

Big Local: Reflections on community leadership

McCabe, Allister; Macmillan, Rob; Wilson, Mandy

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Big Local: Reflections on Community Leadership (Paper Two)

Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan

Introduction

In 2018, Local Trust commissioned two companion literature reviews on power and community leadership within Big Local areas. These provide a framework within which to place this paper which explores what community leadership looks like in practice¹.

The understanding of community leadership adopted here is that suggested by Big Local areas through a series of workshops and interviews - namely, it relates to different models of working that do not rely on charismatic individuals but may be about:

- collective decision making and leadership involving all partnership members;
- decision making which is more devolved, with members of working groups playing a leadership role in strategic direction; and
- a dispersed approach which encourages individuals and groups within the community to take the lead on issues and practical projects which are of interest to them, responding to identified local needs – and supporting them to do so effectively.

This broad definition, which is applied differently in the 15 areas working with Our Bigger Story, fits well with the academic literature on the concept of community leadership² and the concept of shared leadership being explored by Local Trust.

Much discussion on leadership tends to concentrate on the characteristics, approach and development of individual leaders. Individuals, and the skills they bring, are undoubtedly important, but focusing only here risks ignoring the collective nature of making things happen on the ground. Indeed, those active in Big Local areas rarely talked about community leadership in an individual sense. Rather, they valued more collective, consensual forms of leadership and saw Big Local as a mechanism for bringing people together, stimulating local activity, networking between different organisations, developing social enterprises and building their capacity for collaborative working (see also [Three Parishes Big Local 'Have a Go Day'](#) 2018 film).

The discussion in this paper is based on material gathered through workshops, focus groups and individual interviews with partners, local residents, delivery partners and external stakeholders³.

Community Leadership: Tasks and Skills

The tasks and skills required in community leadership have been succinctly summarised in Local Trust's (2018) literature review on the topic. These include:

- The strategic tasks of '*devising strategy, [setting] priorities, goals and focus*'
- The management tasks of implementing that strategic direction or visions – which include '*creating awareness...generating involvement and participation...making decisions, mobilising and applying resources*'.

This requires an ability to identify people's goals and strengths, assign roles and give responsibility, sustain optimism and manage disagreement, build networks and relationships with external agencies within and beyond the immediate community, and connect strategic vision with practical implementation.

The relationship between **transformational and transactional** leadership involves a tension between sustaining, and working towards, a long-term vision for the community on the one hand, and managing the day to day, on the other⁴. Partnerships can get 'bogged down' in the latter – feeling responsible for the finances, for the delivery of funded projects, or the structure of the partnership itself. This, in turn, is linked to the related issue of who is 'seen' to be leading. Partnerships may operate quietly, behind the scenes, to ensure that Big Local is working towards that broader vision – but others, for example paid workers or LTOs are more visible, and hence seen (by external stakeholders particularly), to be driving the process.

Building Community Leadership: What Helps

Some partnerships have secured a healthy turnover of residents taking on leadership roles in the partnership: '*The outgoing ... members will stay engaged and attend...meetings as well as being directly involved with several working groups...so we are not losing folk; rather growing them!*' This is not the experience of most of the case study partnerships however: '*We all agreed on the difficulty of keeping and recruiting partnership members after 3 years*' [Partnership member interviews].

Approaches on the ground

Big Local areas are concerned about building and sustaining community leadership, particularly at the partnership level. Partnership members are, however, also aware that building community leadership often needs to start with engagement and participation in community activities – rather than formal meetings. They have adopted a range of strategies and identified a number of approaches to promoting active resident participation – summarised in the box below. These strategies are 'outward facing' - encouraging participation and mobilising people through activities, acting as a 'spring-board' for residents to become more involved in driving local development over the longer term, armed with increased knowledge and skill.

Building Community Leadership: What Helps?

Prioritise outreach work

Outreach was seen as critical in raising the profile of Big Local, conveying the message that the programme is resident led and reaching less vocal residents. Birchfield, for example, has prioritised youth outreach work to engage younger people.

