

BIG LOCAL

SHEFFIELD SPRING EVENT

**ENGAGING COMMUNITIES:
LEARNING FROM
RESEARCH AND REAL-LIFE**

6TH SEPTEMBER 2017

NCS
**CHAMPIONING
VOLUNTARY
ACTION**

INTRODUCTIONS

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Rastrick Big Local

TALK PLAN

- Different types of community engagement in Big Local
- Learning from the project
- Case-study – Widening out decision-making
- ‘Voice Your Choice’ in Rastrick

DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN BIG LOCAL



Community engagement within Big Local

Research by NCVO

September 2016

The research answers these questions and more about community engagement in Big Local:

1. What's happening – why and how are Big Local areas engaging their community?
2. What's different – how and why does engagement differ between Big Local areas, and how is Big Local different compared to other programmes?
3. What's working – what's working, for whom and in what circumstances?
4. What's being learnt – what's being learnt or tried that could help others?

You can download the full or summary report, or explore the engagement wheels and case studies prepared by the researchers.

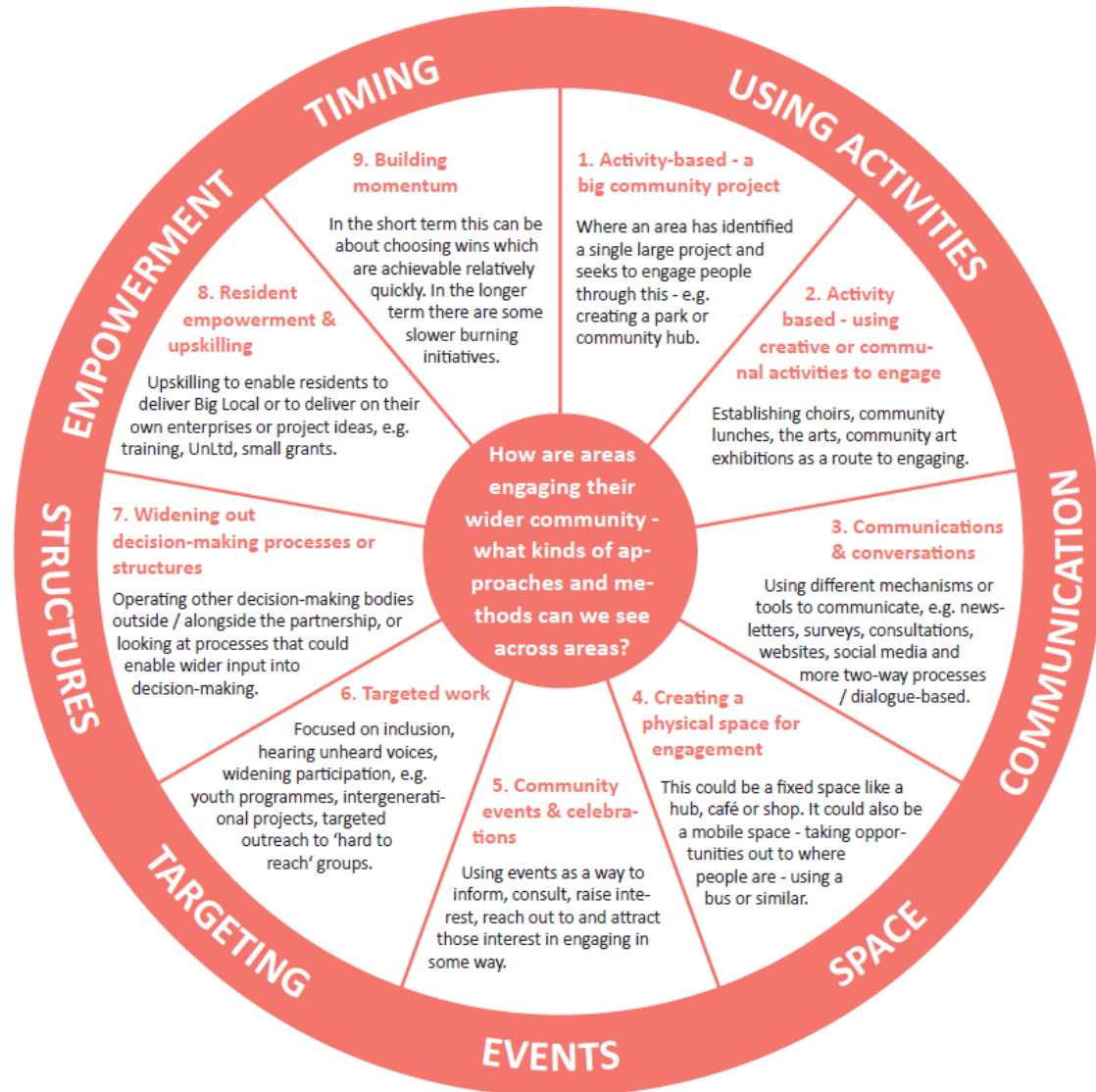
Case studies

[View section](#)

