



**Local Trust** | **Big Local**

# Start the conversation

Your guide to steps 1 and 2 on the Big Local pathway

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# Welcome...

...to *Start the conversation*, Local Trust's guide to help you take the first two steps on the Big Local pathway!

Big Local is an exciting opportunity for residents in 150 areas around England to use at least £1m to make a massive and lasting positive difference to their communities.

To help you make Big Local a success, we ask you to follow a clear set of steps that will guide you on your journey. We call this the Big Local pathway.

The Big Local pathway has seven steps:

- 1 Getting people involved
- 2 Exploring your Big Local vision
- 3 Forming your Big Local partnership
- 4 Creating a Big Local plan
- 5 Delivering your Big Local plan
- 6 Collecting the evidence
- 7 Reviewing your Big Local plan and partnership



If you don't have access to the internet, you can call Local Trust on 020 7812 5456.

# What is Big Local?

Big Local is an exciting opportunity for residents in 150 areas around England to use at least £1m to make a massive and lasting positive difference to their communities.

It has four key outcomes:

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| 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 can continue to identify and respond to local 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. |

## The Big Local pathway

To help you make Big Local a success, we ask you to follow a clear set of steps that will help you on your journey. This is called the Big Local pathway, and the steps are as follows.

- 1 Getting people involved
- 2 Exploring your Big Local vision
- 3 Forming your Big Local partnership
- 4 Creating a Big Local plan
- 5 Delivering your Big Local plan
- 6 Collecting the evidence
- 7 Reviewing your Big Local plan and partnership

### MORE INFO

**Remember - you're not alone.**

Your Big Local rep will support you at each step, and you can find more detailed information and support on the Local Trust website: [www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk)

# Now you're ready to go!

This guide will help you to take your first two steps on the Big Local pathway:

- Step 1: Getting people involved
- Step 2: Exploring your Big Local vision

These two steps are all about letting everyone in your area know about Big Local and gathering their ideas about how they would like your area to become an even better place to live.

In other words it's time to [Start the Conversation](#) about Big Local in your area.

You don't have to take just one step at a time because sometimes events or actions that help you to achieve one step could also be useful for another. Some of the examples in this guide will make this clear, so you will see that an event to get people involved in Big Local could also be used to talk to people about their visions for the future (steps one and two together).

There is funding available for each area to help you take these steps on the Big Local pathway. Your area may already have a Getting People Involved or Getting Started grant or may be applying for one.

## MORE INFO

You can find the following guidance on our website

[Getting People Involved Round 2 guidance](#)

[Getting Started funding guidance](#)

[www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk)

It's important to remember that Big Local is about putting residents in charge; helping to make your area an even better place to live. You have to make sure everybody in your area can input to the plans and decisions – both residents and people working in the area; and you get access to lots of support, including a Big Local rep.

So we hope this guide helps you to get inspired and get talking.

## MORE INFO

Have you read [What's Big Local all about?](#) our brief guide to Big Local? Find it at [www.localtrust.org.uk/big-local/resources](http://www.localtrust.org.uk/big-local/resources)

## MORE INFO

[Remember you're not alone.](#) Your Big Local rep will support you at each step, and you can find more detailed information and support on the Local Trust website [www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk)



# Step 1: Getting people involved

## Your aim

**Your aim is to spread the word about Big Local and make sure all the residents know how to get involved.**

This is really important because the funding is for everyone, not just one group. You need to spend some time thinking about all the different people who live and work in your Big Local area and how you can talk to them about Big Local.

By involving as many people as possible you will have the best chance of achieving lasting change and making your area an even better place to live.

## How to do it

There are lots of exciting ways of communicating with people. Start by thinking about all the different people who live and work in your area: what they do, where they go and how they could find out about Big Local.

For example, teenagers love looking at Facebook, parent and baby groups are good opportunities for a chat, some elderly people might pop into the library every week and the local newspaper will drop onto the doormats of thousands of residents.

There are many local organisations you can make contact with, such as tenants' and residents' associations, community groups, schools, the local council, the police, businesses, housing associations, and charities. Think of informal groups too, to help you get the word out.

