

Keep it Local:

How local government can
plug into the power of community

March 2020

LLOYDS BANK
FOUNDATION
England & Wales



locality

the power of community



Contents

01. Executive summary	03
02. Introduction - what the research shows, why the time is now	08
03. Who are the Keep it Local trailblazer councils?	12
04. Methodology, framework and evidence summary	14
05. Case Studies	20
• Southwark - Bede House	20
• Leeds - Behind Closed Doors	22
• Leeds - Health for All	24
• Sheffield - Manor and Castle Development Trust	26
• Birmingham - Northfield Community Partnership	28
• Hackney - Shoreditch Trust	30
• South Gloucestershire - Southern Brooks Community Partnerships	32
06. How councils can Keep it Local: recommendations	34
07. Conclusion - what next?	40
08. Endnotes	42

01. Executive summary

Keep it Local is the campaign to turn the tide on outsourcing at scale and build partnerships between local places and communities instead.

Local authorities face a growing crisis, with deep cuts and rising demand. Over recent years, the dominant response has been to try and find savings by outsourcing services at scale.

But many local areas are now suffering from 'scale fail': poor quality services that don't deliver the outcomes promised and don't deal with people's problems at source.

However, a growing number of local authorities have been doing things differently. They recognise the distinctive role that community organisations play both in the local service landscape and in the wider social fabric of their places. So rather than crowding them out with bureaucratic commissioning and standardised services, they are seeking to support and nurture them - by building partnerships, sharing power, and maximising local strengths.

This report provides new evidence and understanding of exactly what makes the work community organisations do in their local neighbourhoods unique. It shows the benefits that can be realised if local areas plug into this 'power of community' - not only providing high quality services for

local people but also bringing communities together at a time of ongoing social division. And it highlights the trailblazer councils who are leading the way by Keeping it Local.

Who are the Keep it Local trailblazers?

Locality has established a Keep it Local Network to build momentum behind the new direction that is emerging. We're bringing together likeminded councils to share learning and work with us to put Keep it Local principles into practice.

Eleven trailblazer councils have now joined the Keep it Local Network: Bradford Metropolitan District Council; Bristol City Council; Calderdale Council; Hackney Council; Kirklees Council; Lewisham Council; Newcastle City Council; Oldham Council; Rotherham Council; South Gloucestershire Council and Wirral Council.

These councils have publicly endorsed six Keep it Local principles, appointed champions in their cabinet and senior leadership team and have committed to working with Locality to assess and improve their current practice.

The Keep it Local principles

Through co-design with councils and communities, the Keep it Local principles guide policy and practice within local authorities.



1 Think about the whole system and not individual service silos.



2 Coordinate services at the neighbourhood level.



3 Increase local spend to invest in the local economy.



4 Focus on early intervention now to save costs tomorrow.



5 Commit to your community and proactively support local organisations.



6 Commission services simply and collaboratively so they are local by default.

Alongside these early adopters, other councils are going through internal processes to finalise their involvement in the Keep it Local Network.

These councils have recognised the opportunity Keep it Local presents of delivering on their core agendas while maximising return to their places from the money they invest. As Susan Hinchcliffe, leader of Bradford Council puts it:

“ This isn’t about altruism, or working with local organisations because it’s a nice thing to do. We want to Keep it Local because we know it’s the best way to provide the best possible offer for our communities.

Susan Hinchcliffe, Leader,
Bradford Council



All have different routes into the Keep it Local movement, looking at it through a range of different lenses. For example, this might be through the potential to help build an inclusive economy, as part of a wider public service reform agenda, through a drive to disperse power to a local level, or some combination.

Councils are seeking to be more ambitious in their application of social value; for others the power of community ownership plays a big part; or others still have highlighted the huge potential of building their prevention offer to save money elsewhere in the system. Other places are thinking about the future of social care, in the context of an ageing population, and reimagining the role of community provision in this ecosystem.

All of them see the Keep it Local approach as means of improving their service offer to citizens, making every

pound work harder for the communities they serve, and deepening their long-term relationships with local people.

New research with community organisations

The new research in this report shows why councils are joining this growing Keep it Local movement. Working with seven community organisations from across the country, we’ve developed a deeper understanding of just what makes their approach to services and role in their neighbourhoods distinctive. We’ve uncovered powerful evidence of the transformational impact this has on people’s lives - and the huge benefits local areas can realise if they unlock the power of community.

Whether it’s through end-to-end support for women suffering domestic abuse in Southwark and Leeds; or the provision of physical connection in a world of online tick-boxes for welfare recipients in Birmingham: local community organisations do things differently. And this makes a tangible difference for both the individual people who engage with them and the wider places they live in.

Our research has found that community organisations have distinctive qualities that make them uniquely well placed to address the challenges facing their communities. These organisations not only help relieve immediate pressures on public services but also provide the answer to many longer-term, more intractable issues.

- they possess a strong breadth and depth of local knowledge.
- they have built trust with local people.
- they are motivated by their attachment to local place and driven to improve this place and the outcomes of people living there.

- they are flexible and nimble.
- they work closely with volunteers.
- they work in an asset-based way, harnessing people's strengths for the benefit of the local place.

There is a growing recognition that these are the qualities that are required to get to grips with the complex nature of the most pressing problems local authorities face, from homelessness to adult social care to loneliness. Indeed, our research has found that these distinctive qualities lead to a range of distinct outcomes for people using services provided by community organisations, and for statutory sector organisations commissioning them:

Key system outcomes:

- prevention of demand for services elsewhere in the system.
- organisations recognised as key partners for complex cases – with the public sector referring on the most challenging cases.
- high levels of social value generated for the local place.

Key individual outcomes:

- greater involvement in local community.
- access to safe, welcoming spaces.
- human interaction and person-centred care.
- support which doesn't stop when a simple 'outcome' is delivered.
- access to peer support.

These are critical service-level impacts that can help councils achieve their central objectives, such as reduced social isolation or improved community safety. But we've also seen evidence of the wider benefits local organisations bring – for example, by investing in, and attracting investment to, their local neighbourhoods.

Or by playing a powerful advocacy role, representing the community and taking on leadership roles as key brokers between statutory sector and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

Time and time again, we heard how these organisations take on the complex cases that public and private sectors struggle to solve. Across all these case studies, the role of social action and volunteering is vital to this. Its power to bring people together, build confidence and generate positive outcomes for those volunteering and those being supported is clear.

What this amounts to is a vital resource in our neighbourhoods that has developed over time. A Keep it Local approach enables councils to plug into it and benefit from its power – while also providing vital resources to support it to develop and grow stronger.

Cogs of connection

The thread which runs through all these organisations is their role as a local cog of connection. They are connected to a particular place. They have strong relationships with local people, deep reservoirs of trust, and unrivalled local knowledge. This makes them able to connect all parts of their community – and especially those who might be less likely to engage – with different services, people and activities. They are able to provide a level of support that goes way beyond an individual service – they get people connected locally. We believe this is something they can do that others can't do anything like as well. Their role connecting people, neighbourhoods, organisations, sectors and services means they are powerful and vital cogs in their local network.

All of this suggests benefits that reach far beyond a narrow conversation about public service reform, important though

that is. Recent political events have raised fundamental questions about who we are, how well we know each other and whether we are able to live together side by side. Central to this challenge is the distance that national politics feels from people and growing levels of political distrust.

We know that people have felt that politics and policy has been far too focused on what it could do to them and their places, rather than what it might do with them. Keep it Local offers local areas a way of combating this malaise. These organisations are ready-made connectors – Keep it Local means plugging into and super charging a huge resource that already exists.

Figure 1



“ Supporting the Keep it Local principles has to be about a partnership between the voluntary and community sector and the local authority to make sure that the wealth we create and spend is kept in the local area. If we do this well, we will be creating sustainable, good quality jobs that pay a decent living wage and investing in the skills and capacity of the people of Newcastle.



Nick Forbes, Leader, Newcastle Council

What next?

Councils increasingly understand the case for Keeping it Local:

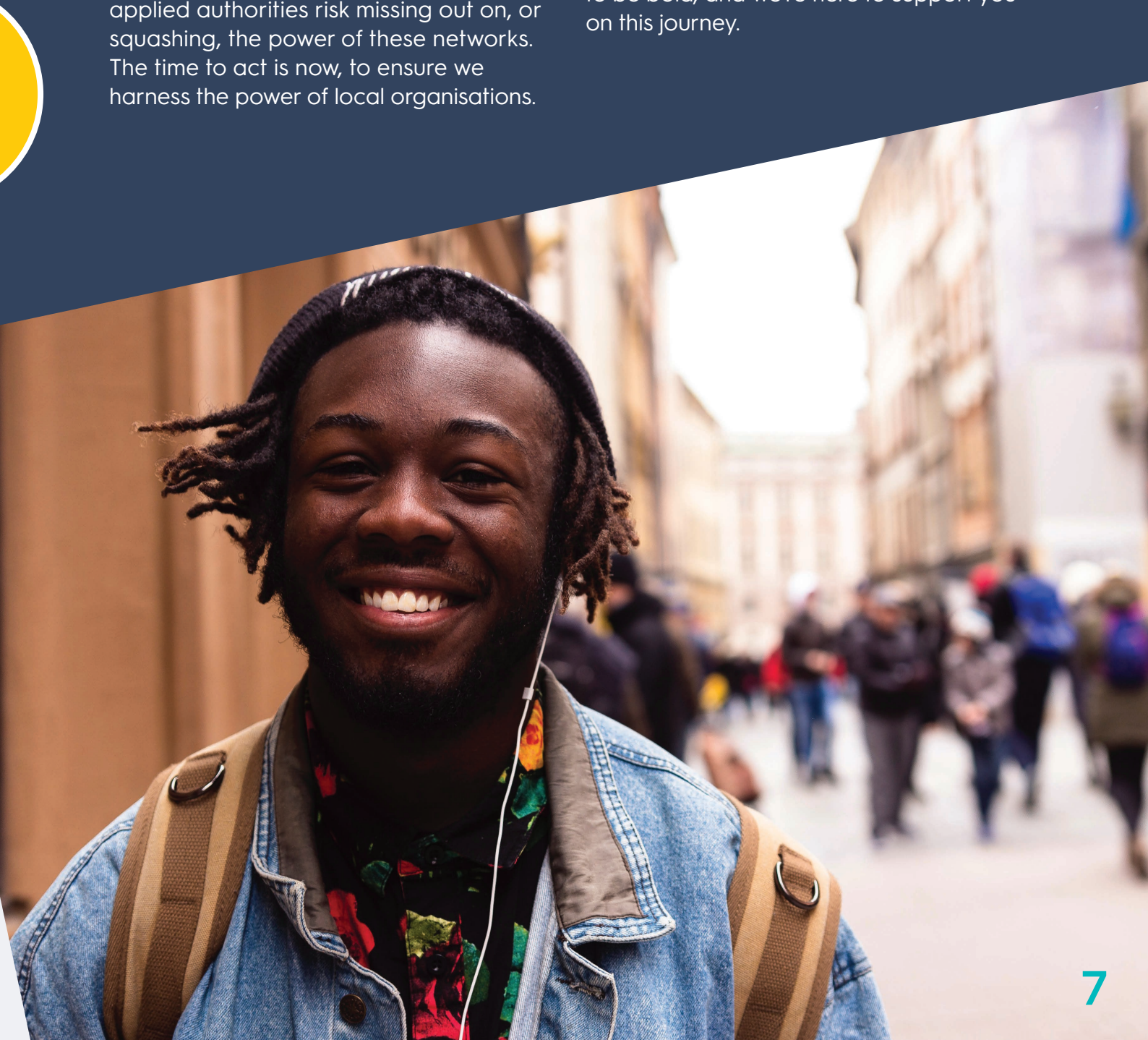
1. For better services that transform lives.
2. To reduce pressure on the public sector.
3. To invest in the local economy.

