



**national network
for neighbourhood
improvement**

The new national network for neighbourhood improvement is being incubated by Local Trust during 2024, supported by New Local.

It builds on the learnings from local government pioneers, evidence from past regeneration programmes, and the recent experience of the Big Local programme: a first-of-its-kind initiative that puts power, resources and decision-making into the hands of local communities to enable them to transform and improve their lives and areas.

It is aimed at those officers working in local government in areas such as regeneration; community or economic development; neighbourhood management; health and wellbeing; policy, research and strategy; or in area-based service delivery.



**Find out more and join
the national network
for neighbourhood
improvement**



New Local is an independent think tank and network with a mission to transform public services and unlock community power. We are home to a network of 70+ councils and other organisations.

Local Trust

Local Trust is a place-based funder supporting communities to achieve their ambitions. Our aims are to demonstrate the value of long term, unconditional, resident-led funding through our work supporting local communities make their areas better places to live, and to draw on the learning from our work to promote a wider transformation in the way policy makers, funders and others engage with communities and place.



Local Trust



**national network
for neighbourhood
improvement**

How can community-led approaches build thriving neighbourhoods?

Our neighbourhoods are dealing with the fallout of big national challenges – the cost-of-living crisis, pressures on public services and a flagging economy. Some are more resilient than others. Effective responses require highly adaptive approaches – even neighbourhoods that are next to each other might have widely varying outcomes.

We explore:



How can councils effectively support community capacity, particularly in areas experiencing low levels of social capital?



What does it mean for the council to be working in ways that are adaptive to the needs of different neighbourhoods?



How can communities take a lead on neighbourhood renewal and what does this mean for the role of the council?

**Tuesday 22 October, 2024
Harrogate**

SPEAKERS

Cllr Jane Ashworth OBE Leader, Stoke on Trent City Council

Jane became Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council in May 2023, when the Labour Group won the all-out municipal elections. She was first elected to represent the historic Burslem ward in 2019.

Prior to retiring and taking on the elected councillor role, Jane was the founding Chief Executive of the StreetGames charity. StreetGames began life in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2001 and went on to be the umbrella organisation for community projects which use sport for community renewal and community development all over the country.

Preceding her work on StreetGames, Jane worked for Sport England for nearly a decade, and for Newcastle upon Tyne, Knowsley, and Salford councils in youth, play and community strategy roles.

Patrick Melia OBE Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council

Focused on ensuring that opportunities are created for all in a connected, international, rapidly

transforming city, Patrick is driven to deliver high-quality services and world-class infrastructure enabling residents to live healthy, happy and financially independent lives, alongside creating the conditions for business to thrive.

Patrick has also led on the successful development of a Trailblazer Devolution Deal for the North East and a current priority is the Riverside Sunderland development, described as the UK's most exciting regeneration project.

Patrick was awarded an OBE for services to local government in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours list, and is a member and chair of a number of national and regional boards that share his commitment to support people and communities to achieve their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

Anna Francis Co-director, Portland Inn Project

The Portland Inn Project CIC is a creative arts project for a community in Stoke-on-Trent with an aim to achieve community cohesion, economic, social and cultural development by involving the community in development of a pioneering community space, cultural hub and social enterprise.

Collaborating with Rebecca since 2016, Anna uses her skills as an educator and researcher, along with her experience as an artist working in urban contexts in planning and delivering activity with the project and community. Anna is Associate Professor of Fine Art and Social Practice at Staffordshire University, and a director and studio artist at AirSpace Gallery.

Matt Leach CEO, Local Trust

Matt Leach has been CEO since 2017 of the national charity set up in 2012 to deliver the Big Local programme. We believe that trusting communities and giving them more power will enable local people to significantly improve their quality of life and the places in which they live.

He leads the charge on Local Trust's promotion of the Big Local model – long-term, flexible funding straight to the communities that need it most – with the funding sector, policymakers and the academic community. Successes have included the campaign for a community wealth fund.

He is a former senior civil servant, CEO of HACT, the social housing sector's ideas and innovation agency and of civil society funding agency Capacitybuilders.

Jessica Studdert Interim Chief Executive, New Local

Jessica has been at New Local since 2015 as Deputy Director, and leads New Local's policy and research work. She is currently Interim Chief Executive.

She writes and speaks about numerous subjects related to localism, devolution, public service reform and local finance. She co-authored the Community Paradigm with Adam Lent, published in 2019.

Previously, Jessica was political adviser to the Labour Group at the Local Government Association (LGA) where she led on policy, working closely on public service reform and devolution. Seconded to the Policy Unit of the Leader of the Opposition's Office during 2013-14, she led on the Local Government Innovation Taskforce. Prior to that, she worked in policy roles in the voluntary sector for a homelessness and children's charity, having started her career at the Fabian Society.