

Inclusive Community–Led Change.

Power and Representation
in Practice



Greater Manchester
GM=EqAl
Equality Alliance

VSNW 

Local Trust | **Big Local**

House keeping.



Microphones

Please keep your microphone muted until the end of the webinar, to minimise background noise.



Cameras

You are welcome to keep your camera on if you feel comfortable, but it is not required.



Respectful Participation

Please be respectful in the chat and during discussions. We aim to create a safe, inclusive space for all.

Chat Function

Feel free to use the chat throughout the session. We will monitor it and respond where possible.

Use of AI

We may use AI notetaking, recording, or transcription tools. By joining, you acknowledge and consent to this.

Slides & Materials

Any slides or resources used today will be shared following the webinar.

Recording

Any recordings will be shared in line with the purpose of this session. Please respect the confidentiality of others when participating.

Please do not use your own AI notetaking tools or automated recording bots during this session.

Timing

We will begin and end promptly. Please stay for the full session if you can.

Agenda.

10am	Welcome & Housekeeping: Ayisatu Emore, Greater Manchester Equality Alliance (GM=EqAl)
10.10am	Local Trust: Helen Morton
10.25am	Ridge Hill Together: Margaret and Russell
10.40am	Lancaster District CVS: Yak Patel
10.55am	Q&A Session
11.25am	Breakout rooms
11.40am	Reflection period and feedback
11.55am	Summary and close

Local Trust
trusting
local
people

Big Local - Power and Representation in Practice



Big Local design and values

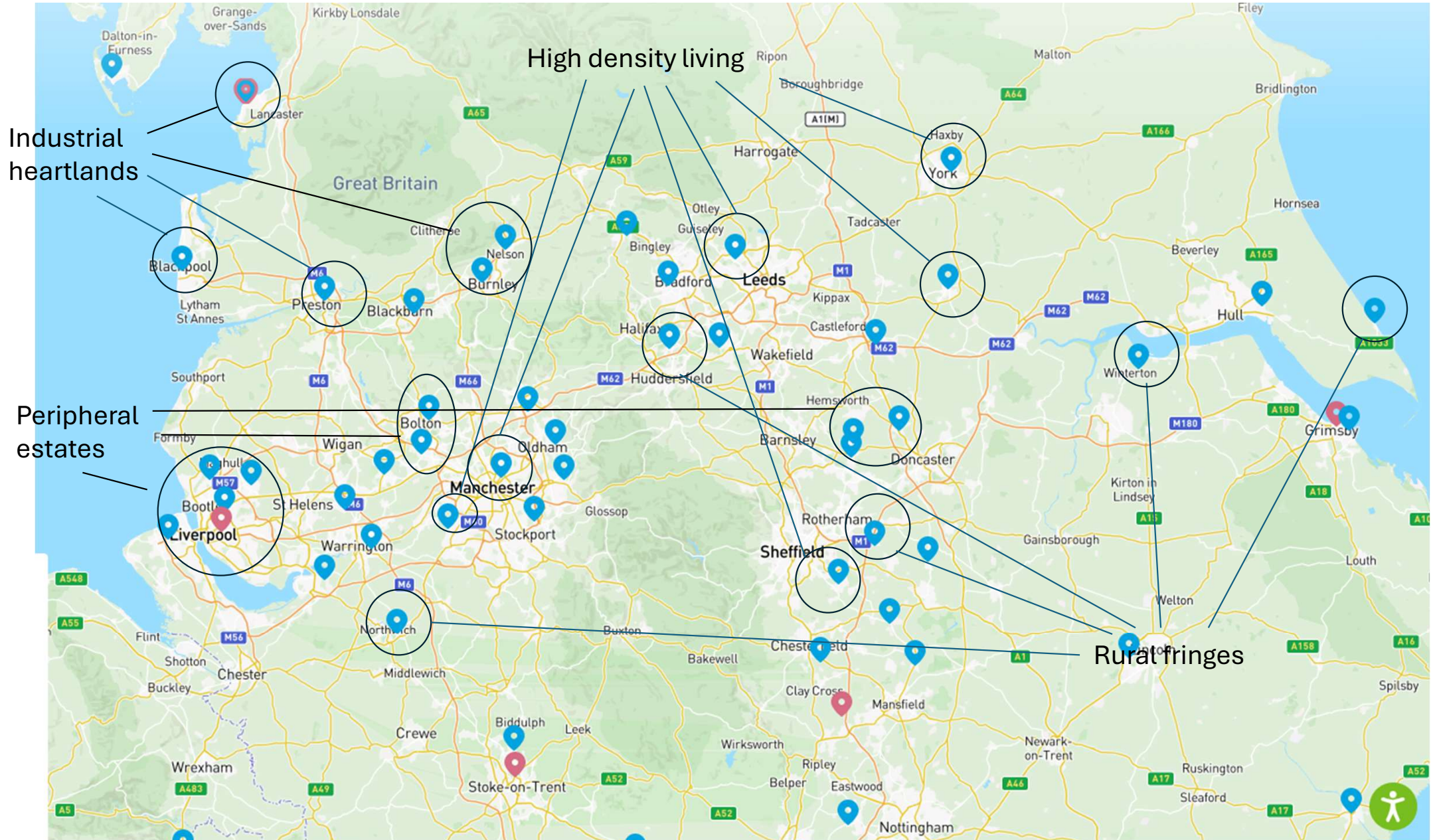
- Residents best placed to make decisions about what happens in their areas
- Plans on how funding was used led by a group of majority residents
- Partnerships engaged wider community to identify local priorities
- Local Trust did not impose value judgements on how communities chose to use their funding
- Communities able to spend on their own terms and in their own time
- Change in Big Local areas was created by communities themselves.



