

# Investing in community buildings

Locality, with Stretford Public Hall



**locality**  
the power of community

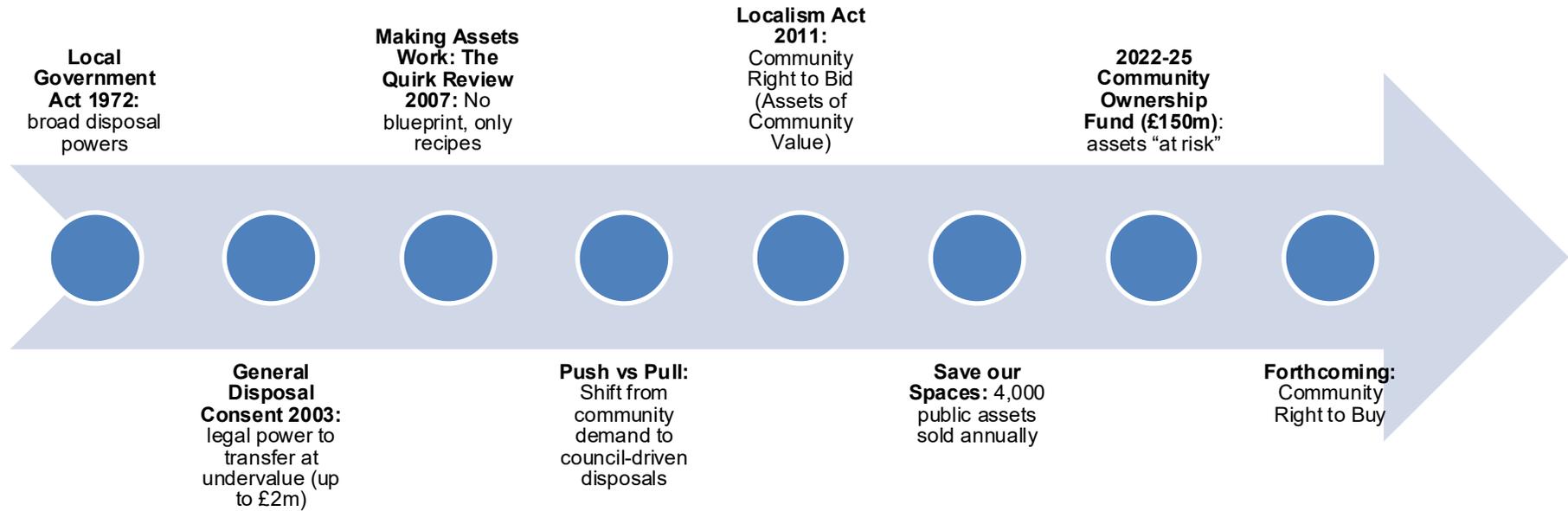
A photograph of a diverse group of people. In the foreground, a woman with dark curly hair and a bright smile looks towards the camera. Behind her, other people are visible but out of focus. The image is overlaid with a large yellow shape on the right side and a purple and teal shape on the left side.

**We believe in the power of  
community to create a  
fairer society.**

# Why community buildings matter

- **Community Wealth Building:** community anchors, circulating wealth locally
- **Investing in the voluntary sector:** strengthens community organisations, reducing dependency on grants
- **Routes to community-led service delivery:** co-produce services with communities, co-location and “hubs”
- **Pride in place:** visible regeneration and civic pride
- **Resilience against future shocks:** pandemic lessons, emergency response
- **Unlocking external investment:** funding streams councils can't access, community shares, crowdfunding, social investment

# Policy timeline



# Myth-busting

- **Communities lack skills or interest. Reality:** Many groups have strong governance and entrepreneurial capacity. Support is available.
- **Assets will be “captured” by one group. Reality:** Legal structures (CIO, CIC, asset locks) prevent private benefit.
- **It’s too politically sensitive. Reality:** Precedents demonstrate that community ownership enhances the council’s reputation and fosters community trust.
- **It means freehold only. Reality:** Typically, it’s a long lease, although length is important for funding (funders need 25+ years).
- **It’s a financial liability for groups. Reality:** Yes, if there isn’t a viable plan, but it can be a springboard for long-term success.
- **It’s a financial risk for councils. Reality:** CAT reduces maintenance liabilities and unlocks social value.
- **It’s just about saving old buildings. Reality:** It’s about creating vibrant, multi-use space for future needs, including new build, housing and much more.