Changing long established systems and cultures is easier said than done and local communities want guidance on how they can go further. Our six Keep it Local principles provide a means to unlock the power of community networks.

Importantly, when these principles aren't applied authorities risk missing out on, or squashing, the power of these networks. The time to act is now, to ensure we harness the power of local organisations.

Application of the principles could involve pooling of budgets and resources with other statutory sector bodies in a place. It could be reform of procurement and social value policies so that processes are simpler, more collaborative and 'local by default'. It might involve a more coordinated and strategic development of community capacity through asset transfer and small grants programmes.

Crucially, it should involve active participation in the Keep it Local Network – recognising that there are councils across the country seeking to harness the power of community, all with unique learnings to offer. It requires leaders and practitioners to be bold, and we're here to support you on this journey.



02. Introduction: What the research shows, why the time is now

Local government is at a crossroads. One of the most harmful effects of the austerity decade we have experienced is that cuts have been weighted towards the local level. Local government and people engaging with its services have shouldered the heaviest burden of sustained fiscal belt-tightening. For a sense of how stark this challenge is, New Economics Foundation analysis shows a £19.4bn local government funding gap¹ for 2019/20.

Following the General Election in December 2019, there is little sign this pressure will ease. Despite commitments that “austerity is over”, we know that services are not about to rebound, and pledges to increase spending on specific areas of local government activity such as social care will not reverse a decade of cuts.

Alongside the deep challenges that local authorities and communities have faced, we have begun to see the emergence of something more positive. There is a growing appreciation that things are not working and that old models are obsolete. This is combined with an emerging range of new thinking and consensus on the way forward.

“Public trust in outsourcing has been seriously damaged.

The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee.²

Key trends driving interest in Keep it Local

- Local authorities face a growing crisis, with deep cuts and rising demand.
- Councils have been trying to find savings by outsourcing at scale.
- Smaller, local organisations have been shut out by the trend towards scale.
- Many local areas are now suffering from scale fail. Councils can become locked into rigid and complex contracts that suck up administrative resources to manage and are inflexible to the current pace of change.
- Following Carillion’s collapse, the entire outsourcing market is under increasing scrutiny.

The New Public Management paradigm – public services based on markets, managers and measurement – is dying and the first shoots of what comes next are beginning to show.³

The complex nature of the public policy challenges we face is increasingly well-understood, and this understanding is driving a new way of working that seeks to harness the power of community. This new way of working requires deep and lasting relationships to be forged, with power widely dispersed and services joined-up around the distinct needs of every person.

Often, the huge power that exists in all communities sparks rather than surges. A lack of community capacity, poor local relationships, top down decision making, a tendency towards risk aversion: all can conspire to leave this power latent.⁴ What sits behind this is a wider system that fails to unlock local potential.

However, there is a growing movement of people, organisations and thinkers looking to move beyond this system.

The growing movement

These changes in thinking span a range of sectors and disciplines, from community wealth building and public finance reform, to complexity thinking and community power.

The community wealth building movement,⁵ for example, is rooted in political economy and is focused on people-centred approaches to local economic development, which redirect wealth back into the local economy. Organisations such as the Centre for Local Economic Strategies have encouraged places to think about how they harness the economic assets in a place for the benefit of local people. This is often in opposition to a wider extractive economic model that hasn't worked for these places - a characteristic shared with the places profiled in this research.

Complexity thinking and its implications for public services is also driving much of this debate. Collaborate's work on "Human, Learning, Systems", sets out a "new world" of approaches to social change that genuinely put people in the lead".⁶ They describe approaches in the existing New Public Management paradigm, based on perverse incentives and ineffective markets, that are wholly inadequate in a time of complexity.

Their research lays out the new ways of working that commissioners and funders are putting in place to respond to complexity. They are built on human

relationships; open to constant learning and adaptation; and look after the health of the wider system, rather than focusing on siloed service areas.

The New Local Government Network's work on the Community Paradigm is also contributing to thinking about what comes after New Public Management, and how to harness community power. It looks at this through the lens of local government reorganisation and devolution.⁷ It challenges whether the state is fit for purpose in the 21st century. We had the 'state paradigm' in the post-war period, the 'market paradigm' from the 80s onwards. Now is the time for the 'community paradigm'. To get there, they argue we need a process of communitisation - "the process of transferring power and resource into the hands of communities".⁸

"The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy is also developing research and guidance for its members - including local authority Finance Directors - on how to unlock the potential of local charities in public service delivery. As councils continue to contend with the results of a decade of austerity and instances of outsourcing failures, the work will investigate the role social value can play in driving commissioning change".

Threads from all this work runs throughout our research. This diversity of thought can sometimes lead to a feeling that these debates are happening in parallel, rather than together. However, it is because of the multi-perspective and overlapping nature of this movement that makes the potential for a dramatic and decisive shift so great.

Keep it Local intersects and complements this existing work. Our research looks at the existing power in our communities, identifies its distinctiveness, and the integral role it plays in all the shifts described above.

Reasons to Keep it Local

Through the course of the Keep it Local campaign, we have explored why councils have signed up to the Keep it Local Network. Each case is unique, but the following themes summarise the feedback from the network.

1. To reduce pressure on the public sector.

There is a recognition that, often, the rising demand placing such pressure on our public services is 'failure demand': problems which have mounted up over time, having not been properly addressed when they were first reported. Local community organisations are more likely to solve underlying issues upfront because of the way they work: services are person-centred and joined-up with other local service providers.

Locality's report "Saving Money by Doing the Right Thing"⁹ found that eight people with drug or alcohol dependency presented to GPs a total of 124 times. Broader analysis from Vanguard suggests that failure demand accounts for 80% of demand into health and social care services. Other research and work, like that of public services consultancy IMPOWER¹⁰ recognises that there is a huge opportunity for local government to manage demand better.

2. To invest in the local economy.

By commissioning community organisations, councils can ensure that precious public sector resources are used to build community capacity and create maximum benefit to the local economy. This is particularly crucial at a time when the income base for local authorities is increasingly dependent on the success of their local economies, with the shift to business rate retention.

Locality research¹¹ looked at how community organisations act as local economic multipliers by employing local people and using local suppliers. In Bristol, every £1 generated by Southmead Development Trust creates £2.55; and Windmill Hill City Farm creates £2.47.

“As a co-operative council who places Thriving Communities at the heart of our own values we believe we share the same vision and mission statement as those in the Keep it Local Network.

It can only be of benefit to an organisation like ourselves to be a part of such a supportive Network. Together we will provide a strong voice to push for change.

Spending money locally and devolution are important ambitions for us. We already work with partners to make sure we maximise the Oldham pound locally and our residents have already seen the benefits.



Cllr Sean Fielding,
Leader Oldham Council

We also calculated the 'enabled contribution' that community organisations make to the local economy by hosting tenants. A study of 10 Locality members by NEF Consulting found they collectively enabled approximately 1,400 jobs and approximately £120m of gross value to be added to the local economy.

New research focussing on two other benefits of keeping it local.

1. The provision of transformational services.
2. Access to, and support for, a unique network of local assets.

It shows that community organisations are providing transformational services. Services which have a distinct value, especially for those with complex needs. Services which are in stark contrast to the transactional provision which has come to characterise much of the public service landscape. Services which are underpinned and powered by a strong depth and breadth of local knowledge and trusting relationships with local people.

In addition, this research shows that commissioners of these services are receiving so much more than just a transformational service. They are supporting and nurturing a rich network of assets and support with a community organisation at its centre. These organisations are key cogs of connection in their neighbourhood – keeping local systems operating and serving as a key link between the statutory and business sectors and smaller voluntary and community sector organisations and groups.

Research by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research¹² in 'The Value of Small' spoke about this distinctiveness in three ways – delivering individual value, economic value and added value. Individuals engaging with these services receive a distinctive offer of person-centred, committed and holistic support. Community organisations provide economic value through their local supply chains and preventative impact. 'The Value of Small' found that the economic footprint of small and medium sized charities was £7.2bn in 2014-15.¹³

They deliver added value through supporting volunteering; maintaining and enhancing local and organisational networks; and leveraging external funding. These organisations are often able to more than double income received from the public sector with income from elsewhere.¹⁴

Therefore, local authorities should see collaboration with these organisations as an investment, rather than a simple public spending decision. Not only can councils receive a distinctively high-quality service, but they can support and plug into the power of a community network and generate additional social and economic value for their communities.

As stewards of their local place, councils are thinking about how they invest and nurture this local resource. Too often, systems (procurement, commissioning) and culture prevent this from happening. This has largely been driven by the deep cuts to local government funding councils have experienced in the past decade. However, this focus on short term cost savings means councils miss out on the double-benefit described above and explored in detail in this report. Worse still, through underinvestment, they risk crushing these networks that have developed organically over time.



03. Who are the Keep it Local trailblazer councils?

Places are increasingly recognising the benefits of Keeping it Local we outline in this report. To build on this momentum, Locality has established a Keep it Local Network - where likeminded local authorities can share learning on the practice and politics of making the shift to Keep it Local.

