

# Invitation to tender: Design and test a health-check/diagnostic tool for Big Local areas

## Introduction and context

[Big Local](#) was launched in 2011 and has been providing residents in 150 areas across England the exciting opportunity to draw on £1.1m of funding to create a positive lasting change in their communities. Residents living in Big Local areas have the decision-making power to use the funding to work on and address the priorities that are important to their community, making their areas even better places to live. At the core of each Big Local area is the partnership, which is made up of local residents who make decisions about how to spend the funding in order to create lasting change in their communities. Local Trust administers the Big Local programme and provides a range of support to partnerships alongside the funding we provide.

Big Local partnerships have achieved a great deal so far, as they have moved from setting up and establishing themselves in the early days of the programme, to a period of 'peak delivery' which we anticipate continuing, with all funding to be spent by March 2026.

Through research and feedback we have learned that:

- Some areas have faced challenges in delivering their plans, achieving their goals or being able to spend.
- The pandemic has affected Big Local areas in different ways, and areas may benefit from support to take stock, re-energise and refocus action beyond emergency response.
- Areas could benefit from an independent and bespoke facilitated process that enables them to reflect, review and identify their needs, and to take action to deliver their plans, and spend their remaining funding.

During the course of 2020 – 21 Local Trust is reviewing existing support we provide and area needs. We will be using this learning to improve the way we help areas achieve their plans and ambitions.

We recognise that some areas have faced significant challenges in delivering their plans and being able to spend. We have undertaken research that has identified underlying issues and challenges for some areas in spending their funding, drawing on experiences of residents that are involved in delivering Big Local, and of those that provide support to them. Our research indicates that areas could benefit from an independent and bespoke facilitated process that enables them to reflect, review and identify their needs, and to take action to deliver their plans, and spend their remaining funding to meet the needs of the wider community.

We are seeking to commission an organisation or consortium to design and test a 'health-check / diagnostic' to be carried out with areas as a facilitated process. It

should be designed to be useful for all areas and especially helpful for areas who may be struggling to plan and spend effectively.

## Principles of support

These are principles we ask all Big Local support providers to follow:

### **Partners will recognise that residents are in the lead**

Opportunities offered are relevant to Big Local and their plans, and at a pace that works for them.

### **Offers will be tangible and targeted**

Support partners will be able to explain what they can offer in clear language, using real world examples. Support will be flexible enough to respond to the local context.

### **Partners will build trust and be patient**

Partners recognise the importance of investing time in relationships and understand the progress and pace will not always be consistent.

### **Partners will support across the Big Local spectrum**

Our partners respect people's starting place and the value of small local wins.

### **Partners will help build capacity locally**

Partners will be supportive, looking to grow the confidence and capacity of Big Local partnerships in the long-term, while providing expert guidance and support to remove blockers in the short term.

### **Partners will consider legacy from the start**

Before starting work with a Big Local partnership, partners should consider the legacy it will leave beyond the intervention and where relevant support Big Local areas to consider this too. This can be as simple as forging connections for future support.

## The brief

The aim of this piece of work is to design and test a facilitated process for identifying the relative strengths, weaknesses and support needs of a Big Local Area to enable local residents to deliver their Big Local plans and spend their remaining funding by 2026.

### **Elements of the process**

We envision that the process would be designed as a multi-phased approach, with flexibility to adapt to area needs. The process will need to encompass the broad context of the partnership i.e. external partners and relationships, and triangulate across perspectives to provide holistic understanding of strengths, issues and opportunities. Whilst we don't expect that it will be a strictly linear process, we expect these core elements to feature:

1. **Information provided to areas on their Big Local journey to date.** This is a data-led piece of work, which will draw on the information held by Local Trust including spend information. The initial info to be sent out is intended to help areas understand and discuss their Big Local journey so far in order to inform the next steps of the journey. More in depth information will be provided to facilitators to feed into the process and to help tailor sessions according to context, situation and need.

2. **A session or series of sessions with a skilled facilitator to unpack and identify strengths, weakness, issues and opportunities in delivering Big Local, and to identify support needs and agree actions.** The number, focus and timescale of the sessions would be tailored to each area. It could, dependant on the area, be expanded to include wider stakeholders beyond the partnership members.
3. **A summary for areas and for Local Trust** of the identified strengths, challenges, underlying issues, support needs and agreed actions. This could in some cases take the form of a support plan.
4. **Actions** – to be taken by areas to progress delivery of Big Local, for example through taking up support offers.