# Strategic issues and opportunities

## Risks:

- Perceived loss of control
- Capacity gaps
- Technical hurdles (TUPE, procurement)
- “Hands tied” deals - setting groups up to fail

## Reward:

- Civil society and local government are two sides of the same coin
- Leveraging external investment and charitable funding
- Visible regeneration
- Economic impact
- Volunteering

## Cost of doing nothing:

- Blight from empty buildings
- Lost social value
- Increased maintenance liabilities

# Practical solutions for councils

- Develop a strategy (for consistency, transparency & decision making)
- Publish surplus assets list
- Standardise processes: EOI, Business Plan guidance, Lease template
- Secure long leases (25+ years)
- Aftercare

# Stages and roles

- **Identify surplus assets and audit:** Property, community, regeneration teams
- **Publish pipeline & invite EOIs:** Communications, community engagement, sector partners
- **Assess EOIs and shortlist:** CAT panel (Property, Legal, Finance, Community, etc)
- **Business plan development:** Community group + council + external support
- **Negotiate Heads of Terms:** Legal, Property, Finance
- **Transfer and monitoring:** Community liaison



# Lessons

- Leadership from the top of the council
- Start with community *need*, not just saving a building
- Secure long-term tenure for viability
- Blend income streams (enterprise + grants)
- Build governance capacity early
- Use phased development to manage risk



# Mission



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HEALTHY  
COMMUNITY



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# Our Aims



Improving Health



Increasing Wealth



Building Community



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# Theory of change

Being a broker enables us to serve the whole of the community with relevant and quality services.



# Time Line

2019 – Opened Sutton Centre

2022- Opened TFD Gym

2023 – Opened Holme Centre

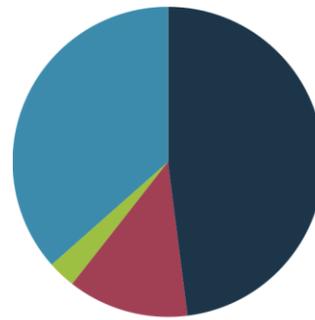
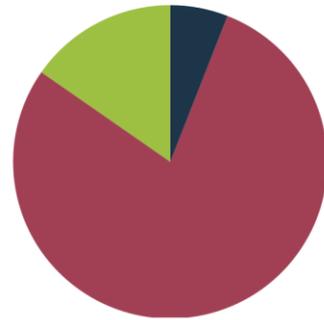
2025 – Opened Community arts space with partner org