Start small and build

One area is thinking of developing a 'street champions' model where people provide a voice for their immediate neighbours, rather than 'representing' the whole Big Local area. In other areas, such as Birchfield, Three Parishes and Whitley Bay, investing in volunteers and local social enterprises has been seen as a route into greater participation in local activity and decision making – though not necessarily through the Big Local partnership.

Appeal to people's self-interest through working groups

At the London workshop, there was a plea to enable people to be involved in, and make decisions about, issues in which they have a particular interest and which have an impact on them directly – e.g. housing or the environment – rather than about Big Local 'as a whole. Some Big Local areas have working groups with 'devolved' decision making powers; that is, *'allowing them the freedom to be in charge of their own work'* (Partnership Chair). One Big Local area created a 'Friends of' Group *'to move this project on...it is slow going but making progress! The best bit is that the members of the committee are all newcomers to the project and one has become a Partnership Board member'* (Partnership member).

Learn from risk taking

Taking an initial risk regarding Big Local spending can build confidence – that residents can make decisions and they will be delivered. One Big Local area describes how a substantial initial investment in a park has given residents the confidence to try other things.

Provide progression routes to leadership development

Some Big Locals have supported those making use of a project to play a more leading role in the future e.g. a play project that included training for parents to continue running the project themselves, a youth project that provides youth work training opportunities for the young people and their parents.

Find fun ways of bringing people together

Events and training activities bring people together who would otherwise not meet. For example, 1,000 people had input into [Whitley Bay Carnival](#) and it has become a catalyst for how people can engage in the community: [It has] *got its own momentum now – so doesn't need us, which is the idea*. This fun event is said to be changing the nature of Whitley Bay *'...from a night-time economy with everyone getting drunk to people coming out during the day with their family and having a good time...'* (Partnership member).

Patience and persistence, to see through planned actions over a long timescale (which in some cases is years). In [Lawrence Weston](#) it was noted that the development of a community-led housing initiative would take around nine years – from the identification of suitable land, through to gaining planning permission, and engaging residents in design, through to actual build and completion. Similarly, Ramsey Million has pursued the community's 20-year dream of having a skate park - it is still high on their agenda, but the proposed development site is still not ready.

Opportunities to reflect, and the capacity to accept or manage criticism

Criticism can feel very personal. As one partnership chair commented; *'people criticise you when they don't see things happening. They don't understand that [big projects] take time and when they do happen, they criticise you again – even though they did not get involved in making the decisions'* (Partnership Chair). Big Local networking opportunities have been a helpful space for those fulfilling leadership roles.

Local Trust support for community leadership

The four overarching outcomes for the Big Local programme are explicit about community leadership development, i.e. increased skills and confidence, communities taking action and making a difference to the needs they prioritise. To this end, Local Trust provides a package of support aimed at helping Big Local areas to achieve these outcomes. This includes the light touch support from Big Local Reps, and the learning sets and networking events organised at national level (e.g. the chairpersons groupings, thematic gatherings) and more locally (e.g. sub regional groupings of Big Local areas). This type of support has been in place from the start of the programme and has changed over time with different 'offers' being tried out. Typically, most of the people who have participated in the various training programmes and learning workshops have been very enthusiastic about such opportunities; they are seen as unique to, and a real strength of, the programme.

There are though, some questions arising from discussions within and across the case study areas around the extent to which such opportunities are building community leadership:

- The OBS participants at the May 2018 London workshop were clear that community leadership is not, per se, about the partnership, but about the quality and level of activities happening with the community - supporting individuals to develop skills and knowledge which make them more effective within their particular group to meet needs and deliver services. Yet, they perceived the Local Trust message as being that *'it's all about the partnership,'* and about the numbers of people involved in the partnership, as this is what they have to report on.
- The centrally offered learning events appear to attract the same people over and over again, mostly those who already play a leading role in their community. Does Big Local need to invest in more open access events within Big Local areas (or at least in those where there may be some concerns about leadership) to reach and equip a wider pool of residents with confidence and skills?
- Feedback from people attending events points to the value of meeting others with similar issues, difficulties and challenges - they are therapeutic. There is less evidence, however, of moving beyond this to skill-sharing and strategies for improvement and change.
- Debate has been raised about the role of the Big Local Rep with an observation that some have their own thematic interests that they 'push' onto the Big Local partnerships they support. This can undermine communities taking action on the needs that they prioritise. It raises questions about the understanding of some Reps with regard to community leadership.