## Getting Started Funding

Getting Started is about starting the conversation – spreading the word about Big Local, making sure people locally know how they can get involved, creating a profile of the area and gathering ideas about how the area could become an even better place to live now, and in the future. As well as aiming to work towards the Big Local outcomes, Getting Started needs to be led by residents, and go at their pace. It is most important for your area to plan various strategies to inform and engage with the range of people and organisations in your area, particularly residents, about Big Local.

If your area does not spend all of the £20,000, we will add the unspent money to your area's £1m Big Local allocation. There is no rush to spend the money. If you do not submit a Getting Started proposal now, your area won't lose it. Getting Started opened for wave 2 areas, those announced on February 29 2012, in May 2012 and will be opened to wave 3 areas in March 2013. If you would like more information please contact your Big Local rep or Local Trust direct (020 7812 5458).

You could telephone people, make posters, get an article in a local paper, make a presentation to a local group and much, much more.

Whenever you communicate with people make sure you tell them what Big Local is and how important it is that they get involved to help decide on the future for your area. Always give contact details for people to find out more.



If you are holding an event, think carefully about how it can be accessible to people with disabilities and whether it's at a convenient time for people who work.

#### MORE INFO

Find out more about reps and their roles and responsibilities at [www.localtrust.org.uk/big-local/resources](http://www.localtrust.org.uk/big-local/resources)

#### MORE INFO

For more things to consider when holding events or other activities, see our guide to why diversity matters for Big Local on the **Resources** section of the Local Trust website.

#### MORE INFO

For ideas about how to use Twitter look at the Local Trust website to see what Local Trust (@LocalTrust) and other Big Local areas have done. You can also link from there to Local Trust's Facebook page.

## Big Local reps

The role of a rep is to help your area achieve your vision for your Big Local area through support, advice and appropriate challenge. Rep support includes guiding your area through the Big Local pathway, often working through your Big Local partnership. The rep also represents Local Trust in your area. They report back to Local Trust and partners to make sure we use your experiences to improve how Big Local works.

The rep role is 'light-touch'. Reps usually have two assignments. The first one is from the start of Big Local until you have got your plan agreed by us at Local Trust (steps 1 – 4 of the Big Local pathway). The second assignment is whilst you deliver your plan (steps 5 – 7 of the Big Local pathway). As reps are not the Big Local workers in each area so many areas also get support from workers employed by their in locally trusted organisations. Each rep's time is paid for by Local Trust and is additional to your area's £1m. The reps are managed by Renaisi on behalf of Local Trust.



## Five fantastic ideas

### 1 Become a Big Local ambassador

Talk to everyone about Big Local – your friends, your family, the person at the till in the supermarket, the doctor’s receptionist.

### 2 Local newspapers always need great stories

Call your area’s reporter and give them a two-minute summary of what Big Local is, how exciting it is and how you want everyone to get involved. You can download the Big Local media pack from the resources section of the Local Trust website [www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk).

### 3 Hold a drop in session

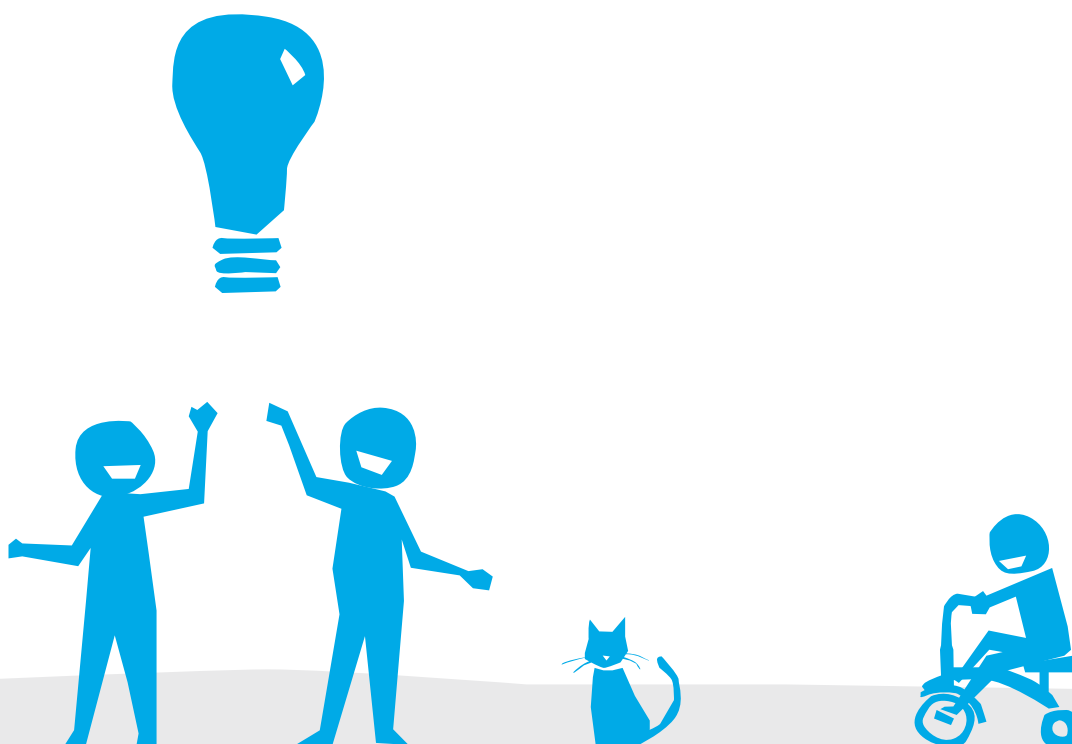
You could do this in a library, a school or place of worship where people can find out more. Have some enthusiastic people on hand to explain what’s happening and prepare some information to give out or make a wall display.

