

Local Trust Board

Meeting minutes, decisions and actions

Local Trust, Canopi, Unit A, Arc House, 82 Tanner Street, London, SE1 3GN (hybrid meeting)

10:00-13.30 Thursday 28 November 2024

*Meeting followed by lunch to welcome trustees to the new Local Trust office 13:30 - 14:00
 This meeting included a recess for the AGM of Local Trust from 11.00-11.15am*

Discussion and decision	Actions
<p>Present</p> <p>Trustees David Warner (chair), Stephen Aldridge, Matt Bell, Chris Catterall, Kate Hainsworth (10-11am only), Sahil Khan, Patrick Melia (10am-12.45pm only), Nicola Pollock, Rich Wilson.</p> <p>Non-Trustees Rosie Chapman (protector), Matt Leach, Rachel Rowney, Jon Fox, Alexandra Askew, Alex Boys (item 7), Madeleine Jennings (item 7), Andrew O'Brien (item 7), Verity Soons (minutes)</p> <p>Apologies Jessica Studdert, Caroline Macfarland</p>	
1.	<p>Welcome, intros and apologies for absence</p> <p>The board welcomed all attendees and noted that Kate Hainsworth would be in attendance for the first hour only and Patrick Melia would leave at 12.45pm.</p> <p>Congratulations were offered to Jessica Studdert on her permanent appointment to role of CEO at New Local and to Chris Catterall for Capacity's appointment as partner to lead 3NI. Trustees also congratulated Caroline Macfarland on the birth of her new baby.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged that this would be Sahil Khan's last Board meeting.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>The chair presented the declarations of interest. The board noted that they only need to declare interests that directly conflicted with Local Trust.</p>

Discussion and decision	Actions
<p>It was noted that following due process, Capacity had been appointed as partner to lead 3NI. Chris Catterall is the CEO of Capacity, and the register would be updated to reflect this.</p> <p>New Local has been approached to deliver some ongoing support to 3Ni and the register would be updated to reflect this.</p>	
<p>3. Trustee closed session</p> <p>The trustees held a closed meeting. There were no Local Trust executive or operational staff present at this part of the meeting.</p> <p>Survey results</p> <p>Following the summary analysis, the board agreed the following key priorities for the chair (and board):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building the board team so it is more than the sum of its parts, and has a shared, laser focus on the coming two years of Local Trust (and see section 3 on legacy) 2. Proactive trustee stewardship, including the value of 1:1 contact, increased communication between meetings, and raising issues of concern as they arise 3. Working with the new CEO and her transition, to strengthen and clarify relationships and mutual expectations between the executive and board, in tandem with building the board team. 4. Give greater direction through sharing own views, firmer facilitation to surface diversity of opinions and ensure these are debated and clear decisions reached. 5. In creating space for different views, all trustees should be prepared to challenge one another, leading to robust debate and improved decisions. 6. Ensure the board operates as agreed in line with the Ways of Working approved at the away day in September 2025. <p>Local Trust for the next 18 months</p> <p>Taking the feedback into the account the following next steps were agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chair to discuss with individual trustees how they can contribute as part of forthcoming appraisals, ahead of the January 2025 away day. 2. Clarification of executive thinking and plans for legacy work, including what 'Carrying the Flame' will mean. 3. Implement a process for identifying priorities for the final phase and mapping executive resources, trustees' expertise and other leverage against this. 4. Consider incorporating additional support to coordinate the involvement of trustees and others into the executive plans. 5. The above to be revisited and a strategy finalised at the January 2025 away day, to be incorporated in the Business Plan. 	
<p>4. Minutes and matters arising</p>	

Discussion and decision	Actions
<p>4.1. Approve minutes of board on 17 July 2024 Minutes from 17 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.2. Matters arising/action points not covered by the agenda The board noted that all actions were complete or covered by the agenda.</p>	
<p>5. Annual report and accounts</p> <p>5.1 Audit report and accounts – covering note</p> <p>Rachel introduced the item and noted that the audit was clean with nothing of concern raised or anything additional to note. The team were content that audit process was a useful and rigorous process of testing and recommended that the board reappoint Moore Kingston Smith as auditors for 2024-25.</p> <p>As Chair of finance and audit committee, Chris Catterall noted that there had been a new member on the Moore Kingston Smith team managing the audit and commended the Local Trust team for their work on the audit.</p> <p>The Board noted the recommendation and accepted the report with no further comments.</p> <p>5.2 To note the audit management report for Local Trust for 2023-24 The Board noted the post-audit management report for Local Trust for 2023-24.</p> <p>5.3 To consider and approve the audited accounts for Local Trust for 2023-24 The Board approved the annual report and accounts for Local Trust for 2023-24.</p> <p>5.4 To consider and approve the audited accounts for Big Local Trust for 2023-24 The Board approved the annual report and accounts for Big Local Trust for 2023-24.</p> <p>5.5 To agree to sign the letters of representation for Local Trust and Big Local Trust The Board agreed to sign the letters of representation for Local Trust and Big Local Trust.</p>	
<p>Recess for AGM</p>	

