

Big Local - The Final 5 years

Why should I get involved?

Because there has been nothing like Big Local before, and this is a real opportunity to put your views forward and be heard. If you think it is like some of our previous regeneration or development schemes **be assured it is not**. You may not get exactly what **YOU** want but that decision will be made by **local people** involved in the Partnership. Big Local was designed to be radically different from other funding programmes and **put residents and their communities at the heart** of their vision which was of empowered, resilient, dynamic, asset-rich communities making their own decisions about what was best for their areas.

Funding was awarded to each Big Local area on the basis that it was **spent over 10 – 15 years** at the communities' own chosen pace, and **on their own plans and priorities**. At least £1m was to be provided to each of the chosen 150 communities in England funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and managed by a new organisation called Local Trust. This has now risen to £1.1 million due to investments by Local Trust with an extra £50,000 given during the Covid Crisis. The Local Trust works nationally with a range of partners to deliver Big Local to provide expert advice and support for residents.

The core features of Big Local included

- **Long term** – providing certainty and continuity, over 10-15 years
- **Resident-led** – working directly with individuals living, working, studying and playing in areas rather than through organisations; building confidence and capacity amongst those wanting to make a difference to their community and their local area
- **Non-prescriptive** – enabling residents to spend on their own terms and in their own time, on the projects they judge to be most important to them
- **Patient and non-judgemental** – giving communities the time and opportunity to learn, make mistakes, resolve disagreements and overcome challenges for themselves, on their way to achieving their ambitions
- **Accompanied by flexible and responsive support** – to help communities to build the confidence and capability to make the most of the opportunities available to them, whilst not constraining their own ambition and initiative

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Big Local was committed and designed to ensure the **time and energy of RESIDENTS** was spent on the things that make a lasting difference to people and communities.

You have a role if you want it, in strengthening the assets of your community and building sustainable and empowered groups and individuals to enable a powerful legacy from the Big Local investment

Big Local Plans

Your Big Local Plan sets out the vision and priorities of the area and East Cleveland Villages Partnership developed their plan in 2013 through consultation, workshops and walkabouts in each of the villages and at that time were committed to involving others in the delivery of the Plan, with a lead member of the Board being attached to each area of development. The next plan came in the shape of a review of the initial plan with the initial vision for East Cleveland Villages staying the same:-

“Eleven rural communities in East Cleveland are working together through the BIG Local programme to improve opportunities and facilities within the area.”

The partnership members at the time said “We want our area to be able to meet the challenges it faces and this is a chance for a range of new and existing groups and individuals to grow and flourish. The partnership development group see this as an investment which will enable them to build on their local heritage and be a means to attracting, jobs, local business and much more local activity for the benefit of the community. We are aware of the strengths and weaknesses within our communities and the opportunities and challenges we intend to pursue to make East Cleveland the place to be.”

There are 4 Big Local Outcomes which are deliberately broad so that local communities can set their own priorities.

- Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
- People will have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future.
- The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises.
- People will feel that their area is an even better place to live.

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The experience of people living in the area is a very positive one due to the wonderful access to coast and countryside, and the sense of family, tradition and community that has built up over hundreds of years.

However, although there is a history of self-help and community action locally, environmentally and socially, East Cleveland has suffered a lack of capacity and confidence relating to its ability to capitalise on the opportunities available regionally and nationally. This makes the latest and last plan particularly important in terms of the available finances and the development of local residents in terms of capacity development to enable meaningful involvement in future decision making. This might mean collaboration or involvement in planning, service provision, environmental issues, education etc. The halfway point in the 10 – 15 spending plan was reached in 2019 however this does not mean that half of the money is left.

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