180,000 on acquiring and renovating the old community centre, fully supported by their local councillors. They set up a social enterprise, Big Venture Ltd, to run the centre and to ensure that it became an asset that would help the community to thrive. The Big Venture Centre was opened in 2017 and is now fully self-sustaining.

Additionally, the area has attracted in a further £2.5m in grants and resources, principally thanks to their community support organisation, Community Action and Training Services. This has been achieved through strong partnership working, supporting local groups to access their own funding, and an outlook that says "We spend our money last of all!".

The work to establish a successful social enterprise has increased the knowledge and skills of many residents. They have changed from building users to building owners, with all the responsibility that entails. Prior to Covid-19 the centre provided access to services such as employment support groups, working closely with Access to Business, as well as hosting Wolverhampton Credit Union. Additionally, the community café became a place for personal support and local residents have been trained as counsellors. As lockdown eased, the centre volunteers seized the opportunity to become a food and meal distribution hub for hundreds of local people.

Key to it all, though, is the commitment and love with which all services are delivered by local people who know disadvantaged at the sharp end.

About Local Trust

Local Trust is a place-based funder supporting communities to transform and improve their lives and the places where they live. We believe there is a need to put more power, resources and decision-making into the hands of local communities, to enable them to transform and improve their lives and the places in which they live.

We do this by trusting local people. Our aims are to demonstrate the value of long term, unconditional, resident-led funding through our work supporting local communities make their areas better places to live, and to draw on the learning from our work to promote a wider transformation in the way policy makers, funders and others engage with communities and place.

Local Trust

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