Context shaped what inclusion meant

- Big Local operated across very different contexts
- Local Trust's approach couldn't be one-size-fits-all
- Representation and inclusion meant something very different in each area
- A lot of partnerships did reflect the broader ethnic demographics of the area but there were also many exceptions, and variations in terms of how actively partnerships sought to address this.
- In some areas, brought to the surface deep-rooted tensions between different communities.





How did Local Trust's approach evolve and why?

Early period: Generalist approach - Gentle nudging on inclusion and representation



Reactive period: Local Trust did intervene – but often responsively rather than proactively



Later years: More support, but quite far into the programme and required partnerships to recognise need and seek support

What was built in and challenges

4,900 residents

25% of people never volunteered

58% on to other positions of community leadership

The Partnership Model: partnerships were charged with reflecting the whole community

Design was intentionally non-prescriptive

The ambition was real: reaching people who'd never been involved in formal community structures.

Drift towards committee style governance

Equalities dimension present but race, gender and other identities were less explicitly built in from the start

Expectations put onto partnerships themselves

Annual partnership review as main mechanism to assess inclusion

An aerial photograph of the Ridge Hill housing estate in Stalybridge. The image shows a residential area with several large, multi-story apartment blocks, green spaces, and a road. In the background, there are rolling hills under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, white font.