The Challenges of Community Leadership

At every stage of Our Bigger Story's research to date, residents, partners, workers and other stakeholders have identified the challenges of community leadership, even if they don't use this terminology or describe it as such. Central to this has been the consistent theme of 'how to get more people involved' – particularly at the decision

making level. There are two dimensions here: capacity constraints and issues of equity across diverse communities.

Capacity constraints

In reality, Big Local partnerships tend to be relatively small. Local Trust's Headline Findings from the Area Assessment Tool (2018) suggests an average membership of nine people, who are often older, with professional backgrounds and are already heavily involved in a range of other community activities. Many of the Big Local partnerships are effectively run by a small 'civic core' (Mohan and Bulloch, 2012⁵) of people who are multiple activists: they are involved in the Big Local partnership, but also volunteer with local projects, lead faith-based groups or are engaged in the formal politics of, for example, Town and Parish Councils: *'everyone says it's always the same people... virtually everything [here] is run by volunteers, most people do at least two things'* (Partnership member).

In terms of the demands on the most actively involved residents, there are, accordingly, a limited pool of people upon which to draw across Big Local areas in terms of the partnership and decision making processes. Thus, a lot of effort and responsibility tends to fall on a narrow range of shoulders. Ironically it can sometimes seem a lot easier when fewer people are involved, as indicated by one Big Local diary keeper: *'[it] seems to make things easier because we actually get on with things, we agree things, we make decisions and it gives you the feeling that you actually moving on rather than just having a circular conversation around a table. We weren't quorate so we couldn't make any big decisions but nevertheless we did get through the agenda before the time was up, and there was a lot of agreement on what to do and how to move forward'*.

Additionally, it takes time to 'do' leadership. One Big Local Chair reported that they spend two days a week on Big Local and reflected that *'you probably need to be retired to take on this role.'* Indeed the age profile of members was a concern for the majority of Big Local partnerships involved in the evaluation.

Diverse communities

The ways in which resources are allocated across diverse communities can be a significant challenge for community leadership. This applies to different groups of residents (for example by age, ethnicity, housing tenure). Most partnership members are likely to want to ensure everyone in the area can benefit from Big Local. Yet they only have a finite amount of resource to 'use', and thus difficult conversations and decisions about priorities are needed. In addition, it is difficult to ensure that the partnership is reflective of the range of people living in the area – and to welcome different perspectives and cope with conflict. This may be compounded by the geographical mix of Big Local areas themselves and how they were selected. There are still examples of 'competition' in Big Local areas that encompass more than one town or village, e.g. Grassland Hasmoor, Three Parishes, Radstock and Westfield or Growing Together. Complaints of too much emphasis on one area and insufficient representation of another are common, as illustrated by this report from one Partnership member:

His main argument was that we have spent more money in x than in y and therefore we should even it up and give them the funds... it's always tricky for

us to appease everyone claiming that someone else is getting more than them and that it's unfair, but we give it a good go in a professional and polite way.

Access to power

Community leadership in Big Local engages with complex and difficult issues around power. One strategic stakeholder noted that *'The great thing about Big Local is [that] it is social action without the politics'*, here defining social action as any kind of voluntary activity which can support a 'better place to live'. This is a familiar but somewhat narrow conception of what 'politics' is, in this context, seen as the sometimes tarnished cut and thrust of party politics in formal democratic institutions. But social action in general, and Big Local in this case, is laced with different dimensions and understandings of power, influence, decision-making and community leadership, and thus is fundamentally political. Community leadership operates through these spaces, but questions remain, about whether and how Big Local areas engage in, or try to influence, broader political decisions which impact on their community – and at what level. Our Bigger Story will delve further into the internal politics of Big Local partnerships, as well as examining external voice and influence, in its 2019 research studies.