Discussion and decision	Actions
<p>6 Long term forward financial planning</p> <p>Rachel Rowney introduced the item which provided an update on long term financial planning to 2027 and had been presented to the finance and audit committee in November. The paper sought to capture decisions from July and September meetings about the neighbourhood's commission, 3NI and work with VCOSs and reflect them in the long-term budget to 2027.</p> <p>Rachel highlighted an incorrect figure in appendix A and that the correct version would be recirculated.</p> <p>In discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was currently £250k allocated in the Local Trust budget and £169k in the Big Local Trust budget for contingent liabilities relating to closure – it was not expected that this would all be needed. There is a meeting being scheduled for the new year with Chris Catterall and Rosie Chapman to discuss further following advice received from Withers and Moore Kingston Smith. <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	<p>Long term financial planning paper to be re-circulated post board.</p>
<p>7 Update presentations</p> <p><i>Alex Boys, Madeleine Jennings and Andrew O'Brien joined the meeting</i></p> <p><i>Legacy updates were taken first to allow trustees departing early to receive the update and feed into conversations.</i></p> <p>7.4 Legacy projects updates</p> <p>a Local Trust/NHS Confederation collaboration</p> <p>Margaret presented an update on the Local Trust and NHS confederation partnership noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that research had been launched in October 2024 at a Westminster event and publications shared on the NHS confederation website were being received well. • Advocacy work included influencing work on the NHS 10 year plan, a plan for which would be developed at a two-day residential policy sprint to identify recommendations. • Action research would be launched in March, initially with five Big Local areas, to develop their relationship with the NHS locally. Scoping work to identify the five areas was currently taking place and would be looking for expressions of interest from areas who had already demonstrated commitment and work to develop their healthcare work and local NHS relationships. <p>In discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst there were initial conversations with NLCF and contributions made to their work on health and wellbeing, there were no further links with them that at this time. There was an internal meeting to discuss relationships with NLCF moving forward and who to engage with on our work and outputs would be taken forward. • It was noted that the NHS have struggled to make the shift to neighbourhood working and working with communities in a meaningful 	

Discussion and decision	Actions
<p>way. It was noted that by working with the NHS Confed the focus has been on working with the willing and where there is existing energy.</p>	
<p>b</p> <p>Local Government Neighbourhoods Network (3NI)</p> <p>Margaret presented an update on the Local Government Neighbourhoods Network (3NI), confirming the appointment of Capacity as the new host following a rigorous two stage process. The funding agreement is being finalised and it is expected that Dan Crowe, who had led the work at Local Trust, would TUPE across to Capacity in the new year.</p> <p>Conversations were ongoing with New Local regarding delivery of the network support element of the brief.</p> <p>It was noted 3NI would retain its branding and become a direct subsidiary of Capacity and that it was not the first time that Capacity had incubated and managed a project in this manner so their learning could be applied.</p> <p>In discussion the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees noted that current funding would take the work to February 2027 and Capacity had a compelling roadmap for how to take the work beyond the life of Local Trust. • 100 local government officers from 67 local authorities were signed up to the network. 	
<p>c</p> <p>Housing/New Communities</p> <p>Madeleine Jennings presented slides which gave an update on Local Trust's two track housing policy project. Trustees noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the two tracks set out were separate and it is not the intention that these would feed off each other. • New developments would outlive the current government, therefore, influencing the social infrastructure and how it was sustainable into the future was imperative. • The New Towns Unit are in the early stages of scoping and had approached us for evidence for their workstreams. <p>In discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees felt it would be useful to cultivate a broader mix of influencers and stakeholders, noting how notoriously challenging the housing sector could be. Whilst some noted held sway in government, they were not necessarily as successful in the private housing sector. • There had been excellent engagement at the St George's House roundtable, and it was positive to see some private developers engaging. • Information on how this fits into the business plan would be shared at the January away day. 	
<p>d</p> <p>Neighbourhoods Commission (ICON)</p> <p>Andrew O'Brien presented slides which gave an update on the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON). He noted that Baroness Hilary Armstrong, Chair of the Commission, was heavily involved and capitalising on the momentum being built with positive engagement across government. Key work to date had focussed on appointment of commissioners, objective setting</p>	<p>Andrew O'Brien to circulate full list of advisory group members to trustees.</p>