### Pilot

This brief includes a short period of piloting to test out the initial sessions with four areas, to refine and inform the design. Please note, we would expect support for areas to continue beyond the testing phase, with follow up sessions as needed. The budget has been calculated to include half a day support for four areas for six months after the testing period.

## Approach to the brief

We would expect the design of the process to include consultation with Big Local reps and a Local Trust working group. [Big Local reps](#) support areas, providing information, advice, guidance and constructive challenge and they can provide valuable perspective and insight. This piece of work will need to complement the work they do in supporting areas.

The brief includes a period of piloting the process with four areas to test and feedback in order to refine for wider roll out. These areas will be identified in consultation with reps and Local Trust.

### Existing information

We will provide the supplier with:

- Background information and research that has contributed to this work to date.
- Area progress information
- Details of support available from Local Trust and local suppliers, which the partner can sign-post Big Local areas to access.
- Findings from a recent review of the support offers Local Trust provides to areas

## Outputs

We would expect the outputs of this piece of work to be:

- A detailed design for the process structure and content of each of the phases
- An explanation of how the process will be tailored to suit area needs to ensure bespoke support
- A description for the facilitator/s role
- An overview of how initial sessions could be delivered to provide a health check with areas
- An overview of how follow up sessions could be delivered
- A format for a summary for areas and Local Trust, following the initial session/s and at regular points after follow up sessions
- A pilot to test the format of the initial sessions with four areas, at different stages of their Big Local journey. This should also include evaluation to provide with evidence of how well the pilot went

- An implementation plan for delivering the process and how to scale it up

## Criteria

A successful applicant would need:

1. A good understanding of the Big Local programme
2. Experience and expertise of reflective practice and engaging others in reflection
3. Experience of designing, testing/piloting, evaluating and scaling up a project
4. The ability to provide a neutral and objective perspective
5. Good research and analytical skills with the ability to identify and unpack root causes, barriers, enablers and to present viable options
6. Core skills in project and process design
7. The ability to build positive relationships
8. The ability to engage a broad range of people
9. Experience of facilitating conversations using supportive, relational and open approaches
10. Strong verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to discuss and present recommendations in a concise and professional manner
11. Experience in co-creating support plans, based on evidence from needs assessment/s
12. Demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion

## Timeframe and budget

We will look to begin this work in August 2021. We expect the initial design to take approximately six weeks, including consultation with reps, with the outcome being a process for which the initial sessions could be tested through a pilot in Autumn 2021. The total length of this piece of work will be at least four months, from August to December, to include the design and pilot. Follow up support for the four areas involved in the pilot would continue for up to six months beyond the design and testing timeframe, to suit the needs of the areas.

This work is being led by Seema Patel, Senior Programme Coordinator and Chris Falconer, Head of Programme Delivery. If you would like to have a conversation about this piece of work, please email [seema.patel@localtrust.org.uk](mailto:seema.patel@localtrust.org.uk) to arrange.

**Total budget: £12,000 (exclusive of VAT).**

## Commissioning process

Please submit your proposal, a maximum of 10 pages, detailing the following:

1. An overview of your organisation or consortium
2. The approach and methods you would employ to carry out the work, including:
  - how you will involve the Big Local reps and work with the Local Trust working group in the design phase
  - potential methods you will consider including in the facilitation process
  - your plans to evaluate the pilot phase
3. An outline timeline/project plan of how you will deliver the work and budget breakdown

4. Details of the staffing you propose for the work. A description of the team's skills and experience, which outlines how you meet the requirements set out above, including CVs (as appendices)

to [seema.patel@localtrust.org.uk](mailto:seema.patel@localtrust.org.uk) by **12pm Friday 20 August 2021**.

## Process for selection

Following receipt of submissions, we will shortlist potential suppliers and either award the contract based on these submissions or invite a small number for interview, to be held via Zoom.

- Deadline for submissions: Friday 20 August 2021
- Interviews (online): Thursday 26 August 2021
- Contract commences: W/b 30 August 2021

## Diversity & Inclusion

Local Trust takes diversity and inclusion seriously, and we want to partner with suppliers who share our commitment. We will ask you related questions as part of our invitation to tender processes.

## Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring that our invitations to tender exercises are accessible to everyone. If you have a disability or a chronic health condition, we can offer adjustments to the response format e.g. submitting your response in an alternate format. For support during the invitation to tender exercise, contact Seema Patel.

If, within the proposed outputs of this invitation to tender exercise, specific adjustments are required by you or your team which incur additional cost then outline them clearly within your response. We are committed to evaluating all proposals fairly and will ensure any proposed adjustment costs sit outside the commercial evaluation.