The aim of Big Local is to provide the opportunity for residents to act, to have the power to create (or at least contribute to the creation of) an even better place to live, whether this is at the level of distributing small grants to make projects happen, or by making environmental improvements at the hyper local level. This suggests the generative potential of Big Local approaches to more dispersed, or shared, models of community leadership. Partnerships may seek to exercise power on behalf of communities; acting as a focus for articulating community priorities and needs to external power-brokers such as the Local Authority. Interviews also highlighted the idea that partnerships may also be channels through which individual and collective agency advance over time; for example, where individuals move into formal local politics, or where partnerships report an increasing collective capacity to address more complex issues.

Residents have spoken about *'the importance of being community-led but getting 'the top'/senior people engaged'*. Many instances of Big Local partnerships working alongside external agencies to achieve change were cited. Lawrence Weston Big Local, for example, worked with the Local Authority and private industry to develop solar panels and wind turbines in the area both to generate green energy and develop an income stream for Big Local itself. The Growing Together partnership has taken the lead on initiating a programme of environmental works to rejuvenate the condition of three local lakes through co-ordination of a project and a European funding bid involving the Environment Agency and Northampton Borough Council. And Whitley Bay Big Local co-ordinates a regular meeting with all the key organisations in the area to build co-productive relationships. The Whitley Bay Big Local community consultation and masterplan have usefully informed the council's regeneration plans for the town.

Building and sustaining these relationships, however, can be challenging. In some areas, relationships that do exist are based, not on mutual benefit, but are perceived to be about other agencies looking to benefit from Big Local. This is either because it is seen as a source of people, or a source of money, or a way of gaining a profile. One

interviewee, for example, noted the instrumental way Big Local was viewed by an external agency: '*...He was asking for, bordering on demanding (not for the first time), a sizeable amount of money from our Big Local...*' (Big Local Worker Diary Keeper). Another described being treated as a token gesture serving another agency's agenda:

'...[I] felt as though I'd been dragged into something simply so they could say that they'd gone and had consultations with other groups. I feel quite fed up about the whole thing and feel like resigning because that's not what I want to be used for...'

In some areas there are good and effective relationships with other agencies and organisations, e.g. one area described the achievement of getting conversations going between council departments from three different councils and the parish council, which was '*...unheard of in recent memory!*' (Resident Diary Keeper). Others describe relationships which were improving, but from a low starting point: '*...an overarching feeling of 'superiority' on the part of x council, we are a long way from being treated as equals or partners...*' (Big Local Worker Diary Keeper)

Partnerships may feel that the real power-brokers are too remote for the partnership to influence in terms of the major issues which affect the community, such as poor transport infrastructure in rural communities or levels of transience within urban localities. There are also examples of where points of influence for community leadership feels far removed from Big Local. For example, given existing local government structures, a county council might seem to be a long way up the hierarchy for a small scale Big Local which has just about managed to build relationships at parish / town council level, and then maybe just at district / borough council level.

This is particularly the case where private sector developers are involved. For example, an ex-chair talked about how Big Local had tried to build a relationship with a Development Corporation when, in reality, power lies not with the Corporation but with developers. Residents have suggested that community leaders need a support system, i.e. help from local agencies, and that it is a real challenge for small areas or neighbourhoods to benefit from or to influence major investment projects. When big developments are going to happen Big Local partnerships/community leaders need to be involved in the discussions '*a couple of years ahead of the game*' (Partnership member).

