

LOCAL TRUST CLOSURE STRATEGY

The Big Local programme will end in March 2026. Local Trust plans to close completely by 13 February 2027.

Achieving a successful closure is critically important to Local Trust – it is one of three key organisational priorities, alongside supporting Big Local areas to achieve their ambitions, and securing a sustainable legacy for both Local Trust and Big Local areas.

This strategy sets out our approach to closure, including the principles and values that will underpin that work.

Principles and values

In closing Local Trust, we will be guided by the following eight core principles:

- **Well planned and managed** – we will create robust and comprehensive plans with clear milestones and deadlines; and commit the resources needed – of people, funds and time – to ensure their delivery.
- **Transparent and clearly communicated** – we will set out and share our plans openly with those affected by them, including staff, delivery partners and Big Local areas. We will look to share our plans in particular with other spend out endowments (such as the Building Communities Trust, Power to Change, Centre for Aging Better, Spirit of 2012), to allow them to benefit from our thinking and learning, and us from theirs.
- **Fair, equitable and inclusive** – our organisation has benefited from an incredibly able and committed staff team; as we close, we will seek to treat them fairly, include them in our decision-making, and support them to plan with confidence for their own futures beyond Local Trust.
- **Delivering on our promises to others** – we will ensure that in closing we are mindful of our obligations and commitments to others, particularly Big Local areas, and avoid doing anything that undermines our support for their work including closing out.
- **Responsive, pragmatic and reflective** – we recognise that a successful outcome is more important than hitting arbitrary targets or deadlines, and that we will need to keep our plans under ongoing review throughout the closure process to ensure alignment with the principles and values underpinning this strategy. We also recognise the complexity of the task, and the need to be agile and reflective while pressing ahead.

- **Aligned with our other strategies and plans** – our work on closure will inevitably interact, affect and be affected by our other plans and activities. We will work to ensure that our plans for closure remain aligned with and support our other strategies and plans, and in particular the Legacy Strategy which defines our ambitions for the long term impact of Local Trust and Big Local.
- **Focused on the future** – we understand in particular that our approach to closure will have a significant impact on our long term legacy – both in terms of our formal plans and softer perceptions of our retrospective reputation – and we will seek to ensure that all of our decisions reflect that awareness.
- **Recognising that closure is not simply an administrative task** – many of the decisions that we make and the way we implement them will have emotional impact, whether on individuals or collectively on staff, trustees, partners or Big Local areas. We acknowledge and will respond to this with the same seriousness we engage with financial and organisational challenges.

Key areas of work

To deliver effectively, our planning for closure will focus in particular on the following key areas of activity

- Governance
- Financial management
- Programme delivery
- Staffing
- Communications

Governance

Local Trust Trustees, Executive and the Protector will play critically important roles in ensuring Local Trust's closure is subject to the highest quality governance and oversight. The project is a collective enterprise and will become even more so as time passes and the balance between exec and board evolves, in terms of numbers, workload and responsibilities.

There will be a particular need to ensure that the closure project is appropriately resourced within the executive team, and that trustees are well equipped and supported in providing strategic direction and oversight, and regular scrutiny of the plans.

- A detailed Closure Plan will be drawn up by Autumn 2023, setting out actions, targets, risks and dependencies that underpin a successful closure.
- The Chief Operating Officer will have overarching responsibility for closure, including preparing the plan, reporting to the CEO and to Trustees.
- A Governance Review will take place early in 2023-24 to ensure that governance structures provide appropriate trustee engagement with and oversight of the Closure Plan and

monitoring of its implementation, including clear timelines identifying where trustee engagement and involvement will be of critical importance.

- Periodic assessment will be carried out of trustee skills and expertise relevant to closure and related issues, to identify if and where new trustees experience would be of benefit to assist with overseeing the closure process.
- The Protector will be consulted on all key closure decisions, consistent with their responsibilities as set out in the Big Local Trust Deed to ensure the integrity of the administration of the Charity and the propriety of its procedures.

Financial Management

As we approach the end of the programme, effective financial planning, monitoring and management will become ever more important, to ensure that we meet our spend-out goals.