### 4 Start a conversation online

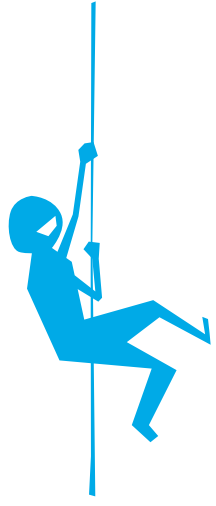
Find a person good with computers and technology to set up a Facebook group for Big Local and invite all your friends in the area to join. If your area has a community website listing local activities, you might be able to add information about Big Local. If you’ve got people on board that are interested in the web, you could even set up a website for Big Local and publicise it through Facebook, Twitter and other relevant websites.

### 5 Distribute posters

Stick them up around your area for people to find out more. We have created a poster that you can use as a starting point – ask your rep for more information. If you want to design your own posters, you might find that a local graphic designer will create something for free, or a local printer could give you a good deal.







# Step 2: Exploring your Big Local vision

## Your aim

**As a group of people involved in Big Local, your aim is to talk to a wide range of people. This is about what your area is like now and what people think it could be like in the future.**

At this stage, not everyone's vision or views of the area will be the same. This is fine, as the important thing is to talk to as many people as possible and get them involved in Big Local.

## What is visioning?

Visioning is the opportunity for you and everyone in your area to re-imagine how the area could be in the future. It will help if you:

- respect that there may be different views and opinions in the area
- re-imagine how the area could be in the future
- recognise and build on the positive things that already exist
- reflect the views of different communities within the area.

Visioning can be helpful in:

- stimulating interest in community issues
- developing community spirit
- getting people involved and talking to one another
- strengthening the relationship with the community and local organisations, the local authority and statutory bodies

- prioritising local effort and resources
- developing voluntary action to meet local needs.

## How to do it

- Your conversations need to be forward-thinking, creative and positive.
- Some of the publicity events and activities that you are working on for step 1 of the Big Local pathway could also be used to gather people's visions for the future.
- You need to ensure that you collect views from all of the different communities in your area. For example, young people, elderly people, people with family and caring responsibilities, people with different levels of income, people of different religions, beliefs and ethnic backgrounds, and people with disabilities.
- Not everyone feels comfortable writing things down, so think about other ways of communicating such as through conversations, art, videos and online.
- Try not to focus on just creating a shopping list of things that people think the area needs – this isn't what Big Local is about.

Use this opportunity to explore some of the following questions with people:

- What do you like about our area now?
- What talents and skills do people have in our area?



Big Local is an exciting opportunity for you to bring together the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make your area an even better place to live. Together you can work out what would make a real difference; what skills and help you need so that the Big Local funding is used in the most effective way possible over the next 10 years or more.

Debbie Ladds, Chief executive,  
Local Trust



- How do you think we could make the most of our area?
- What do you think is bad about our area?
- Why do people leave our area and what might change this?
- Are you worried about the future for yourself or your family and friends? What are those worries?
- What would make our area an even better place to live?

