

Local Trust board meeting minutes, decisions and actions

13 October 2016 at
 2pm

Local Trust, Unit D, 15-18 White Lion Street, London, N1 9PD

Discussion and decision	Action
<p>Present</p> <p>Trustees</p> <p>Kevin Sugrue (chair), Penny Shepherd, Jonathan Taylor, Ben Lee, Daniel Goodwin, Kathryn Kane, Alice Casey, Peter Mills, Andrew Robinson, Karen Riches</p> <p>Non-trustees</p> <p>Peter Thurston (Big Local Trust protector)</p> <p>Ben Hughes, Nicola Hutcheson, Jayne Humm, Rachel Rowney, Jessica Wenban-Smith and Wendy Joynes (minutes) (Local Trust)</p> <p>Nick Downes (BritainThinks) for item 5</p>	
<p>1. Welcome and introductions</p> <p>Kevin welcomed Ben Hughes, interim chief executive and Jessica Wenban-Smith, Head of Communications, both of whom had recently joined Local Trust.</p> <p>He also confirmed that Matt Leach, the current chief executive of HACT, had been offered, and had accepted, the role of Local Trust chief executive.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from John Whitton.</p>	
<p>3. Conflicts of interest</p> <p>Ben Lee: director, NANM (delivery partner, Big Local)</p> <p>Peter Mills, owner, Brand Ethos (commissioned by UnLtd, delivery partners for Big Local).</p> <p>Andrew Robinson: director, CCLA (investment manager, Big Local Trust)</p>	

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<p>4. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p> <p>4.1 Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2016 be approved as a correct record.</p> <p>4.2 Matters arising</p> <p>Kevin confirmed that the bi-annual Big Lottery strategic review meeting would now take place between senior Big Lottery and Local Trust staff, rather than trustees. Whilst this is a logical and positive step, it does mean the only meeting with non-executive members is the annual All England Committee. Kevin will discuss further with Geeta. Regarding maintaining strong links with Big Lottery, it was also felt important to keep BLF staff and trustees in touch through regular invites to Big Local events.</p>	<p>Kevin to get clarification from Big Lottery on reasons for changing reporting arrangements</p>
<p>5. Strategic discussion – BritainThinks perception report</p> <p>Nick Downes from BritainThinks gave the presentation based on findings from the perceptions audit commissioned by Local Trust. It consisted of 25 interviews across a range of stakeholders including funders, journalists, central and local government and the private sector. It was felt that there were some important and timely messages in the report that can help shape discussion at the heads awayday, the December board meeting and the trustee awayday in January 2017 such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Local Trust’s niche? Is it community development? • Local Trust has a responsibility to use our evidence in a compelling manner, to be clearer about what we do, how we do it and what difference it makes. • Findings reinforced the importance of the legacy project, as a way of developing new work streams that complement Big Local delivery. • It is important to note that some of the findings have a strong government focus and so might skew the overall impression. • It is important to consider the language and framing of the message, to capture the best of community development principles in today’s language. • It will be important for Local Trust’s narrative to be mindful of current political and policy priorities. The shifting role of the public sector was raised as an important focus for future influence. • The clearest message was that if Local Trust has aspirations to be an influencer and policy/practice leader then it needs to collaborate a lot more and make itself much better known to key stakeholders and other influencers. <p>There were no further questions and Kevin thanked Nick for his presentation. The board then noted the report.</p>	
<p>6. Programme delivery – Big Local Trust</p> <p>Rachel began by inviting trustees to participate in the learning and networking events taking place from October 2016 to November 2017. Trustees will let Rachel or Wendy know if they want to attend an event.</p>	<p>Trustees to let Rachel or Wendy know if</p>