Engagement wheels

[View section](#)

APPROACHES



LEARNING FROM THE PROJECT

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

- a) *Recognising the importance of both breadth and depth of participation in Big Local*
- b) *Ramifications of the Big Local timeframe*
- c) *The importance of pragmatism and flexibility*

LEARNING POINTS

Keep going: Community engagement is not easy and needs continual attention

There constantly needs to be efforts made to maintain the interest of those who are engaged already and to engage those not yet involved.

Spread the load: Volunteers are key and should not be overburdened

We often found that this 'core' group, the partnership and other active volunteers, were vital.

Keep talking: Communication with residents is paramount

Communication with the wider community was really important, both in the sense of consulting people about what they wanted from Big Local and about what was being delivered.

CASE-STUDY – WIDENING OUT DECISIONS

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES AND FORA

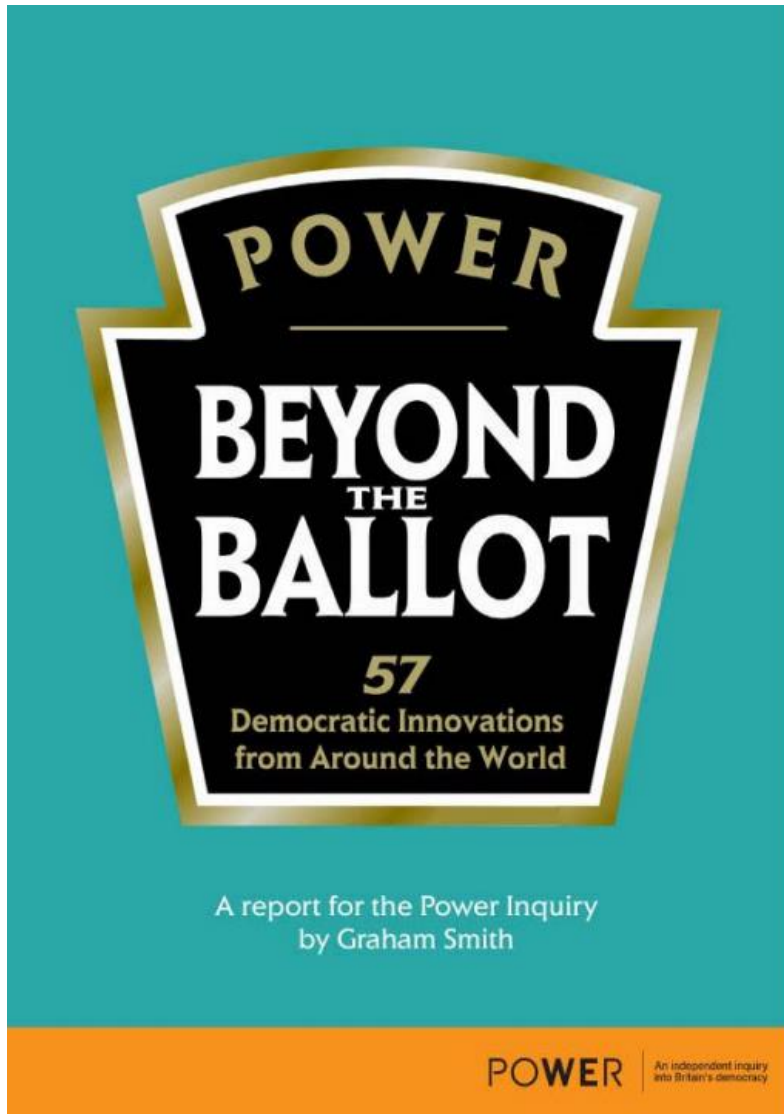
This approach is about widening out formal decision-making alongside – or extending beyond – the partnership. Activities included:

- Participatory budgeting;
- Partnership subgroups/open meetings/open forums;
- Forums, often with devolved budgets (e.g. youth forums);
- Open space;
- Citizens' juries.