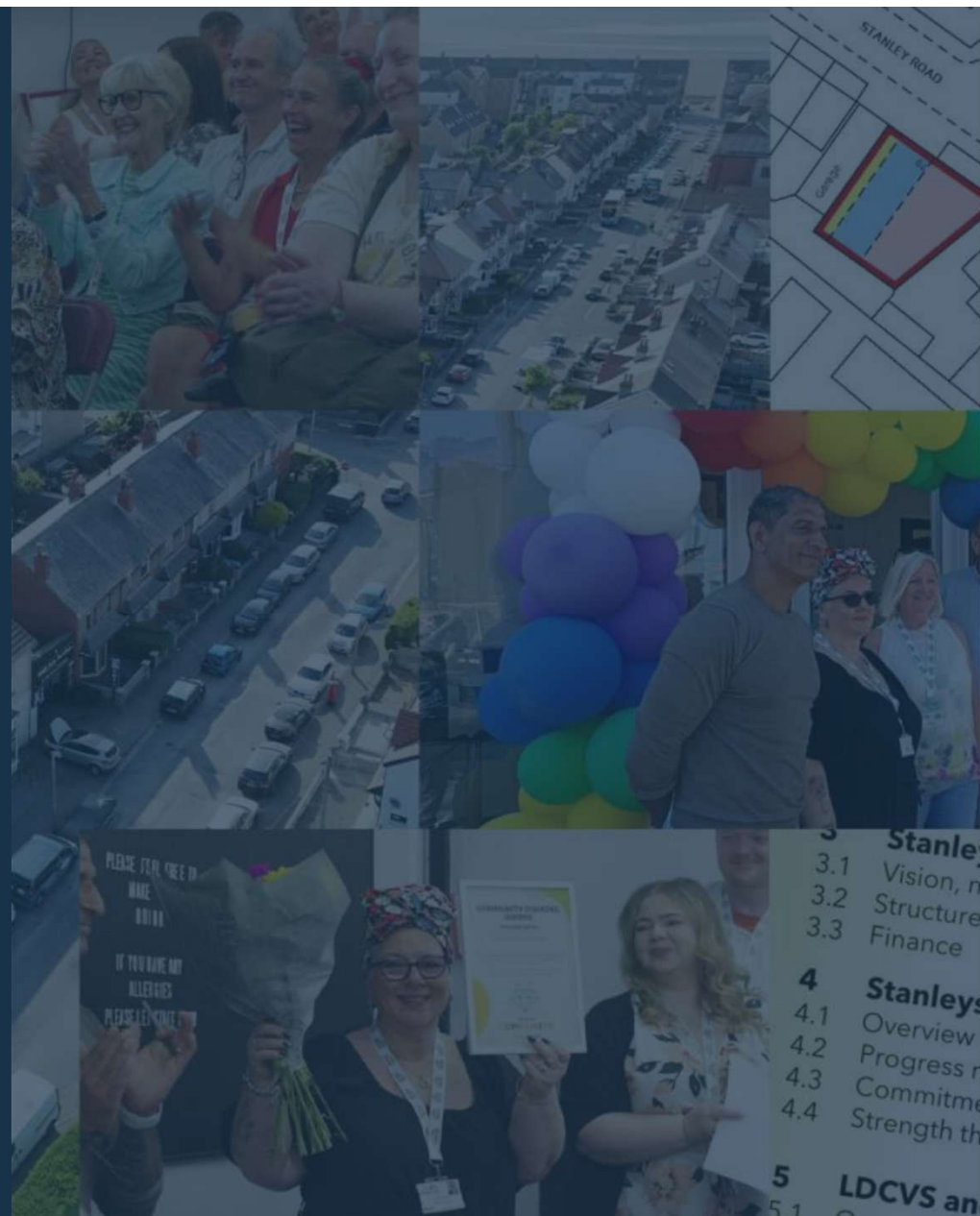
Residents and service providers at Ridge Hill housing estate in Stalybridge are taking a community-led approach to health and wellbeing.



The view from the Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO)

Supporting resident power while holding
money, governance and risk.

Yak Patel | Lancaster District CVS



THE WEST END OF MORECAMBE

A VIBRANT COMMUNITY ON MORECAMBE'S WEST COAST



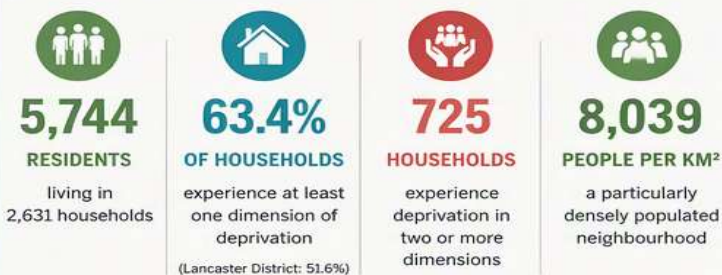
WHERE IS THE WEST END?