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<p>The following questions and comments were then raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding inconsistencies in the way LTOs monitor spend, Rachel confirmed that Local Trust is aware of this and is looking to improve the way we work with LTOs to ensure a more robust and consistent approach. There are two events taking place in November and December where this will be raised; we will also be emailing the chair, LTO and rep for each area with a breakdown of their funding to date, and the balance remaining. A question was raised about the health and wellbeing in areas and if Local Trust is comfortable with what was being done. Rachel responded that there is not a problem, but we are making ourselves aware and that safeguarding for Big Local activities in areas is ultimately the responsibility of locally trusted organisations as per the funding agreement. She added that there were also specialist reps that could help other reps. A question was then raised about the status of the contract with UnLtd. Rachel responded that Local Trust is discussing changes to working arrangement with UnLtd. Any proposed changes will be presented to the board in due course. In answer to a question about the process in place in case an LTO becomes insolvent, Rachel responded that there were procedures and they could be shared with trustees. In response to a question about if there had been any issues resulting from Brexit, Rachel responded that there had been nothing direct, but it could be a subject raised at the 2017 spring events. <p>There were no further questions or comments and the report was noted by the board.</p>	<p>they want to attend an event</p> <p>Proposed changes to UnLtd grant agreement to go to board in due course</p>
<p>7. Research, evaluation and learning</p> <p>7.1 Big Local Trust – update of research, evaluation and learning</p> <p>Jayne introduced the report. Since the report was written, the number of partnership surveys returned is now 870, and at least one has been received from each area.</p> <p>The following questions and comments were then raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees felt it was time to start documenting what is being learnt. They would also like to see it brought together and published so that it can be used. Jayne responded that this work is starting and a report will be presented at the December board meeting. Jayne also added that what has been learnt appears in a number of places for example Rachel’s report, the chief executive’s report and the communications report and it was suggested that a way be found to bring all this together in one place. Trustees agreed that this should be on the agenda for the awaydays. <p>There were no further questions and the report was noted by the board.</p> <p>7.2 Local Trust – update of empowered communities project (the legacy)</p> <p>Jayne introduced the report and informed trustees there had been 24 expressions of interest received of which 19 are incomplete, although the</p>	<p>Item for the awaydays’ agenda</p>

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<p>deadline for submission is still two weeks away.</p> <p>She also informed trustees that there is a mailing list of over 200 people receiving updates and that a comms strategy will be developed with the steering group.</p> <p>The following questions and comments were then raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a question about the CDF grant terms and the importance of ensuring that we are acting within what has been agreed from early on. • Local Trust does not currently have a reserves policy. Now that it has its own funds, it will be important for trustees to agree whether a reserves policy is required, and if so, the details of the policy. • In answer to a question about some of the legacy money being spent on staff costs, Jayne responded that this was initially only for a period of 18 months. • Trustees also felt that it was crucial to keep costs relating to Big Local and Local Trust separate, and a question was then raised about who is responsible for the costs of the BritainThinks project as it appeared to cover both Local Trust and Big Local. Kevin asked that contact be made with Debbie on this point since this study had been commissioned pre the CDF legacy and it therefore appeared to him that it was seen as relevant to Big Local. • Trustees also felt that it would be helpful if the agenda for the legacy project was kept separate at future meetings. <p>There were no further questions or comments and the report was noted by the board.</p>	<p>Ben/Nicola to check the contract and payment for the BritainThinks research and speak to Debbie for clarification</p>
<p>8. Finance and audit – Big Local Trust</p> <p>Jonathan and Nicola introduced the key issues in the report.</p> <p>Nicola noted that total expenditure had been higher than anticipated, however this was due to higher than expected grant funding and constructive obligations; other costs are currently within this year’s budget.</p> <p>She also informed the board that the audit clearance meeting will take place in November. The annual audited accounts and the audit findings report will be considered by the finance and audit committee before being reported back to the board in December.</p> <p>The following questions and comments were then raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding Big Local area funding obligations, Rachel confirmed that funding agreements were now being awarded for two, three and sometimes five years. This has contributed to the substantial increase in constructive obligations during 2016-17. • Whilst the main audit visit had been completed, and the process had gone broadly as expected, Nicola confirmed that it had been a more time-consuming process than in other years, as a result of the IT issues Local Trust had experienced. It was too early in the audit process to tell what the audit findings report might include, however there do not appear to be any issues of significant concern. • Identified underspends were raised as an issue of possible concern; Nicola 	