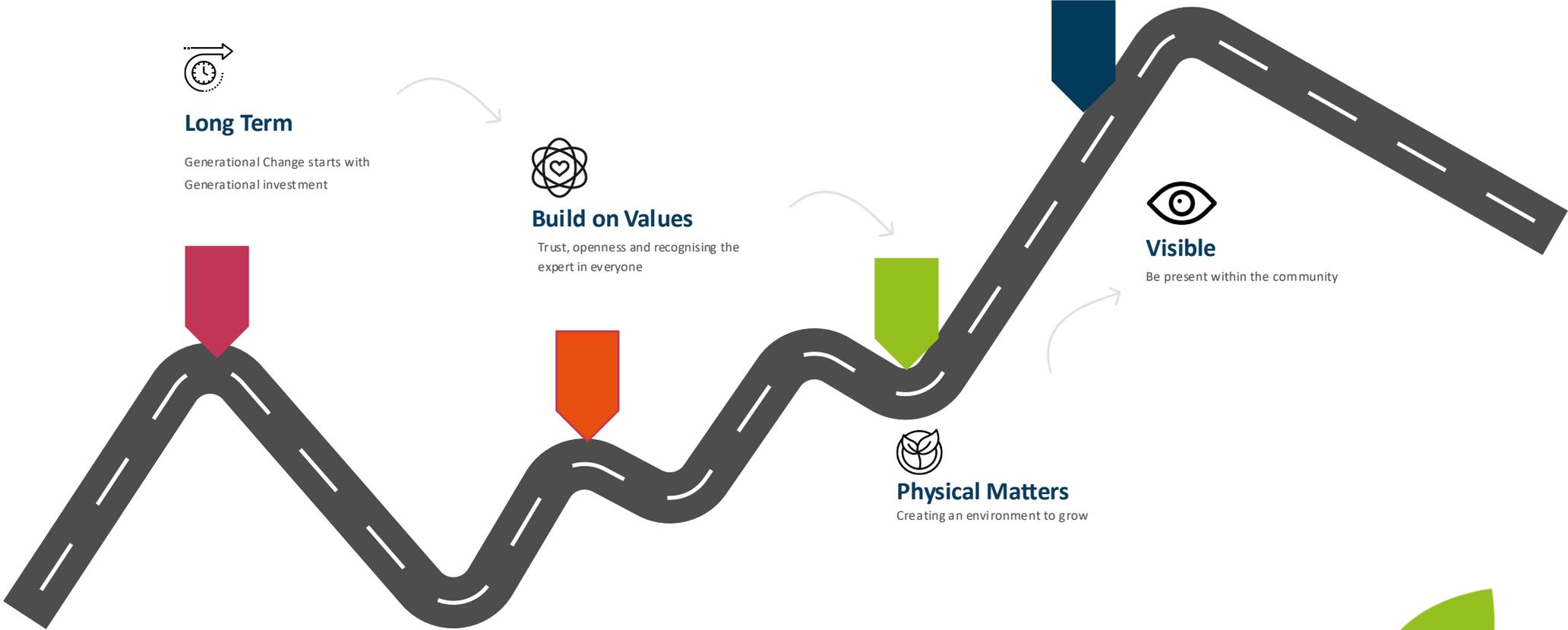
# Funding model

- Donations
- Grants
- Room Rental

- Staffing
- Core Building
- Administration
- Project Spending



# Building a Community Asset



## Long Term

Generational Change starts with Generational investment



## Build on Values

Trust, openness and recognising the expert in everyone



## Physical Matters

Creating an environment to grow



## Visible

Be present within the community

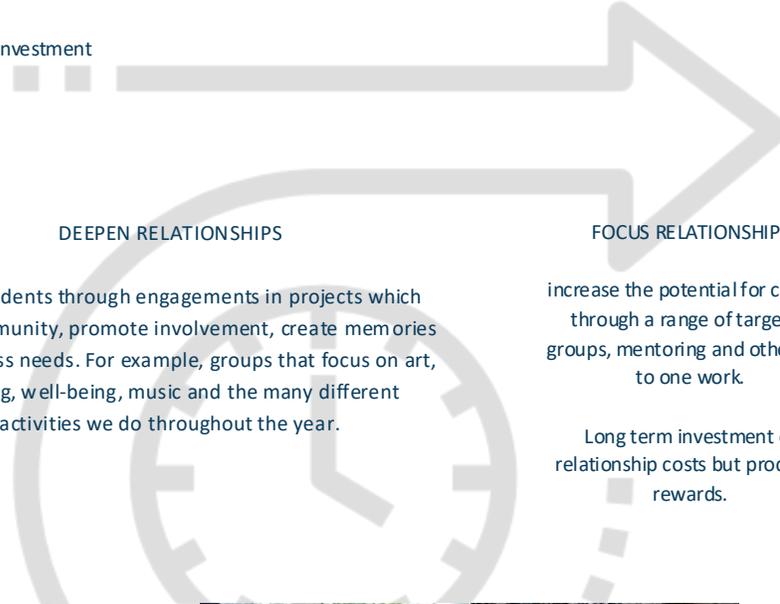


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## Long Term

Generational Change starts with Generational investment



### BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Creating regular opportunities to engage community in easy to access activities on their own terms. Whilst having an open door into our services

### DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS

with residents through engagements in projects which build community, promote involvement, create memories and address needs. For example, groups that focus on art, cooking, well-being, music and the many different activities we do throughout the year.

### FOCUS RELATIONSHIPS

increase the potential for change through a range of targeted groups, mentoring and other one to one work.

Long term investment of relationship costs but produces rewards.

### RELEASE RELATIONSHIPS

through encouraging and supporting the growth of leadership, promoting contribution to wider community life, and seeing personal independence flourish. We have some amazing residents who get involved in volunteering in their community.



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## Build on Values

Trust, openness and recognising the expert in everyone

### SHARED VALUES

Values are not made by an organisation but by the community.

In our work we have always had the shared values of :

Trust

Openness

Recognising the Expert

### TRUST

This is fundamental to our work alongside the community and partner organisations. We often hold information about our community from all sides trusted to bring positive change. This is a fundamental value that can not be broken or misused.