KEY

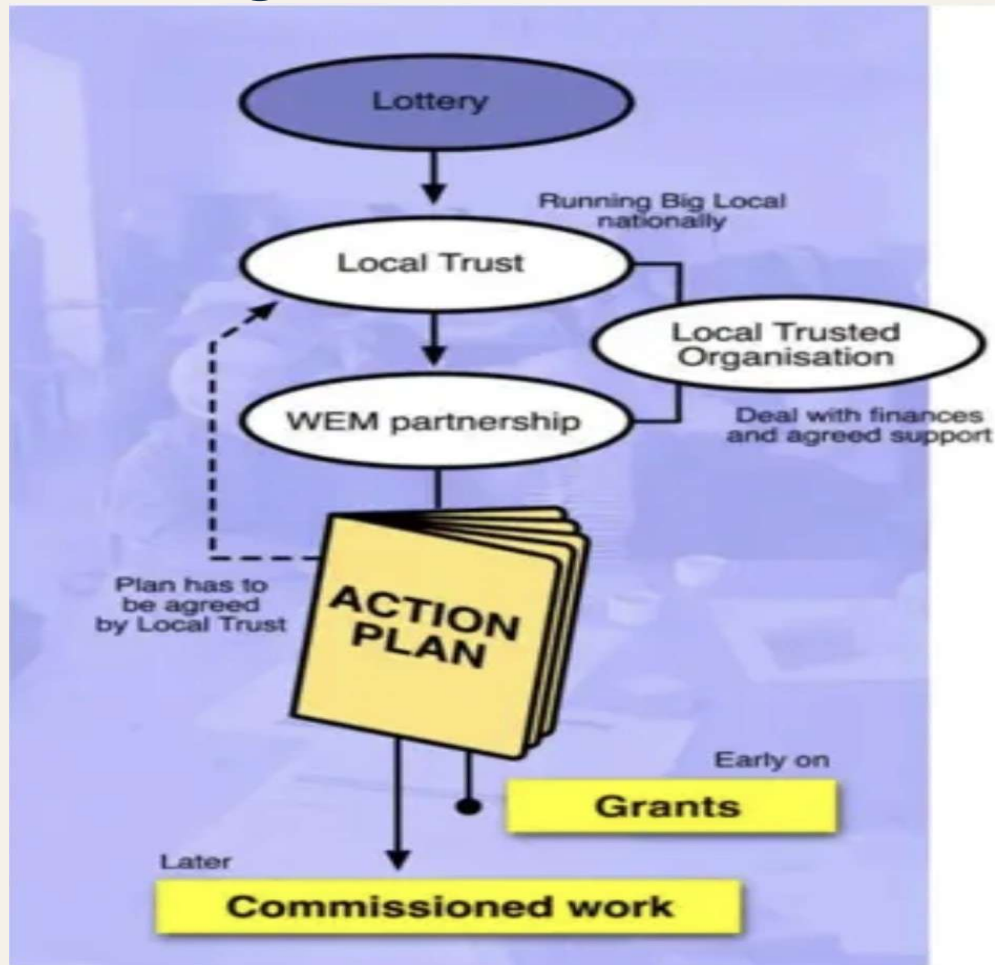
- West End (Census Middle Layer Super Output Area)
- Neighbouring Areas
- Parks & Green Spaces
- Beach / Coastal Area

AT A GLANCE (CENSUS 2021)



Census 2021 measures deprivation across four dimensions: employment, education, health & disability, and housing.

The Big Local model, and where the LTO sat



Our responsibility

Funds
Grants + invoices
Governance + policies
Safeguarding
Reporting + risk
Practical support

But the decisions belonged to the Partnership.

“The infrastructure supported the decision-making. It did not own it.”