Participatory Budgeting, Porto Alegre, 1989

Sources: www.participatorybudgeting.org; www.elbag.org, www.inthesetimes.com



Participatory Budgeting first emerged in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989. As it established itself as an effective mechanism for engaging citizens, it spread to about 180 other Brazilian municipalities, one Brazilian state and to a number of other cities across Latin America.

Community Engagement in Rastrick Big Local HD63

Activity Profile - Participatory Budgeting

1. About Rastrick and its community

Rastrick is a town in Calderdale, West Yorkshire. The Rastrick Big Local HD63 [RBL] area is a slightly larger area than that covered by the Rastrick electoral ward. Over three quarters of Rastrick is classified as domestic gardens or greenspace. There are a little over 12,000 people in the Rastrick Big Local area, living in 5,400 households. Working age adults (16-64) make up 63% of the population. 27% of residents are over 65 and 18% are under 16. The population is predominantly white, with less than four per cent of residents coming from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds. The area is well served by a range of amenities and facilities. It has its own train station and local bus services that serve the area, a range of shops and supermarkets, a library, several churches, two doctor's surgeries, two secondary schools and several primaries, active community groups, some youth provision, and social clubs for both cricket and bowls. Rastrick became a Big Local area in Wave 2 of the programme, with its award of £1m announced in April 2012. The area began its journey along the Big Local 'pathway' relatively quickly after the announcement was made; establishing a local steering group by July 2012, developing a formal resident-led partnership by March 2013, and then producing a Big Local Plan by March 2014. The area's plan was endorsed by Local Trust in August 2014 [a two-year plan for 2014-16].

2. Early community engagement efforts

Building a steering group. Following an initial meeting with the Big Local rep in April 2012, a reference group was set up and a website launched the following month. A series of community roadshow events and a household survey followed in June, and by July a steering group of interested residents and other stakeholders had been formed. At an early stage the steering group identified a set of eight guiding principles to steer its work. Whilst some of these were about how they would do things and how Big Local resources might be used, three specifically addressed community engagement. These were:

- Make sure community members can have a say and participate;
- Maximise the opportunities for people to make a contribution;
- Aim for inclusiveness (giving everyone a chance to be involved) and encourage greater interaction between people (particularly from different generations, neighbourhoods, backgrounds).⁶³

Engaging the community. As part of its *Getting Started* activities, the initial steering group wanted to consult widely in the local area to find out what people wanted. They used various methods to consult and to try and get people involved.

⁶³ Rastrick Big Local Plan

Table 1. Early approaches to engagement

1. Surveying – developing household surveys	A questionnaire was designed and distributed by volunteers. Copies were sent to every household and also handed out at four community events. Despite distributing c.5000 questionnaires, only 300 responses were received with the majority of respondents aged under 25. The steering group mapped the respondents to understand better who they had reached and who they had not but overall the group had hoped for a bigger response and remained keen to reach and hear from more people. Following the relatively poor response to the initial survey, engaging with more people was a priority.
2. Varied communications methods	The area developed a website, did leaflet drops, and engaged with the local press to raise awareness of Big Local and the opportunities to get involved. They also created banners and other marketing/publicity materials and a newsletter distributed to more than 500 contacts.
3. Events and meetings	The group organised events open to the whole community and targeted events to reach particular groups (e.g. meetings and activities in schools or with relevant community groups). These varied from meetings, roadshows, and 'bubble and speak' sessions to larger scale events – the Big Vocal launch and the BIG event (in August 2013).
4. Outreach and work with partners	Networks and connections were well-used at this time with members of the steering group relying on word-of-mouth, sharing information through their own networks and making the most of opportunities to talk to others about Big Local in different settings and with different people they encountered.
5. Small grants fund	A community projects fund was established in December 2012. In its initial stage this was seen as an important mechanism to help raise awareness and engage more people in Big Local. A worker was employed to support the Partnership and to co-ordinate the fund.

Community engagement around the Big Local plan. A second stage of engagement and consultation took place through 2013-14 as priorities started to emerge more clearly. A second survey took place and several more public meetings and events, helping the Big Local Partnership start drafting its plan.



The final plan contained three broad goals linked to resilience, which it defined as 'being able to thrive and make the most of opportunities as well as being able to withstand challenges and overcome problems'. These goals were, to build economic resilience, personal resilience, and community resilience where the composite elements of community resilience were described as a strong, cohesive, active and connected community; a high quality physical environment; and a community that is safe.⁶⁴

Specific themes contained within the first plan were around:

- Health and wellbeing;
- Leisure and opportunities to do things with others;

⁶⁴ Rastrick Big Local Plan

THANK YOU!

Over to Danny!