Think about how other local groups or organisations could help. Make sure that you discuss your ideas with others as it will help them be involved and they may also be able to offer 'in kind' support such as free meeting rooms, photocopying services or information from other consultations they have carried out. Maybe a local business could sponsor an event or the local council could offer free meeting rooms or other support.

People may volunteer to help as you get the word out about what's happening. Keep an eye out for people who may be good at organising events, designing publicity or who have good connections to help spread the word.

You may decide to use some of your Getting Started funding for this step.

You could fund local groups to complete some of the work or you may want to commission a specialist organisation to run visioning exercises for you.

You'll need to generate excitement and interest in the process with some good publicity, for example, posters in prominent places such as shops, places of worship and pubs. Try approaching the local newspaper, bloggers, websites or the radio station to see if they will run a story on Big Local. Remember you may need to translate some of the material into languages spoken by people in various communities in the area. You can ring Local Trust for advice.

You might use informal activities to gather ideas or set up formal community visioning exercises or use a mixture of approaches. Other activities include community events, art projects, video diaries, suggestion boxes, surveys/questionnaires, 'postcards to the future', community tours, door knocking, public meetings and so on.

It's easier if there is a range of people helping with this step who are drawn from a cross-section of your Big Local area. It could be useful to have a group which includes people from the council, police, schools, businesses, health authority and other key organisations to support your activities.

Your Big Local rep can give you advice and support. They can help you to ensure that all the communities in your area have opportunities to participate and help you to identify the best ways to communicate with everyone.

It is important to check how many people and what sort of people you have engaged throughout this step. This will help you to identify whether there are communities that aren't involved yet and which you still need to engage with.

Finally, we know that some Big Local areas will have previously undertaken extensive consultation and visioning exercises. We encourage you to make good use of the information you have already gathered and not 're-invent the wheel'. You may prefer to 'refresh' what has already been collected or add to it to fill in any missing knowledge or information from particular people or groups not previously included in earlier community visioning.





## Ten fantastic ideas

### 1 Get painting

Invite a local artist to work with people to paint a mural of what the area could look like in the future.

### 2 Create suggestion boxes for busy people

Put suggestion boxes in post offices, supermarkets and even local pubs to collect views from busy people.

### 3 Run drop-in sessions

Host 'drop in' sessions when people can come at a time that is convenient for them. Use 'post-it' notes, maps, photographs, models and flip charts to prompt people to give suggestions.

### 4 Get school children involved

Link up with local schools – encourage school children and teenagers to create drawings, or write and perform songs about their area. Even set up a website for Big Local and publicise it through Facebook, Twitter and other relevant social networking sites.

### 5 Carry out interviews

Send students or volunteers out to interview people at elderly people's clubs or parent and toddler groups.

### 6 Generate community spirit

Gather volunteers to redecorate a community building and talk to them about Big Local while they're there – demonstrating what can be achieved when people work together will generate community spirit and enthusiasm for Big Local.

### 7 Create great music

Invite local musicians to work with people to record or write lyrics about the area and then perform at various local events.

### 8 Make use of the internet

Harness all the social media and websites in your area to promote visioning and allow people to share views; this can help build trust because it will be a public record of how ideas are developing.

### 9 Hold 'getting to know you' events

Run some 'getting to know you' events where you swap unwanted items, or host international or local food events, or run some 'skills-swap' workshops where people can meet each other and learn a new skill. Use different locations and different times during the day to reach as many people as possible.

### 10 Piggy-back on existing activities

Find out what events, activities and meetings are already taking place in your area – go along and talk to more people about Big Local.

#### MORE INFO

For more examples of the different ways that Big Local areas are finding to reach everyone in their area, visit the Local Trust website:

**[www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk)**

### How others do it

If you want to have a look at the approaches others use then check the Big Local area pages on the Local Trust website [www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk) or have a look at the following examples.

- **The community planning website** offers a comprehensive guide to community visioning and planning events with clear practical guides illustrating different methods, best practice case studies, publications and toolkits.  
[www.communityplanning.net](http://www.communityplanning.net)
- **Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE)** promotes community-led planning and provides support to rural communities through community development workers within the Rural Communities Action Network. ACRE has developed the Community Led Planning Toolkit. For more details see the Community Led Planning website. This is also relevant for areas in towns and cities.  
[www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning](http://www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning)

- **Action for Market Towns (AMT)** promotes town action planning as part of its wider support to market towns. AMT has produced a guide to community-led planning which includes a description and comparison of community-led planning and market town action planning.