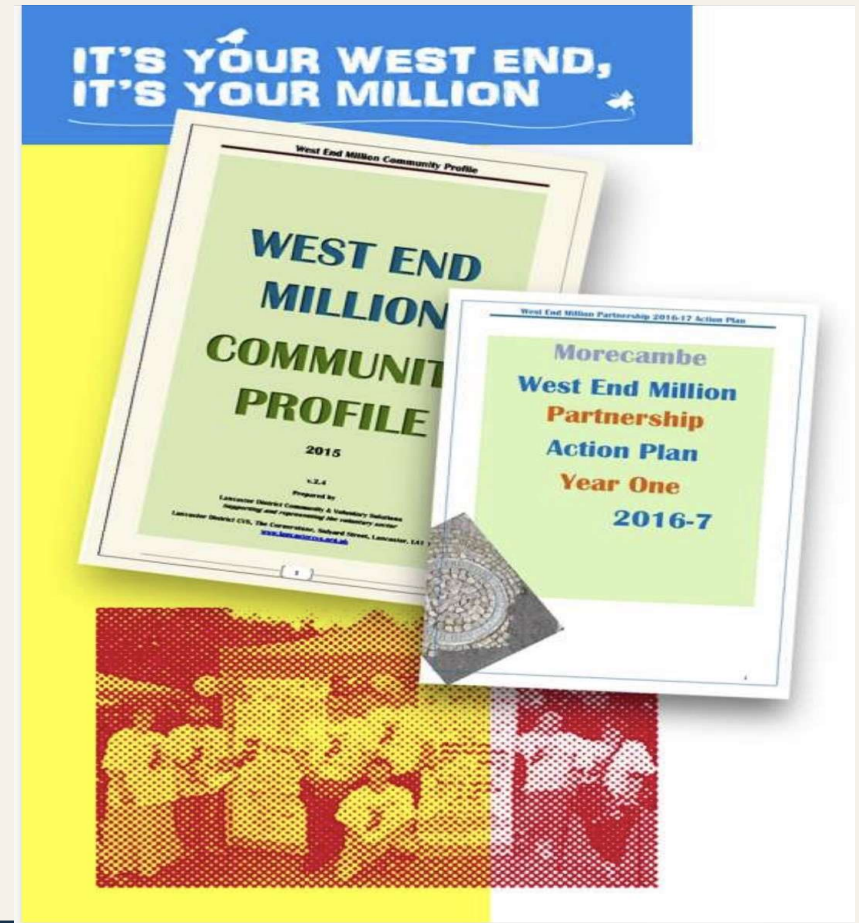
Knowing when to step in, when to step back

Our Role

We support and develop voluntary and community organisations, building connections and bringing people together.

Our Discipline

As LTO, that support had to respect the role of the Big Local Rep and, ultimately, the Partnership's right to decide.



“Are we advising, enabling, or starting to influence?”

Who had the power? Who carried the risk?



LTO

Money
Governance
Safeguarding
Accountability
Risk



PARTNERSHIP

Priorities
Local knowledge
Community voice
Decisions
Leadership

“Community-led funding needs more than a pot of money.”

Local infrastructure can connect community power to wider systems



Relationships

Neutrality

Local knowledge

Connectivity

Financial systems

Convening

Networks

A safe pair of hands

Our networks could help community voices reach people and institutions they might otherwise struggle to access.

Lessons from the LTO experience

- 1 Invest for the long term
- 2 Fund the infrastructure
- 3 Clarify power and accountability
- 4 Expect challenge, conflict and change
- 5 Connect community power to wider systems
- 6 Don't assume 'community-led' means everyone is included



“If you fund community leadership but not the infrastructure around it, you are only funding half the model.”

Community-led does not mean community-alone.