However, this is not all about the actions and behaviors of the potential partner organisations. Some Big Locals do not appear to understand who it is that could be useful to them in terms of providing pertinent information about the area or in terms of being a target for influence. They do not make, therefore, any attempt to engage with these key external stakeholders. One example of this 'mismatch' between hyperlocal planning and understanding the broader policy context is the Big Local area, well into delivering its programme, which was surprised to find that its objectives had a '*strategic match*' with the Local Authority's public health, community integration and devolution plans. This raises an important question: how many Big Local partnerships review who is in their sphere of influence (and who is missing) that could help with delivering around their priorities?

Dilemmas of Community Leadership

Community leadership involves a number of intractable dilemmas. Some have been covered earlier – for example:

- of communicating change with residents when change may take a long time; *'unrealistic expectations' on speed of change*, particularly with larger projects. More dispersed models of community leadership, in particular, can take longer to meet their objectives. Change may be more embedded – but at a slower pace than decision making driven by one or two charismatic individuals,
- balancing the management of day to day programme delivery with leadership which 'holds onto' the long-term vision of Big Local, and
- the balance between promoting leadership which is hyper-local and inward focusing with leadership which engages with broader political processes.

Building community leadership is a hard and slow process, as illustrated below, and a challenge experienced across Big Local areas:

We had our meeting with, what we thought was going to be, all the local groups and quite a lot of local residents.... But I personally felt it was very disappointing. Mainly it was people who were already involved with Big Local, one or two people from a couple of other local groups and three local residents. I thought this was a really big missed opportunity ... for us to get our Local Councillor there andinstead of waiting for him to give us the agenda, for us to tell him. it was really Big Local talking to Big Local... although we leafleted a lot of houses, no local residents turned up (Resident Diary Keeper).

Most partnerships understand that some people are 'doers' rather than 'thinkers'; people who would prefer to press on with practical activities, rather than deliberating on plans and priorities (see [Grassland Hasmoor Time for a Change](#) workshop film). Having reflected on the difficulty of attracting people to a Big Local partnership, one person illustrated this by commenting:

We have a lot of residents' involvement in all our projects so perhaps our anxiety about the fewer people who are willing to be involved in decision making at partnership meetings is unfounded, and that we are on the right track, and that we are actually resident-led in a more hands on way, and that we really don't need to be quite as anxious about getting more and more people involved at the partnership level. Maybe people don't want to, and that's the way it is (Resident Diary Keeper).

Linked to this is the dilemma of claiming credit for mobilising activity in an area, and particularly the extent to which developments and achievements are attributed to Big Local (see film, [Big Local: talking about resident led change](#)). People get tied up in debates about whether a community project is part of Big Local or not. One Big Local worker, sums up the question about whether it matters not:

Isn't it more important that they know who/where to contact if they want to be involved or take part? As staff it is frustrating when your hard work is incorrectly acknowledged – but not the 'be or end all'. What is difficult is trying to explain

what we do and how it all interacts - not only to residents/statutory bodies but also to potential funders. The projects we do are so varied and broad that generally residents only have interest in the schemes that directly affect them and therefore don't see the whole picture.

In [Whitley Bay](#), there has been a conscious decision not to claim credit for community activity which may have actually been supported by Big Local. Support was provided in a variety of ways to help fledgling groups but they had their own identity. The view taken here was that Big Local is about community wide outcomes. It may be difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of Big Local in supporting community leadership in a dispersed model such as this, but it may be more effective in the long run.

Who leads when there is conflict?

Amongst the Our Bigger Story case study areas, conflicts during 2018 in Revue and Bountagu Big Locals have opened up complex questions of influence, responsibility (or blame when things are perceived to have gone awry), and who has the power to pursue (or 'disrupt') the Big Local approach. Difficulties in these areas have had major repercussions for the partnerships and raise important issues for the concept of community control. Does the creation of a partnership (and the allocation of resources) set up a situation of competition and faction in some communities, and thereby place partnership members in difficult positions within the communities in which they live? How does Local Trust ensure that those who take up the mantle do not become Big Local collateral?