[towns.org.uk/knowledge-hub/policy-into-practice-2/community-led-planning](http://towns.org.uk/knowledge-hub/policy-into-practice-2/community-led-planning)

- **SuScit** is a project that supports communities' visioning on environment and sustainability. It has useful publications on building community-led agendas for urban areas. Further details can be found on the website.

[www.suscit.co.uk/resources](http://www.suscit.co.uk/resources)



# Your Big Local profile

As part of step 2, exploring your Big Local vision, you need to create a profile of your Big Local area. The Big Local profile should describe what your area is like now, and include some history about your area. This will give an interesting overview of your Big Local area, highlighting what's good about it already and the challenges that it faces. The profile presents a 'starting point' for you to plan from and a guide to look back on in order to assess change. You can use your profile as a resource to help you make decisions about Big Local as you move along the Big Local pathway.

The profile doesn't just have to be written. It could include photos, videos, YouTube clips, blogs, PowerPoint presentations and pictures.

You could use some of your Getting People Involved Round 2 funding or Getting Started funding to pay someone to put the profile together for you, or work with a local school to produce a photographic history of the area, or purchase a video camera to record people's stories and thoughts about the area.

Once you've completed your profile make sure that you share it with the people who contributed, those who have yet to get involved, your Big Local rep and Local Trust. Many people will have worked hard and given a lot of time and enthusiasm to the process so it will be important to ensure that you regularly communicate how things are progressing. You could make information available online, create a display for public places in your local area showing results and who to contact so that people can see how their views have been considered.

## MORE INFO

See the '[Starting the conversation: toolkit](#)' for ideas about what your profile might include.



## What's happening in Custom House Big Local area in East London to Start the Conversation



We held tea parties as part of steps one and two of the Big Local pathway – ‘getting people involved’ and ‘exploring your Big Local vision’. Tea parties seemed like a perfect opportunity to bring residents together to air their opinions about the area at the same time as we shared information about Big Local.

We ran the events at the Royal Docks Community School. The students – who were from the English, drama and hospitality courses – prepared by laying out all the tablecloths and flowers as well as making cakes, sandwiches, tea and juices. There were about 30 older guests and 20 to 30 students at each event.

They started out with a lovely welcome: the students greeted guests at the door, served everyone and performed some songs, music and poetry.

We had about ten students interviewing the older people using our Big Local community questionnaire which was developed by the Big Local steering group. This asked people what they value about Custom House,

what they see as the key problems and about their vision for a better community. The answers were shared with the steering group who analysed the results as part of the second step of the Big Local pathway, ‘exploring your Big Local vision’.

Music and dancing turned out to be fun and important parts of the tea parties. Some of the students were singing songs about their experiences, such as what it is like to be a young black girl in Custom House – there was a lot of creative stuff. Then the Garden Café Community Revival Band performed and we had everyone singing the old East End singalong songs like *The Lambeth Walk* and *Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner*. We gave everyone song sheets and they all participated – even the kids loved it. There was a fantastic moment when Eileen Roper who is 79 and has spent her whole life in Custom House got up and led the Lambeth Walk around the room.

**Bill Perry, owner of the Garden Café and Custom House steering group member**



Dancing and tea parties can be a good way to get people together





Talk through your ideas with your Big Local rep.

Check out the Big Local area pages on the Local Trust website to see what other areas are doing.

**[www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk)**

**Getting Started funding** - the guidance about this is on the Local Trust website [www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk)

This document will be developed over time with input from the people using this material. If you have thoughts on how this document can be made more useful for you, particularly if you live in one of the Big Local areas, please let us know.

## Local Trust

020 7812 5456

[info@localtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@localtrust.org.uk)

**[www.localtrust.org.uk](http://www.localtrust.org.uk)**

The endowment for the Big Local programme is held by the Big Local Trust and overseen by Local Trust. The Big Local Trust was established by the Big Lottery Fund with a National Lottery grant of £196,873,499.

***If you need this document in other formats or a community language please get in touch with Local Trust and we will help you.***

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