Eleven Keep it Local trailblazers have now joined the Network. They have publicly committed to the six Keep it Local principles, appointed champions in the cabinet and senior leadership team and committed to working with Locality to assess and improve their current practice.

Importantly, they have convened, or will be convening, a discussion with their local community about what Keep it Local means in their specific place. Here, we profile these councils and the key agendas that are driving their involvement in Keep it Local in each area.

Alongside these early adopters, other councils are going through final internal processes to finalise their involvement in the Keep it Local Network.

We also know that there are many other places forging partnerships with communities, including in many of the places profiled through this research. We hope they will join this growing movement of councils and communities coming together to transform their places.

Figure 2



- 1 **Bradford Metropolitan District Council** – One of two Keep it Local pilot areas, alongside Bristol. Bradford are using Keep it Local to think about how they reform their homecare offer – to move away from the transactional model of support that has come to characterise this social service. They also have ambitious Social Value and Inclusive Growth policies¹⁵ which involve a commitment to increasing spend with local organisations.
- 2 **Bristol City Council** – One of two Keep it Local pilot areas, alongside Bradford. The council see the ideas behind Keep it Local as a key route through which to support their ambitions for Adult Social Care transformation and ensuring the One City Plan¹⁶ involves all communities in Bristol.
- 3 **Calderdale Council** – Their Community Anchor Policy¹⁷ has sought to enable the power of their local community organisations. They see Keep it Local as supporting them to deliver on their Inclusive Economy Strategy¹⁸ and develop their social value approach.
- 4 **Hackney Council** – Their Inclusive Economy Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Strategy¹⁹ are both supported by membership of the Keep it Local Network. They are applying the Keep it Local principles through “disrupting service siloes, finding existing expertise in our communities, and pushing for ‘local by default’”.
- 5 **Kirklees Council** – The council have sought to build community capacity through an ambitious Community Asset Transfer approach and are building a diverse local care market through support for small enterprises and cooperatives.²
- 6 **Lewisham Council** – Lewisham have developed their ‘Lewisham Deal’²¹ with other anchor institutions in the city to promote inclusive growth in the borough. They are thinking about how best to support local organisations through their social value policies and have endorsed the Keep it Local principles, recognising “that it is only through strong and effective partnership working that we deliver better outcomes for our citizens.”²²
- 7 **Newcastle City Council** – Newcastle’s Social Value approach²³, and ambition to increase levels of local spending is to “make sure that the wealth we create and spend is kept in the local area. If we do this well, we will be creating sustainable, good quality jobs that pay a decent living wage, and investing in the skills and capacity of the people of Newcastle.”²⁴
- 8 **Oldham Council** – The Oldham model focuses on “thriving communities, inclusive economy and co-operative services”²⁵. The council recognises the support offered through the Keep it Local Network can help support and strengthen this model, and develop alternative approaches to commissioning, like their social prescribing innovation partnership.
- 9 **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council** – Their Social Value Policy²⁶ includes specific reference to the Keep it Local principles and how they will “enable the Council to make a greater shift towards a more collaborative approach grounded in local delivery, early intervention and prevention.”
- 10 **South Gloucestershire Council** – South Gloucestershire Council is going to work together with the VCSE sector to develop a local approach to Keeping it Local and to continue supporting community organisations in the district. It is planning reform to its procurement processes and extend its successful social value approach. It will build on foundations, including a stronger community and voluntary sector, laid out in the South Gloucestershire Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- 11 **Wirral Council** – Wirral Council is working with Capacity: The Public Services Lab, to support its local voluntary and community sector through reforms to commissioning and procurement. They endorsed the Keep it Local principles²⁷ to help them harness the local potential that exists in their authority neighbourhoods and communities.

04. Methodology, evidence summary and framework

Here we describe our approach to researching the distinctive role of these community organisations; provide a summary of what we found and the common characteristics they share; and sketch out a framework that links them.

Research methodology

In the summer and autumn of 2019, we worked with seven community organisations – in Birmingham, Leeds, London, Sheffield and South Gloucestershire – and people they work with. We wanted to look at what makes these organisations unique.

We ran seven workshops – one with each organisation – with senior management and frontline delivery staff. We used these workshops to look at the impact data and stories they hold, and the strategy and culture which guides their work.

These workshops were guided by a Keep it Local ‘characteristics chart’. Its content was informed by staff experience of working with these types of organisations and existing research, such as the Value of Small. It was designed to guide colleagues and research partners to think about the distinctive characteristics of these organisations. It was also designed to explore how they transform lives and the impact measurement approaches organisations might use to show this.

Alongside these workshops, we also carried out interviews with people that use services provided by these organisations. We used these interviews to explore the impact of these services in greater detail.

We then analysed the findings gathered through these research activities to develop a common framework that links these organisations.

Research findings

History and context

We live in a time when inequality is moving up the political agenda, in-work poverty is on the rise, and long-term unemployment remains a stubborn and malign feature of too many communities. It is in this context that the organisations we worked with on this research operate – they are all based in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with complex problems.

Locality’s latest membership survey showed that 80% of our member organisations work in the 50% most deprived wards in the country.²⁸ This is also in the context of recent research from New Philanthropy Capital showing that there are fewer charities per 1,000 people in ‘left behind’ areas than the national average.²⁹ However, all the organisations profiled in this research are based in the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.³⁰

These are the sorts of places that commentary in recent years has come to recognise as ‘left behind’, or ‘held back’ – as the Centre for Labour and Social Studies has argued is a more appropriate term³¹. Held back by a system of top-down state interventions and market-driven solutions which can’t respond to this complexity.

Of course, each was established in response to a particular set of circumstances at a certain time in a specific place. However, all these organisations developed organically out of a recognition that no one was coming over the hill to solve the complex social problems their communities were facing – so they would have to come together to find solutions themselves.

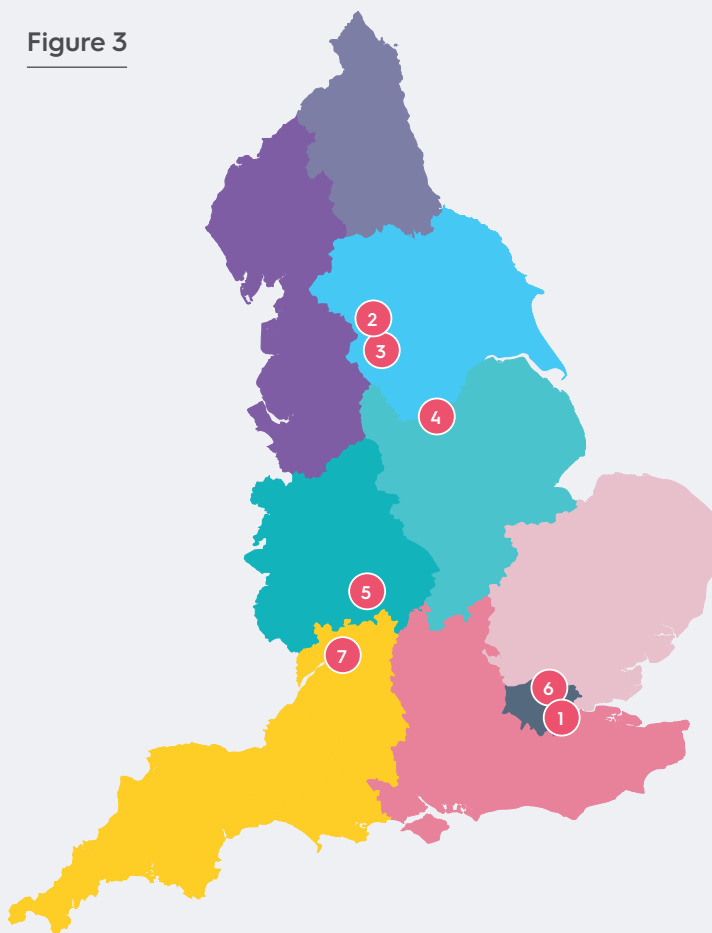
For example, The Northfield Community Partnership (*case study on page 28*) was established in response to the major economic shock of the closure of the local MG Rover Plant in 2005.

Bede House, a community organisation based in Southwark (*case study on page 20*) has served individuals and families in Bermondsey for generations – since 1938. It has adapted and changed its approach in response to some of the great social changes during this period, such as the closure of the docks, the redevelopment of housing estates and the arrival of new communities in the neighbourhood.

Across the case studies, we heard staff and service users alike note that the work of these organisations is fuelled by a connection to their local place and built on a web of trusting relationships with local people. Relationships which have been built up over time.

Social context in the places these organisations work

Figure 3



Organisations	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 Rank	IoD 2019 Health Deprivation and Disability Rank	Unemployment benefit (JSA and Universal Credit) (% of working age adults)	People with no qualifications (% of people over 16)
1 Bede House	5,462 Top 20% most deprived LSOA*	4,624 Top 20%	5.0	25.5
2 Behind Closed Doors	5,701 Top 20% most deprived LSOA*	4,416 Top 20%	4.4	34.9
3 Health for all	823 Top 10% most deprived LSOA*	1,887 Top 20%	7.2	46.4
4 Manor and Castle Development Trust	9,559 Top 40% most deprived LSOA*	10,074 Top 40%	3.9	24.3
5 Northfield Community Partnership	5,929 Top 20% most deprived LSOA*	7,847 Top 40%	6.9	23.8
6 Shoreditch Trust	5,518 Top 20% most deprived LSOA*	10,823 Top 40%	3.4	17.8
7 Southern Brooks	8,636 Top 40% most deprived LSOA*	14,327 Top 60%	4.0	32.7

*Lower Layer Super Output Area

Their role

These community organisations deliver a range of local authority and statutory sector services, as well as undertaking other income-generating activity to support their work in their neighbourhoods. Through our case studies, we have seen examples of organisations delivering complex domestic violence support, antenatal support for new mothers, social prescribing schemes and welfare support in areas of high deprivation, to name a few.

They are multi-purpose. As well as delivering vital services, they see their role as ‘connectors’ – making links between local services, sectors, people and activities. Previous research has referred to a similar role as ‘providing the glue between services.’³²

Our new research has found this makes them vital cogs of connection in their neighbourhoods. They keep local systems operating and act as a key link between the statutory and business sectors and smaller voluntary and community sector organisations and groups.

“ It is in and of itself a good thing to find a way for people to realise their power. To understand themselves as assets and not passive recipients of public services.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol



For example, Northfield Community Partnership, with the local church, set up Northfield Stakeholders Group. This was to enable local community organisations and agencies to respond strategically to the decreasing service provision and increasing challenges faced by communities in Northfield’s neighbourhoods. Some of the key successes of this group include restoring homelessness support in the neighbourhood and developing a new community hub to host at-risk organisations.