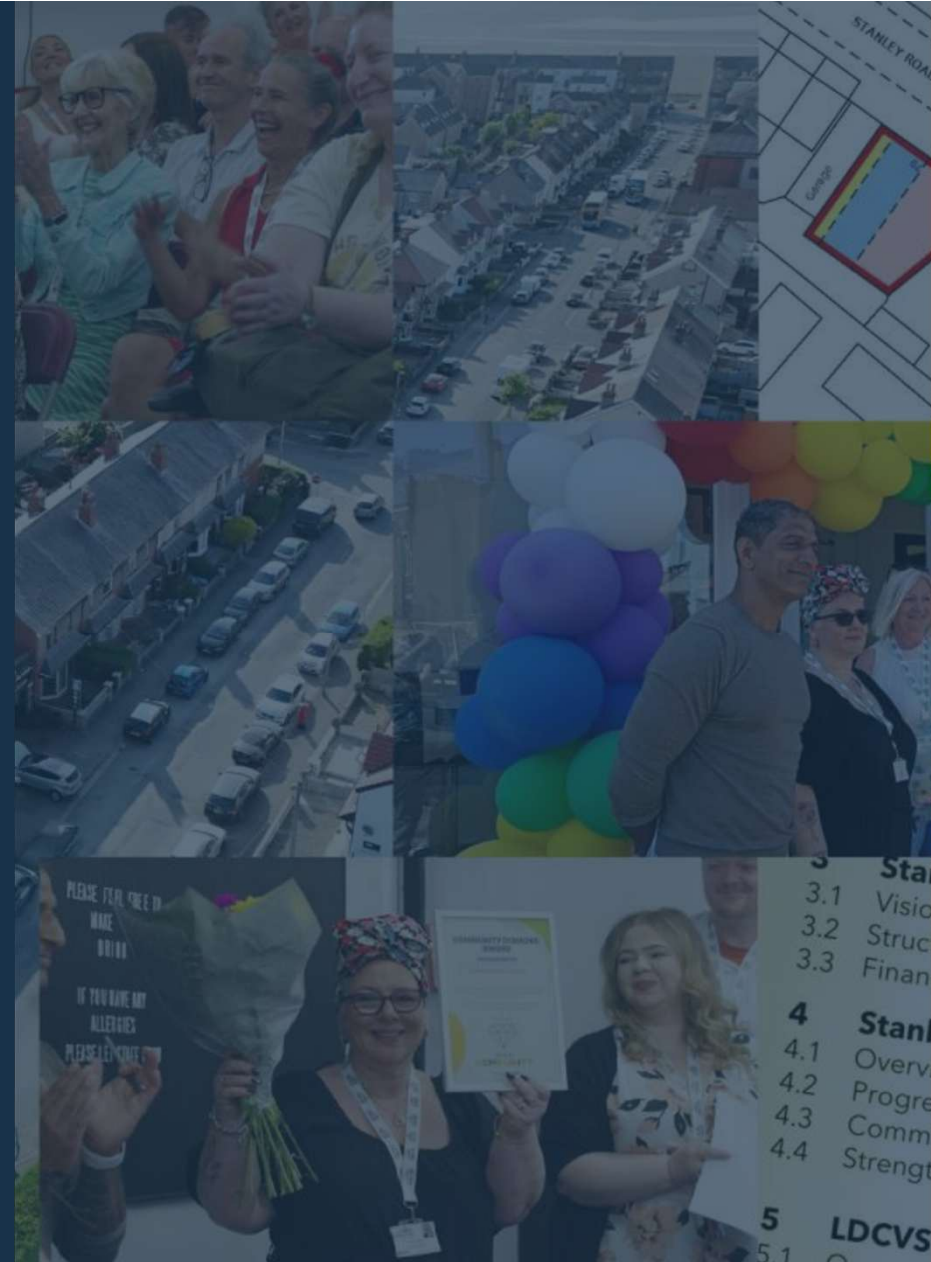
Sometimes to advise.

Sometimes to connect.

Sometimes to hold the risk.

Sometimes to step back.

But it does have to mean community-led.



Breakout Rooms.

- What Big Local approaches to inclusion and participation felt most relevant to your work?
- What barriers might need to be overcome to make this happen?
- How can funding and commissioning processes better support inclusion?

Coming soon...

Future events

Next week, we'll have our final session exploring more of what Big Local can teach us about long-term funding, community power, inclusion and the conditions that enable communities to lead change.

The final session on Weds 30 September:

- See social infrastructure in action: Learning from Big Local and Live Well at Our Sale West

Learning into Action Awards

A new opportunity for participants in the Big Local North West Learning Programme to apply for a small grant to help put ideas into practice in their own organisations, partnerships and communities.

You could use the funding to:

- Test a new idea.
- Bring residents together.
- Try a different approach to community engagement.
- Explore a new partnership.
- Capture and share learning.
- Pilot something you've always wanted to try.

Attend the learning events throughout the programme and start thinking about how you'll turn learning into action.

More details will be shared after the programme ends.

Learn → Develop an idea → Connect with others → Apply for a Learning into Action Award → Test your idea → Share your learning

Thank you.

- www.vsnw.org.uk
- www.linkedin.com/company/voluntary-sector-north-west