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<p>confirmed that some of the apparent underspends were due to late invoicing. There is an identified underspend on systems development, and this budget will be reallocated to cover additional costs identified during the year, as outlined in the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees noted progress made in mitigating the ransomware attack; Nicola confirmed this but reminded trustees there was still quite some work to do. <p>There were no further questions and the following recommendations were taken. The board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accepted the finance manager's report for the period ending 31 July 2016, including the revised monthly budget for 2016-17 agreed to delegate responsibility for agreeing changes within the existing 2016-17 budget as outlined in paragraph 35 of the report to Ben Hughes. 	
<p>9. Investment – Big Local Trust</p> <p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the investment sub-committee meeting on 19 September 2016 were received by the board.</p> <p>Investment update</p> <p>Penny informed the board that sub-committee co-optee Chris Wigley was keen to stay involved, despite not having been able to attend recent meetings due to work commitments. Chris will therefore hopefully participate remotely in future when he cannot attend. In the circumstances the investment sub-committee therefore wished to recommend the recruitment of a third co-optee after the appointment of the investment management consultant.</p> <p>Penny confirmed that we were hopeful of appointing a consultant shortly to advise on future investment management arrangements which would mean bringing their report and recommendations to the March 2017 board meeting.</p> <p>There were no questions and comments and the recommendations were taken</p> <p>The board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agreed the recruitment of a third co-optee to the investment sub-committee report including the proxy voting report for the quarter ended 31 March 2016 accepted the investment report for the quarter ended 30 June 2016 accepted the CCLA accounts for the year ending 31 March 2016 agreed the stewardship code statement in principle and gave delegated authority to Nicola to approve the final text agreed the revised terms of reference of the investment sub-committee. 	
<p>10. Communications – Big Local Trust</p> <p>The board received the update on communications. The following comment was made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding use of the video, Jessica confirmed that there will be two versions, a four-minute online one, which will be used to explain what Big Local is, and 30-second cut for social media, with a general introduction to Local Trust and what we do. 	

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<p>There were no further questions or comments raised and the board noted the report.</p>	
<p>11. Chief executive report – Big Local Trust</p> <p>Ben H introduced the report and highlighted that he had been involved in helping to scope a new £7m fund under development by Big Lottery, DCMS and DCLG, to strengthen place-based social action. He felt it offers Local Trust an opportunity and was something that should be explored. The timescale seems very tight, with the tender process being launched well before Christmas. If we did proceed, we would need additional capacity.</p> <p>The following questions and comments were then raised on the subject:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The general view was that this did seem to fit with Local Trust’s mission, and that it was an opportunity worth exploring further. • Prior to any final decision, detailed consideration would need to be given to what would be funded, how and by who. • Kevin suggested Ben H come back to the board with a more detailed proposal that answers the above points and that will enable the Board to make a decision. • It was also agreed that Ben H and Matt Leach discuss this together, and consider implications around flexibility of Big Local capacity. • Regarding the strategy and awayday, Ben proposed that Ben Cairns undertake the facilitation. Trustees agreed to this. <p>The Board reviewed the targets Ben H had proposed, to guide his work with Local Trust. These were agreed.</p> <p>There were no further questions or comments and the report was therefore noted by the board</p>	
<p>12. Any other business</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>Full board meetings 2-5pm</p> <p>8 December 2016 (including AGM)</p> <p>Finance and audit sub-committee 2-5pm</p> <p>18 November 2016</p> <p>Investment sub-committee</p> <p>11 November 2016, 2.30pm to 4.30pm</p>	