Distinctive qualities and characteristics

Our research has found community organisations have a distinct set of qualities, driven by the values and purpose they are guided by (namely a commitment to their local communities) and the history and context which drive their work.

- they possess a strong breadth and depth of local knowledge.
- they have built trust with local people.
- they are motivated by their attachment to local place and driven to improve this place and the outcomes of people living there.
- they are flexible and nimble (often realised through flat management structures).
- they work closely with volunteers.
- they work in an asset-based way, harnessing people’s strengths for the benefit of the local place.

Outcomes

Through our research, we've seen a range of distinct outcomes for people using services provided by community organisations, and for statutory sector organisations commissioning them. These include:

Key system outcomes:

Prevention of demand for services elsewhere in the system. Across all the case studies, the preventative impact of their services for other statutory sector services and for the voluntary and community sector was a clear characteristic. For example, Bede House's Starfish Project potentially saves the NHS £3,398 for each woman they help remove from domestic violence and support to rebuild their lives.³³ However, this is just part of the picture. Intervening early in a domestic violence 'journey' helps save money for a range of statutory services, including the police, the local authority-funded care system and the criminal justice system.³⁴

Organisations recognised as key partners for complex cases – with the public sector referring on the most challenging cases. Across the organisations researched this was a common theme. Statutory sector bodies recognised that they and some national providers couldn't deal with the more difficult cases, due to the complexity and interconnectedness of some of the challenges people are facing. To deal with these challenges requires neighbourhood-level knowledge and a local web of relationships. One staff member from Health for All in Leeds sums this up: "We say yes".

High levels of social value generated for the local place. As demonstrated by the two points above, the additional social and economic value generated by community organisations impacts

the local system in positive ways. For example, after analysing a range of client 'progress data', Behind Closed Doors, a domestic abuse charity in Leeds, estimated that they produced around £12,073,457 of social value in 2018/19.

Key individual outcomes:

Greater involvement in local social action and volunteering. Many of the services and organisations profiled in this research recognise the power of social action and volunteering. It can provide a good follow-on activity for clients, to sustain their relationships with the organisation and peers beyond the completion of formal commissioned services.

Access to safe, welcoming spaces. Our social infrastructure is in decline, the scale of which was laid bare by our Great British Sell Off report³⁵. Across our research, we've heard how these organisations have remained a physical community space for people to connect. This is at a time when the market and state infrastructure around them has crumbled. Informality is also important. Sheffield-based community organisation, Manor and Castle, provides retail space 'shop-front' - a non-traditional space that people feel they can drop in to and doesn't feel like a formal service. This finding is supported by research on the value of small and medium sized charities³⁶. Volunteers and service users spoke about likening the environment created by these charities to "a family" and "felt that also marked it out as different from a larger charity or public service."³⁷

Human interaction and person-centred care. Clients at Behind Closed Doors noted that the strength of relationship was crucial. It enabled them to be honest about their feelings and situation and allowed workers to discuss, challenge and support them effectively.

Support which doesn't stop when a simple 'outcome' is delivered. For example, Bede House's domestic abuse service is open-ended. Staff will work with clients for as long as is necessary to break the cycle of abuse.

They also recognise the power of peer support in this mix. Bede House's Survivors' Groups and Freedom Programmes connect women so they can share their experience and help one another through the challenge of recovery, following their involvement in the commissioned domestic abuse support service.

Cogs of connection

Figure 4 illustrates the role community organisations play as cogs of connection in their local place. It shows the range of relationships they have formed with local people, public sector agencies, providers, businesses and other local partners - a network that has developed organically over time. Community organisations have a catalytic role linking up these often-disconnected parts of the system.

This network is part of what delivers strong service outcomes when community organisations deliver services. For example, a community organisation will be well-placed to deliver complex services which require trusting relationships when it has already formed bonds with residents.

There is also a strong degree of additional benefit which commissioning rarely recognises. We have seen examples of people engaging with an organisation for a specific service and then being linked up to all manner of other support and assets as a result.

We have found a broad range of assets, organisations and individuals mobilised by the organisations profiled in this research.

There are examples of organisations tapping into their local networks to make seemingly small interventions which can have a huge impact. There is the example of Eloise's support worker in South Gloucestershire who, after speaking to a local employer about her complex needs and lack of transport, found her temporary work close to home.

There is the case of Client A in Southwark, someone who experienced domestic violence at home - with her problems compounded by an expired visa. Bede House supported her to access immigration advice and counselling, and then introduced her to a local Survivors group.

In Northfield, many people first access Northfield Community Partnership through its foodbank service. Staff there are aware of the complex challenges many of these people face and can quickly signpost them to other services provided by the organisation, such as employment-readiness support and help with job searches.

It is a similar story in Sheffield. Staff at Manor and Castle Development Trust about seeing their role as being 'to recognise links and connections'. Their services operate independently, but "once you're in one you get linked up to other things".

Health for All in Leeds have supported over 100 small, local community groups to work in their community, recognising their role as being one of direct support, but also to catalyse smaller voluntary and community sector organisations to meet people's needs and build on their strengths.

Figure 4



“ We support Keep it Local because we believe that strong, resilient communities benefit the whole borough and our local economy. We are proud to have commissioned local organisations to deliver local services in our communities like our Children’s Centres.

We work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to help support resilient communities through projects like Staying Well and Active Calderdale that empower people and enrich local lives.

In the past year we have launched our Inclusive Economy Strategy and are developing our approach to social value so that these vital partnerships are built into all our work going forward.

Jane Scullion Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Resources, Calderdale Council



05. Case studies

The following case studies focus on community organisations in different areas of the country with unique histories, stories, and areas of focus. We look at the impact they have on the people they work with, the systems they operate in and how they support councils to deliver on their agendas and much more.

Southwark – Bede House

Responsive to the needs of local people for over 80 years. Today they provide domestic abuse support services and access to wider support networks.

Bede House is based in Bermondsey, South London. It was founded in 1938 and since then has provided a range of community-based responses to the needs of local people. It has served individuals and families for generations, particularly during periods of great social change, such as the closure of the docks, the redevelopment of housing estates and the arrival of new communities in the neighbourhoods. Today, one of their most vital local services is the Starfish Project.

Southwark Council's statutory funded domestic violence services are delivered by Solace, a national provider who support a high volume of clients. Bede's Starfish Project works alongside this to serve those whose needs are not easily met by the contracted service. Those using the Starfish Project are in complex situations. For example, half of the women who contacted the project have a formal diagnosis of mental ill-health.

A unique feature of Bede's service is that it is open-ended – staff will work with clients for as long as is necessary to break the cycle of abuse. They also recognise the power of peer support in this mix. Their Survivors' Groups and Freedom Programmes connect women so they can share their experience and help one another through the challenge of recovery.



Key findings

- In 2018/19, the small team at the Starfish Project helped 198 clients. Over one third of their clients were self-referrals who had heard about Bede by word of mouth.³⁸
- 90% of their clients live safer lives after help from Bede, and their mental health improves as a result.
- Each year, social services avoid having to take children into care because Bede has helped their mothers to end the violence at home.
- Based on The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) estimate of a cost for an Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA), the Starfish Project potentially saves the NHS £3,398 for each woman they help remove from domestic violence and support to rebuild their lives.³⁹

“ I had no money, because my husband controlled our finances. I also found out that my visa had expired (he controlled our visas too) which meant that I couldn't work or receive any benefits.

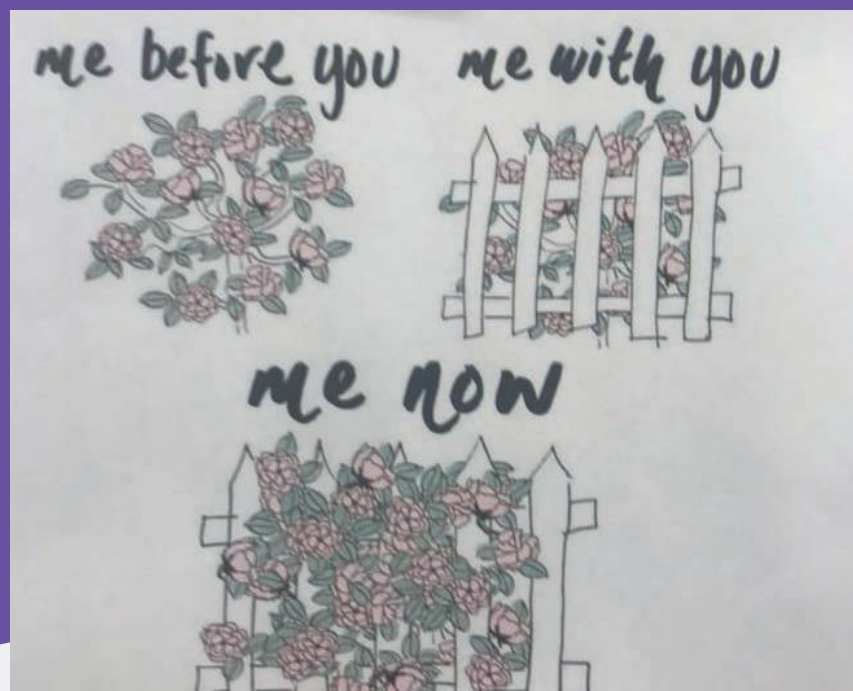
The Bede House team were amazing. They provided counselling and got me some immigration advice plus financial help and guidance.

I also started to attend their weekly Survivors Support Group. Where women like me come to listen to each other and share their experiences.

It's the only place I go where I feel that people really understand. They also make my children feel wanted and welcome which makes a huge difference.

Behind Closed Doors client

A client of Bede's Starfish DV Project created this image to describe her experience of life before, during and after an abusive relationship.



Leeds – Behind Closed Doors

Holistic work with clients prevents further instances of domestic violence and abuse. Community-level preventative work follows-on from statutory support.

Behind Closed Doors was started by local women in Otley, Leeds, in 1997. They provided a phone line and safe space to help women suffering domestic abuse and violence. They are now a city-wide charity based in the Aireborough / Wharfedale district of the city.

Behind Closed Doors recognise the importance of retaining a presence locally. They maintain a private address. This enables them to maintain the trust of the people they work with and allows them to provide a safe space.

The organisation provides both commissioned (Community Domestic Violence Team) and community-level preventative (Prevention and Recovery Service) work - so recovery support can follow on from the statutory service.