The role and performance of the LTO has been the main focus of attention in these two areas. The model might work in most areas, but it may need to be tailored in others. In one case, the 'civic core' of very active residents has felt let down.

There has been a sense of defeat amongst some partnership members, in the way of which this particular issue has been dealt with...Wrong has been done, somewhere along the line, and all the residents were looking for was someone to hold up their hand and admit fault and apologise. This is not going to happen, so it is time for some members to reflect and for some, it has meant leaving, which sucks [Diary Keeper].

These are critical issues. If anything differentiates Big Local from other place-based initiatives it is that disputes, when they do arise, are not between residents and some distant authority, but between close neighbours. This increases the intensity - a perception that there is somehow more at stake in resident led action.

Conclusions: community leadership as a long game

Through the evaluation material considered here, people have commented on the complexity of the issues they want to resolve, on the challenges of getting residents to see the connections between local issues, and on the difficulties of engaging minority communities and interests in diverse neighbourhoods. Despite often strenuous efforts, however, they are struggling at a much more basic level – how to attract anyone under 55, and the majority of inactive residents: reaching beyond the 'civic core'. How they

structure their Big Local, though, may have implications for effective responses in their particular context over the longer term.

A spectrum of models of community leadership

There appear to be three broad styles of how community leadership is enacted across the 15 case study areas:

- Model 1: it is all about **the partnership** – the majority of people's time and energy is focused on recruiting and retaining partnership members who then act as an 'executive' for the community. All decisions go through the partnership.
- Model 2: a **dispersed model of leadership** through the development of working groups. Residents, who may or not be on the partnership, are encouraged to come forward and form working groups around issues they feel passionate about and are interested in doing something about. Some decision making is devolved to the working groups rather than 'funnelled' through the partnership. In some cases, the working groups become constituted entities in their own right.
- Model 3: **the partnership is not that important**. The Big Local role is about supporting neighbourliness, capacity building, networking and small community group development, perhaps through small grants. It sees itself as enabling others to be more active and effective in creating 'a better place to live'. Whether this is badged as 'Big Local' or not is of secondary importance.

In terms of leadership, some Big Local areas have become inwardly focused – leadership is vested in the partnership – and community engagement is a consultative process which gives legitimacy to partnership priorities and plans. Effort tends to be expended in recruiting to the partnership rather than, necessarily, more dispersed or shared concepts of power and community leadership. This can lead to an identity that is introspective, rather than outward looking. In reality, even in some of the areas where there is evidence of growing activism across the community, there are still only a handful of people who understand that Big Local is not all about the partnership, that there are many ways that Big Local can make a difference. Sometimes these people are paid workers. Sometimes they are residents, albeit with a history of activism and community work prior to Big Local. In these areas there is analysis and strategy. When things do not go according to plan, there are people with the confidence and skills to negotiate, to challenge and with the resilience to find a resolution:

'[Big Local has] taken off from people who are not traditionally involved... it's not middle class liberals. Here [names area] it's people who have been disempowered who are pushing back – it's people saying enough is enough...but it's hard'.
(External stakeholder).

The value of a long-term approach is that residents can try things, learn from what works and what doesn't, and take a different approach as necessary. It provides the time to build knowledge, confidence and skills, to form connections and relationships. The downside of a long-term approach is that people's eagerness to use Big Local resources to make change in their communities, along with their sense of responsibility to try and 'get it right', can drain energy, with the same people battling on and becoming disheartened by the whole process.

As previously noted, partnerships are often trying to establish themselves in a sea of other bodies who also want some control. Particularly in the small localities that Big Locals cover, frictions and tensions can be amplified because individuals play several roles across different groups and interests. Negotiation and mediation skills are crucial in navigating these complex overlapping relationships: such situations are described as *'all a bit messy and frustrating'* with a need work hard to *'tread a careful path'*. For example, one interviewee was *'...anxious about the personalities in the group as there are some hidden agendas which relate to personal matters...it will be important to steer this group gently and carefully!!'*

The 15 case study areas have approached Big Local differently:

- some are aiming to support community organisations to build their capacity to be able to successfully bid for funds and grants to ensure their continuity and growth;
- some are focused on providing services for different groups - children, older people, vulnerable people;
- others have very local ambitions to bring people together through networks and promote 'neighbourliness';
- whilst some have ambitious strategies to influence and benefit from large scale development around their area;
- and still others are more concerned with making sure residents have a voice and opportunities to be heard.