Discussion and decision	Actions
<p>meetings with all advisory groups and the first commission meeting, workplan development and finalisation of the team.</p> <p>In discussion the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current funding is £1.07m, fully funded by Local Trust. • Trustees discussed diversity of the commissioners, asking that a broader range, including representation of young people and the international perspective be considered. • Trustees noted that Matt held his role as commissioner independent to his role as CEO Local Trust and that Stephen Aldridge held the role of observer. • Governance arrangements, relationship to the Local Trust board and accountability were discussed and trustees asked that this be considered further. The governance team at Local Trust offered to support as needed. • Welcomed the three clear phases for the work but asked for clarity around leveraging points and information dissemination through the journey being linked to spending review opportunities as it looked to result in a single final report as currently presented. • Trustees asked that the website be updated with the commissioners and the advisory group membership. • Stephen Aldridge offered support for events relating to the Commission. 	<p>Add ICON budget (as part of business plan) and an update on governance arrangements to January away day agenda.</p> <p>David Warner to discuss ICON governance with trustees in 1-2-1 discussions.</p> <p>David Warner and Alex Askew to meet to discuss governance ahead of January away day.</p>
<p>7.1 Closure plan update</p> <p>Rachel Rowney introduced the paper which provided an update on the steps required (particularly in relation to closure). Rachel noted that there had not been considerable changes to staffing profile and that the next redundancies, post 2024, would take place in approximately 12 months. Recruitment approaches were being considered as challenges were starting to materialise including enhancements to offers, secondments and staff redeployment.</p> <p>In discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good results were received on the staff survey and noted that results showed people were less anxious and now sadder about closure. People, culture and governance committee would receive a more in depth report on the staff survey results. • Noted the amount of senior leadership time it took to exit people from the organisation positively and trustees suggested that capacity be considered in the budget if needed. • Trustees noted feedback implying that staff are happier being directed through the process by people they know and hold a relationship with. • Trustees noted that part of team reviews now included colleagues receiving an estimated quarter for when it was anticipated their role would end and to be provided updates on this. 	
<p>7.2 Follow up from September away day <i>12.45 Patrick left the meeting</i></p>	

Discussion and decision	Actions
<p>Jon Fox presented an update on the decisions made at the September away day, noting a strong focus on co-production of the approach and currently brokering relationships to identify partners for coproduction and codesign. Current Local Trust investment is £750k, a more detailed budget would be shared at the away day in January alongside developments of how local legacy fits into national plans.</p> <p>In discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleased to see the work was rooted in local with a national aspiration, amplifying the overall message. • Some trustees noted that engagement with the VCSE sector could be challenging and labour intensive, finding it hard to recognise the natural partners for this work. • It was noted that there was already interest in some geographical areas with engagement being positive to date and an appetite for thinking about this that we could influence and support. 	
<p>7.3 Programme Delivery Update</p> <p>Jon Fox presented slides which gave an update on programme delivery, drawing the following to the attention of the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were now just 23 areas holding more than £200k, exceeding the business plan target to reach 30 areas at this point. The team remained focused on supporting these areas to spend out. • The high-risk threshold had been revised down to over £150k in October. Thresholds would continue to remain under review. • Area risk categories had been simplified to high, medium and low and now also took into about other risk factors than spend that might derail progress. • All Big Local areas would receive a visit through to January – these were attending by funding leads, area coordinators and managers as needed, as well as LTOs, workers etc in the area to identify plans and next steps. • Alternative approaches agreed in September 2024 for Hill Top and Caldwell bringing the total number to seven Big Local areas. <p>The board noted the update and congratulated the team on their work.</p>	
<p>8 Items to note and receive</p>	
<p>8.1 Performance, risk and finance and investment reports</p> <p>Trustees noted the cover paper.</p>	
<p>a 2024-25 Business Plan Performance Report October 2024</p> <p>Rachel Rowney introduced the item and noted that the business plan targets remained on track.</p> <p>The board noted the report.</p>	
<p>b Risk Register June 2024</p> <p>Rachel Rowney noted that the register had been reviewed by SMT and drew the boards attention to the updates detailed in the paper.</p> <p>The board approved the risk register with no further questions or actions.</p>	

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c	<p>Management accounts (to 30 September 2024)</p> <p>Rachel Rowney introduced the item and confirmed that management accounts were on track with slight overspend shown on area spend (which is a positive trend).</p> <p>The board noted the management accounts.</p>	
d	<p>Big Local Trust and Local Trust Investment Reports (to September 2024)</p> <p>The board noted the investment reports with no further questions.</p>	
e	<p>Big Local Programme Status Report (to 31 October 2024)</p> <p>The board noted the status report with no further questions.</p>	
8.2	Committee proceedings	
a	<p>Finance and Audit committee 7 November 2024</p> <p>The board noted the chair approved minutes of the meeting on 7 November 2024. The board noted that there had been concerns around the fluctuation of investment income in the reports, however, with CD maturation in December, there would be more certainty on income available in January 2025.</p> <p>The board noted that Fiona Young Priest had been contracted to consider if Local Trust were best placed to continue working with CCLA for final two years. Investment co-optee Matthew Brumsen would also be asked to feed in. The committee would receive an update at its meeting in March.</p>	
b	<p>People, Culture and Governance committee 5 September 2024</p> <p>The board noted the chair approved minutes of the meeting on 5 September 2024 and that the pay benchmarking and staff survey summary would be received by the committee in the New Year.</p>	
9	Item 9 – Reflections on the meeting - was taken at the end of the meeting.	
10	<p>Any other business, board forward look.</p> <p>Trustees noted that they would be invited to feedback on the test site for Learning from Big Local in January.</p> <p>The Chair expressed thanks to Sahil Khan for his work with Local Trust and as former Chair of the programme delivery committee.</p>	
9	<p>Reflections on meeting</p> <p>Trustees shared their reflections on the meeting, which is that it felt productive and collaborative.</p>	
Meeting close		