Clients said that individualised, 1-1 support, in their own home, at a time to suit them was important and that they really valued their worker's professional, personalised support. They said that this relationship was crucial. It enabled them to be honest about their feelings and situation, and allowed workers to discuss, challenge and support them effectively.⁴⁰

Due to the complex nature of the challenges faced by the people Behind Closed Doors work with, a major part of their work is connecting people with others, and with other services. They work closely with housing, police, social care, schools, children's centres, immigration, and the criminal justice system.



“The mix of safety, practical and personal stuff that my worker helped me with made it much easier to open up and process what happened and move on.”

Behind Closed Doors client



Key findings

- In 2018-19 Behind Closed Doors produced £12,073,457 of Social Value: mainly for the people the Community Domestic Violence Team and Prevention and Recovery Service team supported. This is based on the change in circumstance delivered for their clients compared to the cost of providing the services.⁴¹

They also produced:

- around £1.9 million Social Value for the children of their clients.
- £517,421 of Social Value for their volunteers.
- Last year, the Community Domestic Violence Team provided 3,888 hours to 379 people (333 Women and 46 men). The Prevention and Recovery Service team worked with 355 people (329 Women and 26 men).

These clients who completed support in 2018-19 said it enabled them to:

- be more independent, in control and able to make their own decisions.
- develop new stronger relationships.
- parent better.
- improve their mental health and wellbeing.
- keep themselves safer.

Leeds – Health for All

Actively taking on the difficult cases while acting flexibly and nimbly to bolster support across the neighbourhoods in which they operate.

Health for All was started with a small grant in 1991 in response to the World Health Organisation's health for all agenda developed in the 1970s.⁴² Health for All was founded on three core principles: redressing health inequality, promoting community participation and enabling collaboration. Its aim being to enable the poorest and most vulnerable communities in South Leeds to overcome the challenges of health and social inequality.

Many of the services and areas of work delivered today started when the first worker, who is now the CEO, went around the area to find out more about health inequalities and local issues. The organisation developed by finding out what local people want and need – and making it happen. This approach continues today, using the local knowledge of their staff, volunteers and local partners.

Health for All believe physical spaces for people to go and get support, meet others and feel part of the community is vital to the success of their services. They're important because people can turn up and access multiple services arranged around their needs.

In cases where Health for All have ownership of a space, they can use it to add value with additional projects and support as the needs are identified.

They have six centres across Leeds to ensure that people can easily access what they need. Many of these community assets were previously empty or underused facilities in deprived areas earmarked for demolition by the council.



They have since been saved by local people recognising and articulating their value. These local people called on Health for All to support their campaign and take ownership of these buildings, because they were a trusted and credible organisation.

Key findings

- Health for All have managed to leverage extra funding (beyond local commissioned services) from external sources to support the local area. Over the last 5 years, Health for All have directly and indirectly enabled an extra £3.74m of investment in local groups and assets.
- They are locally led. Six out of ten board members are from the local area, ensuring the organisation doesn't drift from its mission of working with local communities to tackle the root causes of local social challenges.
- Health for All have identified usages for community centres previously deemed surplus to requirement by Leeds City Council. In total, they have brought six centres back into active community use.

“ From our family intervention services and work with vulnerable men, we realised there wasn't a lot of support for young dads.

Young dads felt they are usually just seen as a problem and not many services engage with them. So, we started a group, asked the young dads what they needed and secured funding from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for a worker.

Our other projects, services, local centres and partnerships meant we were able to swiftly and easily engage young dads to respond to the need.

Pat McGeever, CEO, Health for All



Sheffield – Manor and Castle Development Trust

Their multi-asset and place-based approach enables people to self-refer and access a range of services easily.

Manor and Castle was set up in 1997 to work with local people to regenerate the neighbourhoods in the Manor and Castle ward in east Sheffield. Their core purpose is community development and working with local people to address the issues that matter to them and the wider community. The services they offer cover health and wellbeing, early years, employment and skills and social action and volunteering.

Building trust with their local community is central to their approach. Manor and Castle's retail space 'shop-front' is a non-traditional space that people feel they can drop in to and doesn't feel like a formal service.

They operate a 'cogs model' – services operate independently but "once you're in one you get linked up to other things". Staff see their role as being to recognise links and connections, both within the organisation and with other assets, organisations and services in the community.

Manor and Castle utilise social prescribing to triage people to different services within the organisation and to other organisations in the local area and work closely with local GP's practice.



“He provides the continuity and kindness that many of our patients need to turn their lives around... He is much more skilled than us at helping folk get more active and eat more healthily.

A local doctor, speaking about one of the Manor and Castle Development Trust Health Trainers

James's story

James was diagnosed with hypertension due to being overweight, and as a result at risk of diabetes, heart conditions and strokes. For two years following diagnosis, James worked with his GP to try to reduce his blood pressure and the risks associated with hypertension.

Two years later, James's blood pressure was the same and the health risks still there. He was still presenting regularly to his doctor. It was at this point he became aware of Manor and Castle Development Trust. He spotted an advert for their "Eat Well Feel Well" course in the GP surgery and was referred by his doctor. Over the following six weeks, James got to know the health and

exercise worker delivering the course, changed his eating and exercise habits and lost 16 pounds.

This was just the beginning of his journey with Manor and Castle. Over the following months, James became involved in a diabetes course and mental health programmes and became a volunteer and ambassador for Manor and Castle Development Trust. He spoke about his health transformation and advocated for others to do the same across Yorkshire on TV and the radio. James spoke about this transformation and the things he had done with Manor and Castle seeming like a dream.

Key findings

- Manor and Castle's work has been shown to prevent clients presenting to GP services. They have written testimonials from a GP about how they supported someone who had been presenting at the doctors with various problems and how engagement with Manor and Castle had improved their health.
- Manor and Castle's work is centred on cross-referral of clients to ensure they have a holistic offer and experience from the organisation. Manor and Castle have an in-house database with lots of info and can easily identify how people have accessed various services / support to tackle complex needs.

Birmingham – Northfield Community Partnership

Physical connection at a time when many welfare and support services are migrating online.

Northfield Community Partnership was established in 2007 by local stakeholders including the local MP, Town Centre Manager, business owners and local residents in response to the closure of the MG Rover car manufacturing plant in 2005.

Local people recognised that the closure of a huge employer would have a devastating impact on local people, the place and local economy if nothing was done to support them. The vision from the very beginning was to bring businesses and the community together for the benefit of residents and the area. Since that time, NCP has operated a community hub on the high street and become a trusted service provider, partner and source of support for local people, organisations and businesses.

Northfield Community Partnership has developed into an important part of the local community, providing advice and support across many services which the local authority can no longer provide effectively due to cuts. Their current site, known as 'The Hub', provides a range of services including financial advice, sexual health advice and resources, a Foodbank, welfare and benefits advice, employment, digital skills and volunteering opportunities. Their local connection is still apparent today. Their five board members either live locally or have a strong connection to Northfield.

NCP works in an area of high deprivation⁴³, with associated challenges such as low educational achievement, child poverty, unemployment, poor health and low wages.

For example, in 2015, Birmingham Northfield topped the national list of living wage



blackspots – with 53.4 per cent of the jobs based there paying less than the living wage⁴⁴.

As a result of the complex array of challenges facing people in Northfield, NCP's operational model is based on multiple services addressing the needs of the whole person. The model is built with the aim of tackling the underlying, long-term causes of the issue presented.

As services withdraw or are moved online⁴⁵ people can't talk to anyone about the challenges they face. NCP has placed a great deal of importance on retaining a shopfront so people can come in and see someone. At a time where austerity is hollowing out social infrastructure, NCP is one of the key remaining institutions in the local area.

Their regular interaction with local people provides a different level of insight into the challenges that people are facing.

A staff member referred to the low levels of energy people had to carry out mandatory job searches required by Job Centre Plus if they haven't eaten for a few days. This understanding and recognition of personal circumstances is something that many claimants have argued is missing from Job Centre employees.

So, Northfield Community Partnership works to identify the reasons behind clients' food poverty. Their model is built on cross referrals and support, providing advice and guidance (on work, housing etc) alongside food poverty initiatives.

Neighbourhood catalysts

Northfield Community Partnership and the local church set up Northfield Stakeholders Group to enable local community organisations and agencies to respond strategically to the decreasing service provision and increasing challenges faced by communities in Northfield.

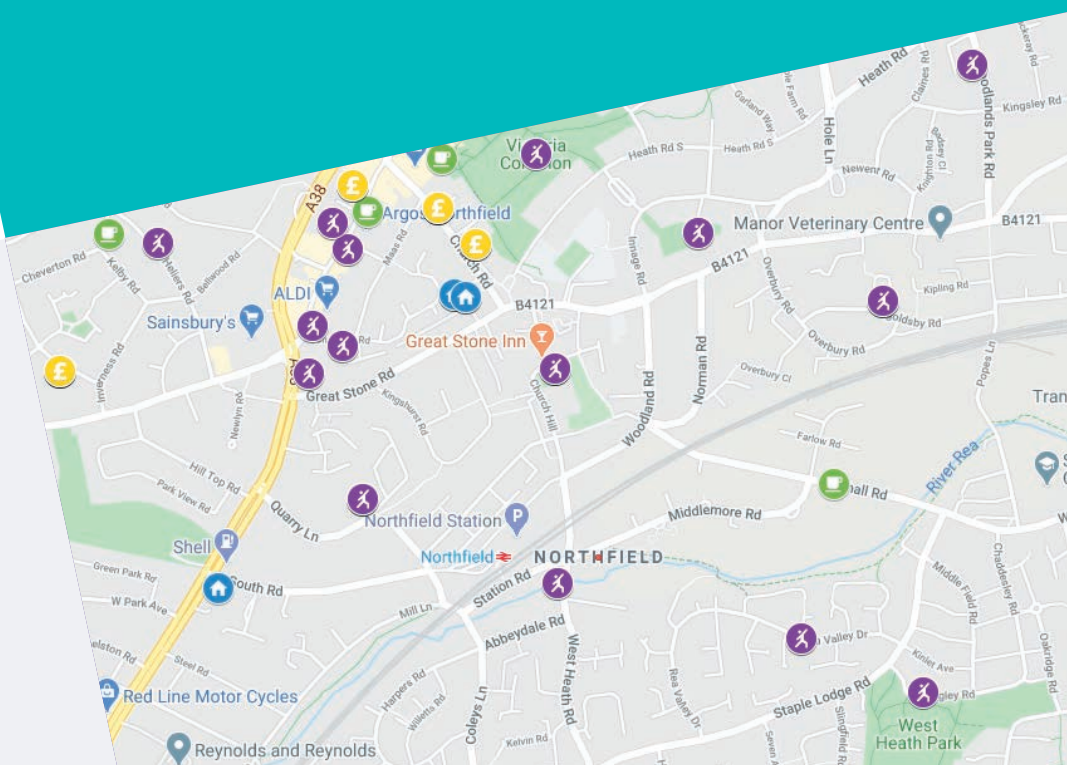
This group established the need and secured funding for a locally based housing officer from Birmingham City Council, following the closure of the Housing Advice Centre in the Northfield town centre⁴⁷. The stakeholder group also developed a community hub to house organisations at risk of closure and to provide new and emerging groups low cost office space.