In truth, many are working with several of these approaches⁶. One clear distinction is between, on the one hand, those whose focus and end result is on achievements in line with their Big Local plan (and many are delivering some outcomes, however small scale, which have not been seen in the past); and on the other, those where Big Local is more of a stepping stone to build organisational capacity and reach aspirations way beyond the horizons of Big Local. What they have in common is a desire for maximum engagement of the wider community. Big Local partnerships are not alone in seeing the difficulties of sustaining resident engagement in very long-term projects.

Notes

¹ This paper aims to relate the more theoretical perspectives and questions in the Local Trust scoping papers to the lived experience of community leadership, within Big Local areas participating in Our Bigger Story, the multi-media longitudinal evaluation of the programme. As such, it builds on, and can be read in conjunction with, Paper One 'Reflections on Resident Led Change' and can be viewed alongside the film material from workshops in Birmingham and London where local residents, partners and Big Local workers reflected on the connected issues of power and community leadership:



² See for example Pigg, K. (1999), Community Leadership and Community Theory: A Practical Synthesis; *Journal of the Community Development Society*, Vol. 30, Issue 2, pp. 196-212 and J. Onyx, J.R. Leonard (2011) Complex systems leadership in emergent community projects *Community Development Journal*., Vol. 46, Issue 4, pp. 493-510

³ See Paper One 'Reflections on 'Resident Led'', for further details

⁴ As raised in both the initial NCVO evaluation report: National Council of Voluntary Organisations (2014) *Big Local, The Early Years: Evaluation Report*. NCVO, London and in the subsequent Our Bigger Story 'Beyond the Early Years' report (2017)

⁵ Mohan, J. and Bulloch, S. (2012) *The idea of a 'civic core': what are the overlaps between charitable giving, volunteering, and civic participation in England and Wales?* Third Sector Research Centre, Birmingham – available at https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/1028_549.pdf

⁶ See [Big Local: Beyond the Early Years](#) report – p.84

Appendix: Methodology

This paper draws on:

- Filmed workshops with partnership members, residents and other stakeholders in three Big Local areas (Birchfield, Grassland Hasmoor and Ramsey) with 63 participants
- Two workshops, in London and Birmingham, with 31 participants from 12 Big Local areas – both partnership members and workers. A composite film of all workshops is available here.
- Material from Our Bigger Story diary keepers in six Big Local areas
- Discussions at the Local Trust Community Leadership event at the University of Warwick
- Discussions with partnership members, workers and Big Local Reps in Bountagu, Birchfield, Catton Grove, Grassland Hasmoor, Growing Together, Ramsey, Revoe, Northfleet, Lawrence Weston, Radstock and Westfield, Three Parishes and Whitley Bay
- An analysis of filmed material in seven areas (Catton Grove, Grassland Hasmoor, Lawrence Weston, Three Parishes, Westfield, Whitley Bay and Northfleet)
- Data from 70 interviews with external strategic stakeholders – see profile in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Profile of External Stakeholders interviewed

Position	
MP	5
Councillor - Primary Authority (Unitary/County)	10
Councillor – District/Borough Council	5
Councillor – Town/Parish Council	3
Local Government Officer - Unitary	14
Local Government Officer - District	4
Local Government Officer – Town and Parish	2
Non-Departmental Public Body	2
Other statutory (e.g. Clinical Commissioning Group/ Head teacher)	6
Voluntary Sector	12
Faith group	2
Private sector/social business	3
Other (universities with connections with Big Local)	2
Total	70