Our approach to monitoring Big Local

Nothing like Big Local has ever existed before. It is a radically different programme that sets out to support residents to lead lasting change in their neighborhoods, by creating a genuine transfer of power and responsibility to local people.

Local Trust aims to deliver high quality, efficient, low bureaucracy, responsive programme management and grant funding to our areas[1]. Our approach is designed to ensure residents time and energy is spent on the things that make a lasting difference to people and communities. The programme structure is designed to maintain this core ethos, while ensuring appropriate systems and checks are in place to account for funding.

This document outlines the monitoring and reporting structure that underpins the Big Local programme.

Structure and responsibilities

For Big Local to be delivered in an area, there must be a **resident partnership** in place that meets the criteria set out in our guidance. The resident partnership must identify a **Locally Trusted Organisation** (LTO) to work with. An LTO is a formally constituted organisation chosen by the partnership to administer and account for the distribution of funding, making sure the funding is used for the charitable purpose it was awarded for.

When an LTO is identified, Local Trust will undertake a series due diligence checks to ensure they are an appropriate organisation to take on the role. All LTOs are required to accept and sign up to our grant **terms and conditions of grant**.

Resident partnerships identify priorities and activities to be delivered, capturing this in a **Big Local plan**. This plan, and associated budget, forms the basis for delivery of Big Local and is assessed and approved by expert assessors and Local Trust staff. Partnerships and LTOs are asked to report periodically on progress and spend against their plan.

Each Big Local area works with a **Big Local Representative** (Rep). The rep acts as a representative of Local Trust in areas, providing support and constructive challenge to partnerships and LTOs around programme delivery, including following relevant guidance. Reps provide regular reports to Local Trust on progress in the delivery of Big Local, including identifying any risks and issues.

Further detailed information on the role of Partnerships, LTOs and Reps is available on our **website**.

Reporting

There are multiple touch points that enable Local Trust of effectively monitor the progress of Big Local in areas.

[1] Local Trust Strategic Plan 2018 – 21, p7

Plan

The **Big Local plan** describes how an area will work towards becoming an even better place to live. It captures and builds on a community's vision, priorities and actions. It describes how a partnership will use a range of resources in the best possible way. Plans are submitted to Local Trust and assessed to ensure they meet the programme criteria.

Once approved a **funding agreement** is put in place. This is a document that sets out the terms on which we fund an organisation with Big Local money, on the partnerships behalf. We send funding agreements to the Locally Trusted Organisation(s) and partnerships (for reference).

A funding agreement includes the offer letter, the terms and conditions of funding and a payment schedule.

Review

Throughout the lifetime of an individual plan Big Local partnerships are required to undertake a **plan review** and submit this to Local Trust. The plan review must cover some key questions on: The plan itself; progress against it; the Big Local outcomes; next steps.

Shortly after submitting a review, partnerships will receive some feedback from Local Trust. This feedback is on the review process and makes suggestions on methods and evidence that could inform future reviews. We are unable to approve new plans until a review has been completed.

Spend reporting

LTOs are responsible for the financial administration of and accounting for Big Local funding in an area.

They are required to keep separate and accurate financial records of how Big Local funding is spent, including receipts, invoices, accounts and any other relevant documentation, for a period of seven years after the money is spent.

They are also responsible for reporting to the Big Local partnership on expenditure, in addition to reporting to Local Trust in accordance with the terms and conditions.

Local Trust requires six-monthly spend reports to be submitted. We do not ask for details receipts and invoices to be provided as this is the role of the LTO. We may ask for further information to be provided at our discretion.

Further information on **managing funding** is available on our website.

Rep reports

Big Local reps are required to submit quarterly reports on activity in areas they support.

Other monitoring activities

Local Trust takes a proactive, informed and proportionate approach to monitoring and managing risk. We do this in a number of ways:

- Through actively engaging with areas via visits and events;
- By undertaking regular reviews of LTO financial accounts and other information including assessments and rep reports to build a picture of risk;
- By undertaking finance review visits to ensure that the financial administration of Big Local is being carried out effectively and in line with our terms of grant

Further detail on reporting and monitoring of Big Local is available in the **programme guidance** section of our website.