Following the publication of Birmingham City Council's white paper, Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods⁴⁸, the area was awarded "Pioneer Neighbourhood" status. The area was awarded this status for its innovative community development work and contribution towards priority issues such as jobs, health and housing at the local level.

NCP's local knowledge also helped to develop the Northfield Community Asset Map, featuring up to date information about groups, activities and services operating in the Northfield Ward. NCPs services are developed in response to this, and other, local intelligence.

Key findings

- NCP registered 1393 new clients within a 12-month period between 2018 and 2019 and received a total of 5423 referrals from 53 service partners and self-referrals.



Northfield Area of the Birmingham Neighbourhood Networks 2019 Community Asset Directory.⁴⁹

Hackney – Shoreditch Trust

Developing an increased community capacity to care facilitating a mutually supportive network of women workers across agencies who jointly develop services.

Shoreditch Trust was formed in 1999 as part of the government's New Deal for Communities Programme. The initial remit involved regeneration of a specific part of Shoreditch, working closely with community members to ensure their input was heard, and training them to be able to continue to influence change in their local area in the future.

As the Trust became more involved, they realised there were lots of other ways they could work in the community. Since 2010 they have expanded, offering services further afield to the wider Hackney community and Greater London.



Shoreditch Trust see their place within the local voluntary and community sector ecosystem as vital. They are protective and proud of their ethical stance of not competing with other successful local organisations. This local knowledge and network has been built organically over time and is something that is very hard to replicate.

Shoreditch Trust also works very closely with public sector services in the area. For instance, the biggest referrer for one of their key services, Bump Buddies, is public health and midwifery in Hackney who have a very targeted client group of new mums with high needs.

“When people have complex needs and problems in different areas of their lives, having support from a service that actually has links into all the different local services that are going to support them is vital. We offer that at Shoreditch Trust. And when I say links, it's knowing the name of the person, it's having relationships.

Jaimie Persson, Deputy Chief Executive

“ A large organisation could set up an office in the area but not necessarily in each location. And there are lots of little organisations working at a hyper local level. If you're not plugged into that network, it's very difficult and it's a big job to get to know them. They're small organisations, they don't have capacity to set up websites and keep them up to date. So, even if a new organisation who wasn't local was to get on Google it won't help them get that knowledge.

Jaimie Persson, Deputy Chief Executive

The Bump Buddies Service – a peer mentoring scheme for new mums – has been shown to deliver outcomes for mums and children alike. The service results in improved emotional health, confidence, engagement, sense of trust, communications skills.⁵⁰

Shoreditch Trust actively invest in the local economy. They are committed to supporting the local economy and have a policy to source through both ethical and local suppliers, including other local social enterprises. Everything from the soap in their bathrooms to the ingredients in the kitchens are from local suppliers. They could save on budget if they sourced from national suppliers, but the money would not be going back into the local area. This is a clear demonstration of the economic multipliers councils can achieve for their local place when supporting local community organisations.

Key findings

- Almost three quarters of mothers identified the Bump Buddies Scheme as having helped them give their child a 'good start' in life⁵¹. Work from Professor James Heckman⁵² has identified that babies who have a good start are likely to cost the economy less and contribute more to society over the course of their lifetimes.



South Gloucestershire – Southern Brooks Community Partnerships

Working in close partnership with the local public sector and talking on difficult and complex cases that the statutory sector struggles with.

Southern Brooks operates across South Gloucestershire, but focuses in the neighbourhoods of Kingswood, Yate, Filton and Patchway. They operate a number of community hubs that work in responsive ways to combat isolation and loneliness in the local community. The aim is to bring people together over shared interests and common issues and get neighbours to meet each other to build strong community networks.

Southern Brooks support people with complex problems. Their approach is to work across teams, because people with multiple challenges often need to get involved with more than one of their projects. An important element of their approach is to make sure clients keep the original point of contact as their route into all these services.



“Someone might come to us wanting to have employment support, but because of the multi-purpose nature of our organisation, that person might be able to access counselling through us, or our volunteering programme to help with their skills or youth work for their kids.

Julie Close, Chief Executive, Southern Brooks Community Partnerships

Key findings

- Southern Brooks keeps track of how people are referred to its services. Last year, they received hundreds of referrals from over twenty local agencies and organisations, including DWP, social services teams, youth offending teams and housing associations.

Client A's story

Client A⁵³ was referred to us through the South Gloucestershire Council Transitions team. The council had worked with them for some time but were unable to achieve their initial short-term goals, and as a result, their case was transferred to us. I met with Client A and their transitions coach to complete the initial assessment and outline what they would like to achieve. The goal was to get Client A back into education and obtain part time employment.

We investigated numerous Art & Design courses to enable them to utilise their impressive artistic skills. We researched local course providers, and eventually Client A decided that South Gloucestershire and Stroud college provided the best course for them as the college would cater to Client A's additional needs. I supported Client A with the college application, as they find written English quite challenging and the whole process was overwhelming for them.

Client A was accepted on to the course after a successful interview and is due to start the course in September. I liaised with their support team to ensure the course was fully funded due to them having an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Client A was still very determined to find part time work that would go alongside their college course. We scheduled regular 1:2:1s to apply for jobs where Client A would often apply for multiple roles at a time. Together we created a CV and I showed Client A how to complete application forms using key words that employers look for.

A very challenging aspect of Client A's job search was the location of their home. Client A's family live in a very rural area

where there are limited job opportunities. Transport options are also limited, with very few buses running from their home town in to the city centre, which impacted on their ability to gain employment.

I contacted a HR representative from a local hotel who I had previously met at an employment event. I informed them of Client A's skill set and ability to communicate effectively with new people. I also explained how Client A does have additional needs, but with the right support, Client A can achieve their potential – the venue is also very close to Client A's home, which combats the geographical barrier.

Client A applied for the role and subsequently was invited to interview. (I was able to provide a character reference for them.) Client A did a great job at the interview and was offered a casual basis contract at the local hotel.

Southern Brooks also has a critical role to play in helping to support other local community organisations in the area. They go the extra mile to support a thriving and diverse local voluntary sector. They have long established relationships with other organisations and services in the area, built over many years.

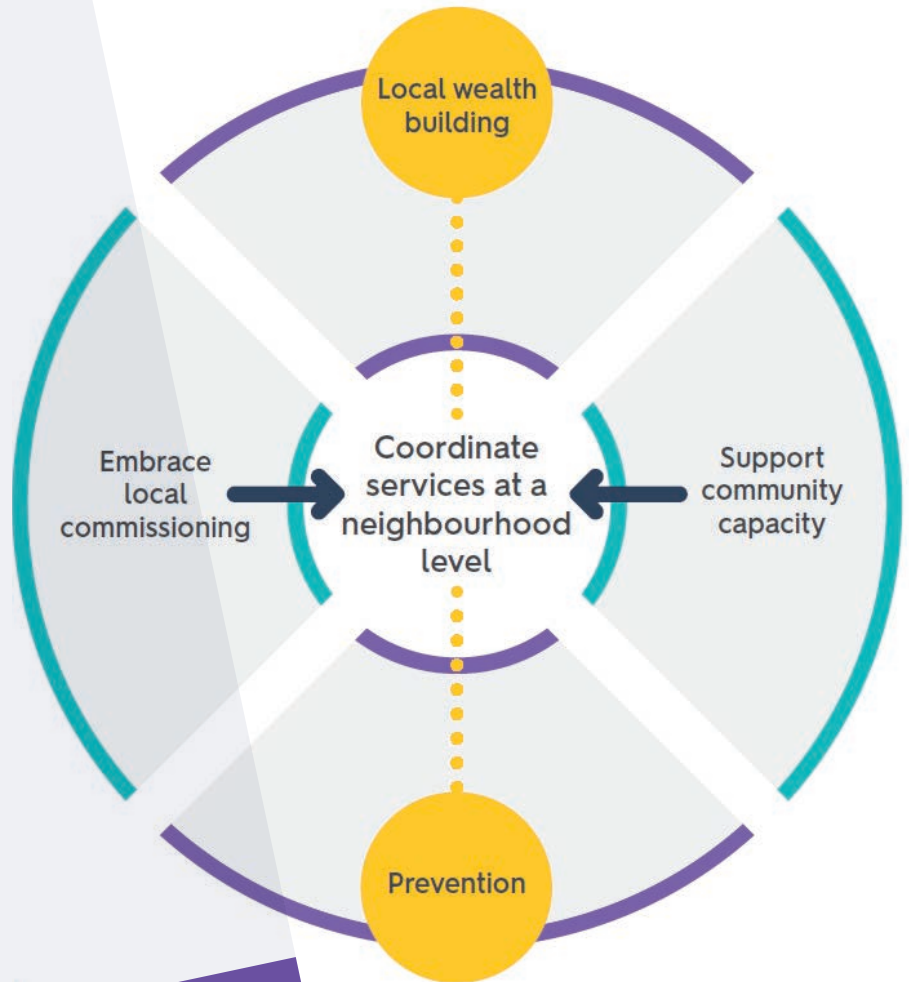
They ensure that they work collaboratively with others, adding value rather than stepping on toes. And they seek out opportunities for partnerships. An example of the support they provide is to help smaller organisations access funding as Southern Brooks often leads contract but builds in opportunities for grassroots, local groups to be subcontracted.

06. How councils can Keep it Local: recommendations

We co-designed with councils and communities the Keep it Local approach, and the six Keep it Local principles. We believe both can guide policy development and practice within local authorities. They can support councils to plug into community organisation networks.

The Keep it Local Approach

Figure 5



“ The Keep It Local principles really capture our approach. We are focussing on early intervention by building new people-focussed, place based local integrated partnerships to tackle poverty, social isolation, and build community capacity from the grassroots.