- We will ensure that trustees and staff are supported by the best possible financial information as we plan for and approach closure, tracking both financial commitments and cash spent.
- In developing our staffing plans (see below) we will prioritise in particular retention of a critical mass of experienced staff in our finance and programme teams to ensure that effective financial management and controls is not put at risk as the organisation prepares to close down.
- We recognise that changing external economic circumstances have made it harder to plan our finances with absolute certainty and made it more difficult to assess exactly how much money we have at any time to commit to future plans. Notwithstanding that, we will aim to make the earliest possible decisions about how best to utilise any remaining uncommitted funds, taking into account in particular our legacy ambitions and obligations to prioritise delivery of Big Local.
- To the extent that it is possible, we will seek to identify and resolve issues around the mechanics of closure and any necessary residuary issues as early as possible to enable us to plan with confidence and certainty as we approach closure.

Programme delivery

Local Trust was established to deliver the Big Local programme; the programme sits at the heart of everything we do. Supporting residents to successfully deliver Big Local in their neighbourhoods helps ensure the programme's long term legacy at local level, whilst providing the evidence, insight and credibility that underpins the policy and approaches we promote more widely as part of Local Trust's national legacy.

- Right through to the end of the programme, we will continue to commit whatever resources are needed towards effectively delivering the Big Local programme at a local level; supporting Big Local areas to fully spend out their Big Local funds by March 2026 at the

latest; and formally closing all grant agreements by December 2026.

- To that end, we will continue to refine and improve our information systems (both hard and soft) and management tools to identify where and how Big Local areas would benefit from support, advice and assistance, and ensuring that it is provided in ways which provide the maximum benefit to areas and the programme as a whole.
- Where areas appear at risk of not spending out, we will take timely action as necessary to address this. We will set out our approaches in such circumstances clearly and transparently. Where we make such interventions, mindful of the reputational risk of being seen to take away money that is seen to have been promised to Big Local areas in 2012, we will seek to ensure that, wherever possible, those areas do not miss out on the £1m initially allocated to them.
- We will seek to learn from and continuously improve and develop our approaches to supporting Big Local areas, both in terms of spend and legacy through to the end of the programme.

Staffing

We recognise that our staff are an incredibly valuable resource, that is critical to delivery of our ambitions over the remainder of Local Trust's lifespan. Consistent with the values set out at the front of this strategy, we will seek to treat them fairly, include them in our decision-making, and support them to plan with confidence for their own futures beyond Local Trust:

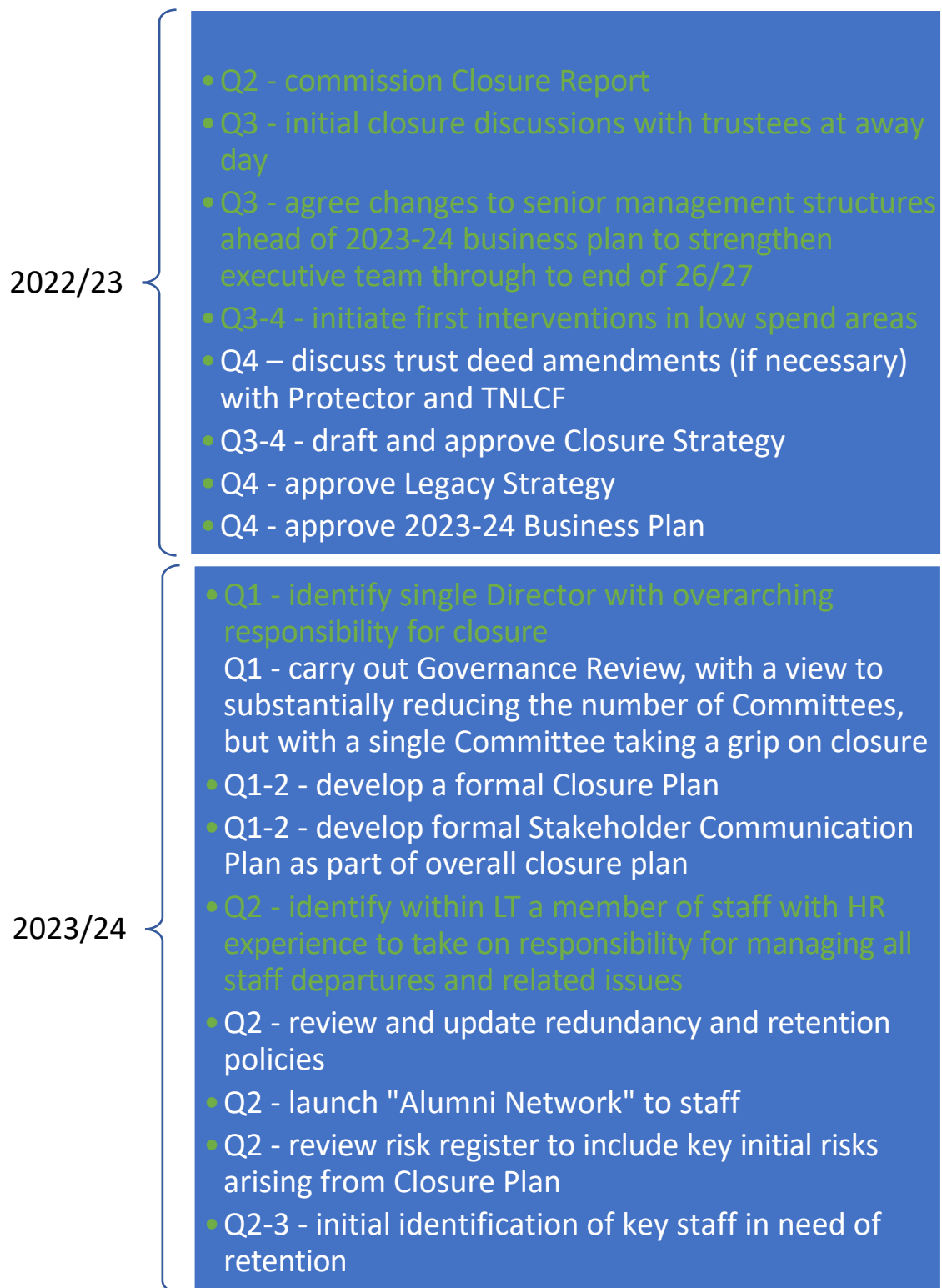
- We will ensure we have a member of staff with HR experience to provide support as we make changes to staffing structures and manage departures as Local Trust starts to decrease in size from 2023-24 onwards.
- Over the first half of 2023-24 we will review our approach to retention and redundancy and develop new policies to inform how we manage this within Local Trust.
- We will on the same timescale identify mission critical staff and organisational capabilities, and develop retention plans to ensure that we are capable of operating effectively across our business through to the end of the programme. A particular priority will be given to ensuring that we do not lose critical mass or capability in key areas of our business where this is needed to ensure effective management and successful delivery of the Big Local programme.
- Where individuals are leaving us, we will invest in supporting them to plan for the future, including provision of career coaching and advice to help them plan for the future. We will consult staff on the development of these plans, to ensure wherever possible they reflect their needs and aspirations.
- In support of that, we will create an "Alumni Network" as a key part of our legacy, seeking to maintain a network of former staff interested in continuing to develop and promote the knowledge, values, skills and networks they have gained at Local Trust in their future careers.

Communications

Our Closure Plan will include a proactive programme of communication to keep stakeholders at all levels informed about Local Trust's closure decisions and their implementation.

- We will publish this Strategy and associated timeline on our website, and share it with key stakeholders and partners.
- We will initially publish biannual updates on our plans, which will increase in frequency as closure approaches.
- We will prepare a separate communications plan focusing on messaging to our staff team, to give them the maximum possible certainty as to our plans for the future.
- We will look at ways of ensuring staff are consulted and kept aware of plans to ensure their voice is heard throughout the closure process.

KEY EVENT TIMELINE



2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1- implement new Committee structure • Q1 - Roll-out of full reporting/monitoring structure for delivery of Closure Plan to be included in quarterly management accounts bundle • Q1 - first significant scale redundancies arising from scaling down of LT activity
2025/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 - identify within LT or recruit a new member of staff to support Director in project managing final stages of closure • Q2-3 - Develop initial plans for detailed mechanics of closure and tackling of residuary issues • Q4 - target date for all areas to achieve spend out
2026/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 final agreement on home for residuary staff issues and accounts/records • from Q3 follow detailed sequence of events for closing the legal entities • 13 February 2027 Big Local Trust to close
2027/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q2 - approve final accounts and complete formal processes for Local Trust to close as a company and then a charity