### OPENNESS

Organisations always have an agenda when working in areas like Holmewood and as a community we know it.

Be open about why you are in the community, for how long and what together you want to achieve.

### EXPERTS

Experts are sat in every room. From parents being experts, community workers, to statutory workers. Everyone has an equal voice to bring change and be valued.



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## Physical Matters

Creating an environment to grow

Invest in the area like it's your house, don't treat it like a hotel

Connect services to keep the physical environment tidy and of quality public realm.

Invest in community spaces that show people they are valued

Remove the effects of crime as soon as possible

Create ownership and empower the community to have belonging



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## Be Visibile

Be present within the community

We've worked hard with partners to be visible at the good times and the bad

Show there is a person behind the lanyard

Co-locate not just co- exist

Make your presence normal



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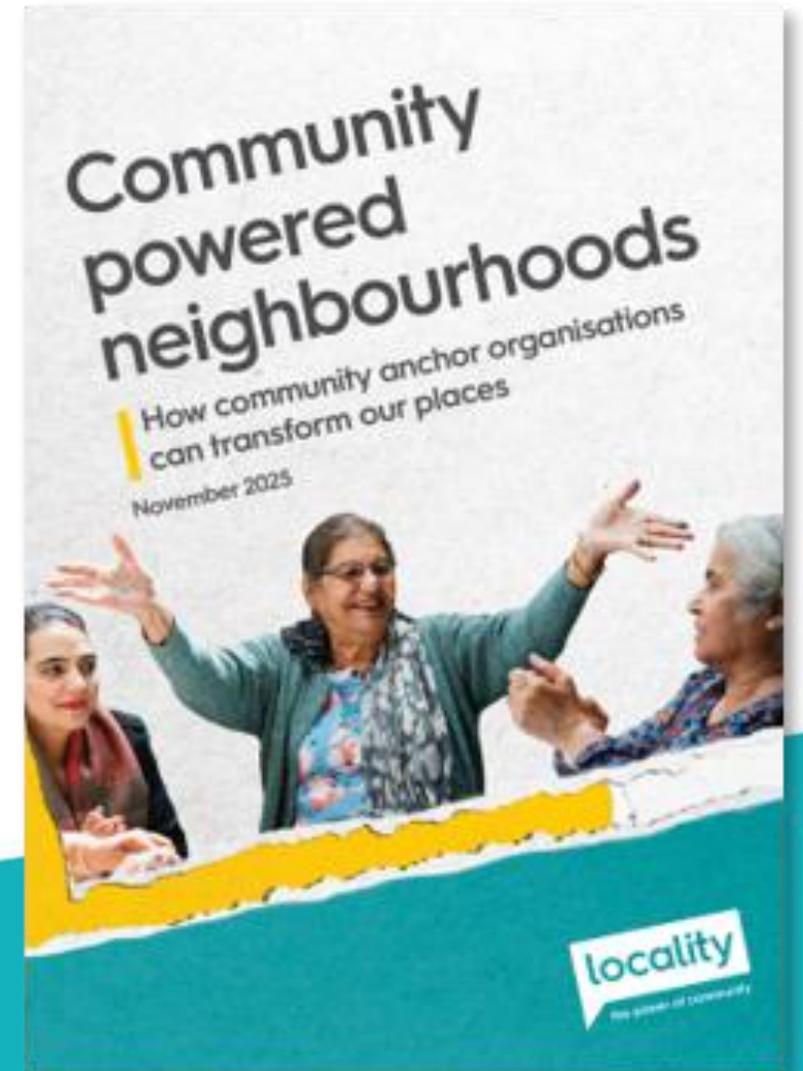


# Q & A



# Beyond assets – we're here to help councils and boards

- Training and capacity-building for Board members.
- Facilitation of inclusive community-led decision-making processes.
- Expertise in the “powers and tools” in the policy toolkit, i.e. Neighbourhood Planning, ACV and CAT.



# Get specialist advice and support

Our team of local experts cover:

- Governance
- Business planning
- Financial resilience
- Community engagement & impact
- Marketing & communications
- Collaboration
- Ownership of land & buildings

## Talk to us!

0207 336 9435

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[locality.org.uk/services-tools](https://locality.org.uk/services-tools)



# Unlock the power of your community with us

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