Shabir Pandor, Leader, Kirklees Council



Recommendations: how to apply the six Keep it Local principles

In summer 2019, leading thinkers and practitioners contributed essays and case studies to a collection based on the six Keep it Local principles. These principles can be used to unlock the power of community networks we have highlighted through this work and provide a roadmap for how councils can use these principles in practice.

When these principles aren't applied authorities risk missing out on, or squashing, the power of these networks. Below are some recommendations on what each principle could mean for your local authority.



1. Think about the whole system and not individual service silos

Outcomes in a local place are driven by a huge range of factors. To ensure this is properly accounted for you should:

- coordinate and work across service silos within the council, to achieve prevention benefits.
- use the council's role as a local place leader to coordinate work with other statutory sector and voluntary and community sector organisations across the local authority area.
- consider pooling budgets with other partners, as has been done in Bassetlaw⁵⁴ and Plymouth.

Plymouth City Council – One System, One Budget

One system, one budget approach is an integration of the council and Clinical Commissioning Group. All monies are pooled into a single budget, and all staff are co-located and work as an integrated commissioning team. In addition, Plymouth City Council has integrated its social care staff within the community health provider to provide integrated health and social care. The approach seeks to establish a 'whole system of service designed around the needs of people', rather than a 'fragmented market built around the needs of commissioners and services'.

The integrated fund of £600m supports a combination of four strategies, focusing on wellbeing, children and young people, community-based care and complex care. The new approach was introduced in April 2015.⁵⁵



2. Coordinate services at the neighbourhood level

Thinking about the whole system requires looking at issues and challenges at scale. However, it shouldn't distract from the fact that most people's day-to-day lives exist within communities and neighbourhoods. For the benefits of Keep it Local to really accrue, councils should consider how existing services can be organised at a neighbourhood level whilst also harnessing the assets of the wider system.

“ Working at a neighbourhood level with communities who understand both the challenges they face, and the strengths and assets that can help meet those challenges, can help find creative solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems. It seems an obvious point, but neighbourhoods are where people spend most of their time. So by working in them and with them, we can have greater reach and impact.”⁵⁶

Anna Hartley, Director of Public Health, Wakefield Council



3. Increase local spend to invest in the local economy

This is proving to be ever more important at a time of austerity for local government. With the local tax base set to play a bigger role in local government finance, councils are increasingly thinking about how to support local organisations, and ensure their local pound goes further.

Preston Council is one of the best-known proponents for harnessing the power of local spend to drive improvements in their city. In 2013, the council, with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, began looking at how they could support local organisations better. Analysis of their spending in 2016/17 showed that over the five years since 2012/13, locally retained spend had increased within Preston from 5% to 18.2% and within Lancashire from 39% to 79.2%.⁵⁷

In 2018, Preston was named the UK's most improved city⁵⁸, according to the Good Growth for Cities Index, based on analysis conducted by Demos and Price Waterhouse Cooper.

“ Local enterprises, SMEs, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises and cooperatives are more likely to support local employment and have a greater tendency to recirculate wealth and surplus socially and locally.”⁵⁹

Neil McInroy and Grace Brown, CLES

In 2019, this title was also given to one of the Keep it Local pioneer councils, Bradford.⁶⁰ The local authority have worked closely with Locality over recent years, on areas such as community ownership, social value and local commissioning and procurement strategies.

Bradford have a similar plan. Over the next five years, the council plan to increase levels of local spend from 47% to 60%, which would put an additional £45m into the local economy.⁶¹



4. Focus on early intervention now to save costs tomorrow

Community-based interventions can intervene upstream, and prevent demand escalating elsewhere in the system. An approach which is gaining interest is the Buurtzorg model of social care, pioneered in Holland. The model is based on locally based teams based around the needs of 'self-managing clients'. Cambridgeshire County Council are carrying out a pilot built on its principles in a number of neighbourhoods.

Key findings: Cambridgeshire's Buurtzorg pilot

An interim evaluation report, published in late 2018 suggests that the pilot has prevented the escalation of needs, impacted positively on clients' quality of life and on the development and harnessing of community assets. The report shows that our teams have prevented crises by preventing hospital admissions or readmissions, instances of carer breakdown and deteriorations in mental health.⁶²



5. Commit to your community and proactively support local organisations

Map and recognise your local assets. Many places don't have an accurate picture of the community assets – physical or otherwise – that exist in a local place.

The Birmingham Neighbourhood Networks⁶³ approach, led by the council aimed to do just that. Council officers worked with a number of neighbourhood-based community organisations to generate asset maps of the local neighbourhood.

This then allows you to understand their skills and ideas, and build from this, rather than only seeing need. Leeds City Council's approach to asset-based community development⁶⁴ recognises this and builds much of their work across the council from this understanding.

Community Asset Transfer is a route to transferring genuine power and resources to local people. It can stimulate community action, involving volunteers and local people in the governance of local spaces.⁶⁵ When done well and properly supported, it also unlocks service improvement and innovation. It can improve skills of local VCSE organisations,⁶⁶ as well as improving their financial resilience,⁶⁷ underpinning the strength and sustainability of community infrastructure.

Local community organisations are facing huge financial pressures and deeply entrenched social challenges. Councils could consider how to strategically support community organisations to build their capacity. Calderdale's Community Anchor Policy⁶⁸ is a great example of how to enhance the role of community organisations. It recognises both their community leadership role and the role they play in empowering local residents to drive forward positive change in their community.



6. Commission services simply and collaboratively so they are local by default

Relatively small changes to commissioning and procurement systems can play a huge role in supporting local organisations, and the rules are more flexible than many think.

The Art of the Possible in Public Procurement⁶⁹ provides procurement officers with a guide to the role they can play within the scope of the 2015 Public Contracts Regulations. Other top tips for ensuring commissioning is local by default are:

- use grants where possible.
- use alliance contracts to foster collaboration and join up services.
- break big contracts into smaller lots.
- announce commissioning intentions early to allow local organisations the time to bid and form local delivery partnerships.
- co-design services in partnership with local community organisations and service users and embed this in commissioning.
- think creatively about market engagement and how to make it as inclusive as possible and get beyond the usual suspects.
- require documented assessment of local supplier base in all commissioning.
- require quotes from local suppliers for contracts under EU threshold.
- consider available procurement approaches for larger contracts, like single tender action, innovation partnerships, light touch regime, reserved contracts.
- defend against small local providers being used as 'bid candy' by increasing the accountability and transparency of subcontracting.
- don't use payment by results - use blended payment mechanisms instead, which include upfront payments and fee for service.⁷⁰

“We know that our voluntary, community and social enterprise sector has skills, expertise, creativity and fleetness of foot to act locally, which is why we already work with them, right up to the strategic level, as partners and equals.

“We want to build on and strengthen that relationship as we develop a new approach to providing services for local people and communities. We're joining the Keep it Local Network because we know this is the beginning of a journey and recognise the power of learning from other councils in the Network as we make this shift.”

Toby Savage, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council



“ The EU procurement rules are often held to have imposed burdensome obligations that inhibit commissioning good sense. Yet the true villain is to be found much closer to home: domestic, bureaucratic institutionalism.

Commissioning should not assume big and commercial are best and not preclude engagement of a community provider, meeting community need. It should also look towards traditional grant-support, as an alternative to a service contract.

Julian Blake, Partner, Stone King LLP



07. Conclusion

Through this report, we have heard inspiring stories and evidence of the power of community. The role local community organisations play in a local place – working with people with complex issues to deliver transformative services, and the additional value they deliver for councils which is often unseen or hard to capture.

The increasingly complex nature of the challenges local authorities are dealing with, from an ageing society and increased demand for services to an incredibly difficult financial environment can sometimes feel insurmountable. However, a growing number of places highlighted through this research are choosing a different path and choosing to harness this power of community to tackle these core challenges all councils face.

They are building and strengthening partnerships with their local communities and community organisations, recognising the potential of this partnership to help them overcome these challenges. They are making small changes to policy and practice which make a big difference alongside more systemic changes which make a more transformational change.

Councils are doing this because they want to plug into the power of local community organisation networks. The new research undertaken for this report has highlighted the huge additionality provided by community organisations – their role as local cogs of connection.

They have specialist expertise in acting as catalysts for change in their local place. Their role connecting people, neighbourhoods, organisations, sectors and services means they are powerful and vital actors in their local network. When local authorities keep it local, they are plugging into this resource and benefit from its power.

Commissioning can support this network to develop and grow stronger. At present, in too many places commissioning tends to miss out on these benefits and make it more and more difficult for this vital ecosystem to sustain itself.

The Keep it Local Network is for those wanting to seize this opportunity. It can support councils to deliver on core outcomes for their citizens, and in the process, they can receive so much more. They are investing in their local economy, preventing demand elsewhere in the system and nurturing these vital local networks.

Taking this new route requires leadership and vision, accompanied by practical change. Through the Network, Locality and your peer councils will work with you to make this vision a reality.

Contact us

If your council is interested in becoming a Keep it Local council, we'd love to have a conversation with you.



policy@locality.org.uk



0345 458 8336

08. Endnotes

02. Introduction – what the research shows, why the time is now

- ¹ NEF compared how much local authorities have available to them with how much they would need to provide services at the level of access and quality in 2009/10. https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/NEF_Local_Government_Austerity_2019.pdf
- ² House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (2018) 'After Carillion: Public sector outsourcing and contracting', Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubadm/748/748.pdf>
- ³ Collaborate (2020), Manifesto for a Collaborative Society, Available at: <http://wordpress.collaboratei.com/wp-content/uploads/CollaborateCICManifestoForACollaborativeSociety-copy.pdf>
- ⁴ Locality (2018), People Power: Findings from the Localism Commission, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/LOCALITY-LOCALISM-REPORT-1.pdf>
- ⁵ CLES (2019), Community Wealth Building 2019, Available at: <https://cles.org.uk/publications/community-wealth-building-2019/>
- ⁶ Collaborate (2019), Exploring the New World: Practical insights for funding, commissioning and managing in complexity, Available at: <http://wordpress.collaboratei.com/wp-content/uploads/1.-Exploring-the-New-World-Report-MAIN-FINAL.pdf>
- ⁷ NLGN (2019), Community Paradigm: Why public services need radical change and how it can be achieved - http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/The-Community-Paradigm_FINAL.pdf
- ⁸ <http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/2019/our-public-services-need-communitisation-not-privatisation-or-nationalisation/>
- ⁹ Locality (2014), Saving Money by Doing the Right Thing, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Localiy-Report-Diseconomies-updated-single-pages-Jan-2017.pdf>
- ¹⁰ IMPOWER (2018) The two billion pound question Is there an opportunity to move from meeting to managing demand? Available at: https://www.impower.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/IMPOWER_Report_The_Two_Billion_Pound_Question.pdf?x18707
- ¹¹ Locality (2017) Powerful Communities, Strong Economies: Summary Report, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Join-the-Keep-it-Local-Movement-FINAL.pdf>
- ¹² Dayson, C et al (2018), The Value of Small: In-depth research into the distinctive contribution, value and experiences of small and medium-sized charities in England and Wales, Lloyds Bank Foundation and Sheffield Hallam University, Available at: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/value-of-small-final.pdf>
- ¹³ Ibid. Page 7
- ¹⁴ Ibid. Page 37

03. Who are the Keep it Local trailblazer councils?

- ¹⁵ <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/business/doing-business-with-bradford-council/social-value-and-inclusive-growth-policy/>
- ¹⁶ Bristol Council (2020) 'One City Plan 2020', Available at: https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/One-City-Plan_2020.pdf
- ¹⁷ Calderdale MBC (2016) 'Community Anchor Policy', Available at: <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/councillors/councilmeetings/agendas-detail.jsp?meeting=23288>
- ¹⁸ Calderdale MBC (2018) 'Inclusive Economy Strategy for Calderdale 2018 – 2024', Available at: <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/sites/default/files/inclusive-economy-strategy-v3.pdf>

calderdale.gov.uk/v2/sites/default/files/inclusive-economy-strategy-v3.pdf

- ¹⁹ Hackney Council (2018) 'Sustainable Procurement Strategy 2018-2022', Available at: <https://hackney.gov.uk/procurement-strategy>
- ²⁰ Kirklees Council (2019), Case Study: Commit to your community and proactively support local organisations <https://locality.org.uk/keep-it-local-case-study/commit-to-your-community-and-proactively-support-local-organisations/>
- ²¹ <https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/mayor-and-local-partners-sign-the-lewisham-deal-in-ground-breaking-effort-to-tackle-poverty>
- ²² <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/council-meetings/-/media/e3be1524b6af4a02ace8602de86c1205.ashx>
- ²³ <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/business/doing-business/delivering-social-value>
- ²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfCOzP-JwWc>
- ²⁵ Sutcliffe, R (2019), 'Case Study: Commission services simply and collaboratively so they are 'local by default'', Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/keep-it-local-case-study/commission-services-simply-and-collaboratively-so-they-are-local-by-default/>
- ²⁶ <https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=123078>
- ²⁷ <https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50063855/Wirral%20Council%20to%20Commit%20to%20Keep%20it%20Local%20Campaign.pdf>

04. Methodology, evidence summary and framework

- ²⁸ Locality (2017), Locality 2016 Impact Report, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Localiy-Impact-Report-2016-1.pdf>
- ²⁹ Corry, D (2020), Where are England's Charities?, Available at: <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/where-are-englands-charities>
- ³⁰ Based on mapping of organisations' address against 2019 IMD data
- ³¹ Shaheen, F and Kennedy L (2018), These towns and regions aren't left behind – they are held back, CityMetric, Available at: <https://www.citymetric.com/business/these-towns-and-regions-are-not-left-behind-they-are-held-back-3801>
- ³² Dayson, C et al (2018), The Value of Small: In-depth research into the distinctive contribution, value and experiences of small and medium-sized charities in England and Wales, Lloyds Bank Foundation and Sheffield Hallam University, Available at: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/value-of-small-final.pdf>
- ³³ Starfish Domestic Violence Project, interim evaluation 2015
- ³⁴ <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/our-approach-change-that-lasts/>
- ³⁵ Locality (2018), The Great British Sell Off: How we're losing our vital publicly owned buildings and spaces. Forever, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Great-British-Sell-Off-FINAL.pdf>
- ³⁶ Dayson, C et al (2018), The Value of Small
- ³⁷ Ibid.

05. Case studies of seven cogs of connection Southwark – Bede House

- ³⁸ Bede House (2019), Bede House 2019 Annual Report, available at: https://bedehouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Bede-Annual-Report_2019_web-version.pdf
- ³⁹ Starfish Domestic Violence Project, interim evaluation 2015

Leeds – Behind Closed Doors

⁴⁰ Behind Closed Doors (2019), Behind Closed Doors Social Value Report 2018-19

⁴¹ Ibid.

Leeds – Health for All

⁴² In 1977, the World Health Assembly decided that the main social target of governments and of WHO should be the attainment by all the people of the world by the year 2000 of a level of health that would permit them to lead a socially and economically productive life. More information can be found here: https://www.who.int/whr/1998/media_centre/executive_summary6/en/

Birmingham – Northfield Community Partnership

⁴³ 51.1% of Northfield's population fall within the most deprived 20% of areas in England. This makes the people of Northfield district highly vulnerable to many other issues related to poverty and social exclusion.

⁴⁴ TUC (2015), In parts of Britain half of jobs pay less than the living wage, Available at: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/parts-britain-half-jobs-pay-less-living-wage>

⁴⁵ Alston, P and van Veen, C (2019), How Britain's welfare state has been taken over by shadowy tech consultants, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/27/britain-welfare-state-shadowy-tech-consultants-universal-credit>

⁴⁶ Citizens Advice (2019) Achieving income security for all, Available at: [https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/welfare%20publications/Achieving%20income%20security%20for%20all%20\(FINAL\).pdf](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/welfare%20publications/Achieving%20income%20security%20for%20all%20(FINAL).pdf)

⁴⁷ Birmingham City Council (2016), Housing Advice Service Consultation, Available at: <https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/people-1/housingadvice-service/>

⁴⁸ Birmingham City Council (2019), Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods: White Paper: Available at: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11839/working_together_in_birminghams_neighbourhoods_white_paper.pdf

⁴⁹ Birmingham Neighbourhood Networks Community Directory, Available at: <https://brumnns.wordpress.com/2019/12/04/our-latest-community-asset-directory-is-here/>

Hackney – Shoreditch Trust

⁵⁰ Sampson, A (2017), Independent evaluation of Bump Buddies, Shoreditch Trust, London School of Economics, Available at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/90396/1/Sampson_independent_evaluation_bof_bump_buddies--author.pdf

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Heckman, J (2016), The Case for Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children, Available at: <https://heckmanequation.org/www/assets/2017/01/Heckman20Investing20in20Young20Children.pdf>

South Gloucestershire – Southern Brooks Community Partnerships

⁵³ Taken from Southern Brooks Community Partnerships internal case study bank

06. How councils can Keep it Local: recommendations

⁵⁴ Chavaudra, N (2019), Think about the whole system not individual service silos: Bassetlaw's Integrated Care Partnership, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/keep-it-local-case-study/think-about-the-whole-system-not-individual-service-silos/>

⁵⁵ Locality (2019), Join the Keep it Local Movement, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Join-the-Keep-it-Local-Movement-FINAL.pdf>

⁵⁶ Hartley, A (2019), Coordinate Services at a Neighbourhood Level, available at: <https://locality.org.uk/keep-it-local-principles/co-ordinate-services-at-a-neighbourhood-level/>

⁵⁷ CLES (2019), How we built community wealth in Preston: achievements and lessons, Available at: https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CLES_Preston-Documents_WEB-AW.pdf

⁵⁸ Lancashire Evening Post (2018), Preston has been named the most improved city in the UK, Available at: <https://www.lep.co.uk/news/politics/council/preston-has-been-named-the-most-improved-city-in-the-uk-1-9423133>

⁵⁹ McInroy, N and Brown, G (2019), Increase local spend to invest in the local economy, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/keep-it-local-principles/increase-local-spend-to-invest-in-the-local-economy/>

⁶⁰ BBC News (2019), Bradford 'most improved' city says report, Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-50392377>

⁶¹ Bradford Metropolitan District Council (2017), Social Value and Inclusive Growth Policy, Available at: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/business/doing-business-with-bradford-council/social-value-and-inclusive-growth-policy/>

⁶² Cambridgeshire County Council (2019), Focus on early intervention now to save costs tomorrow, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/keep-it-local-case-study/focus-on-early-intervention-now-to-save-costs-tomorrow/>

⁶³ <https://brumnns.wordpress.com/>

⁶⁴ Ward, M (2017), Using Asset Based Community Development to Harness Individuals and Communities Strengths, Available at <https://www.insidegovernment.co.uk/uploads/2017/10/SI-8.-Ward.pdf>

⁶⁵ Locality (2017), Places and Spaces: the future of community asset ownership, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Locality-Places-and-spaces-report-final.pdf>

⁶⁶ Locality (2017) Places and Spaces: the future of community asset ownership, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Locality-Places-and-spaces-report-final.pdf>

⁶⁷ NCVO et al. (2015), Financial sustainability review of voluntary sector, Available at: https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/funding/financial-sustainability-review-of-the-voluntary-sector-july-2015.pdf

⁶⁸ Calderdale MBC (2016) 'Community Anchor Policy', Available at: <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/councillors/councilmeetings/agendas-detail.jsp?meeting=23288>

⁶⁹ Villeneuve-Smith, F and Blake, J (2016), The art of the possible in public procurement, Available at: <https://e3m.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Art-of-the-Possible-in-Public-Procurement.pdf>

⁷⁰ Locality (2019), Join the Keep it Local Movement, Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Join-the-Keep-it-Local-Movement-FINAL.pdf>

About Locality

Locality supports local community organisations to be strong and successful. Our national network of over 700 members helps more than 400,000 people every week. We offer specialist advice, peer learning and campaign with members for a fairer society. Together we unlock the power of community.

About Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales partners with small and local charities who help people overcome complex social issues. During 2019, the Foundation distributed £25.7 million through new and existing grants, supporting more than 900 charities which helped 150,000 people experiencing disadvantage.

Through long-term funding, developmental support and influencing policy and practice, the Foundation helps those charities make life-changing impact. The Foundation is an independent charitable trust funded by the profits of Lloyds Banking Group as part of their commitment to Helping Britain Prosper.

For more information visit lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk.



 @localitynews

 /localityUK

locality.org.uk

Locality | 33 Corsham Street,
London N1 6DR | 0345 458 8336

Locality is the trading name of Locality (UK) a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 2787912 and a registered charity no. 1036460.

locality
the power of community