

Building Thriving Neighbourhoods: The Locality Manifesto



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Summary

We believe a hopeful future lies in the inspiring work of local community organisations. In the face of huge challenges, they are building thriving neighbourhoods.

As we approach a general election, we want to showcase this to politicians from all parties – so the next government can help inspire a Community Power Revolution.

The Locality Manifesto sets out a positive vision of where we can get to in 10 years' time, if we put communities in charge. It's practical and achievable – because it's based on things we see Locality members doing every day.

Our manifesto is built on the three core building blocks we believe form the foundations of thriving neighbourhoods:

1. **A community-powered economy**, which is democratic, regenerative and inclusive.
2. **Preventative public services**, which offer person-centred, cradle-to-grave support that tackles social inequalities.
3. **Places and spaces for everyone**, where people feel in control and have access to everything they need to live the lives they choose.

But community organisations can't do it all on their own. To get there we need big reform, fundamentally changing the way national and local government understand, engage, and collaborate with local people.

Community organisations

support local people in a local area over the long term. They come in all shapes and sizes, and will often be based in places like community centres, parks, libraries, cafés and swimming pools. They run a range of services that their community needs most across housing, employment, health and wellbeing, arts and culture, and the environment.

Five big reforms to inspire a community power revolution:

1. **Introduce a Community Power Act**, to create three new community rights – to buy assets of community value, to shape public services, and to control local investment. And to create Community Covenants, new power sharing arrangements between councils and local communities.
2. **Inspire a step change in community ownership**, through a new, cross-government National Community Ownership Strategy that boosts community ownership and capacity from energy to housing to health.
3. **Put communities in charge of local economic development**, giving residents more control over local regeneration spending and radically devolving employment and skills support to the hyper-local level.
4. **Make collaboration – not competition the guiding principle of public services**, with bold reform of commissioning and shifting budgets to community-led prevention.
5. **Community-led housing and planning**, giving communities a tangible stake in their neighbourhoods by supporting the growth of community-led housing and spreading the use of neighbourhood planning.



Introduction

A positive vision of the future is growing from the ground up.

Our age of permacrisis has shrunk the boundaries of what feels possible in politics. But we reject the notion that all we can wish for is to manage decline and make small tweaks to prop up a crumbling status quo. At Locality, every day we see the start of something better: a hopeful way forward emerging from the work of local community organisations.

In this manifesto, we describe that potential future over the next 10 years. It is, quite simply, a manifesto for community power - the key to achieving thriving neighbourhoods in every place. It's built on three core building blocks that we believe form the foundations of thriving neighbourhoods: a community-powered economy; preventative public services; and places and spaces for everyone.

Crucially this vision has been developed based on things community organisations are doing already - despite the day-to-day pressures they face, despite the centralised systems they operate within, and despite the dire lack of resources. We are confident our vision is possible, because everything we talk about is already happening. But these are pockets of inspiration and success, which have been achieved despite the barriers and difficulties. We know

community organisations can only go so far on their own; that going against the grain is only sustainable for so long.

So, we are proposing a series of potentially game-changing policy shifts. These big reforms will fundamentally rewire policy systems to actively support community power, rather than stand in its way.

As we approach a general election, we are asking politicians of all parties to shift their focus. We know how tough things are and that the challenges the next government will face are enormous. But away from the glare of Westminster, powerful solutions are beginning to take shape. Local communities are finding innovative ways of tackling complex problems and building thriving neighbourhoods. So rather than trying to reconnect Whitehall's broken levers, this is the moment to kickstart a community power revolution. We need our politicians to recognise the practical transformation community organisations are leading right here, right now - and imagine how much more they could achieve with the right support in place.

The building blocks of thriving neighbourhoods

Community organisations provide the building blocks of thriving neighbourhoods. At a time of ongoing crisis, they provide hope for local people and a practical route to tackling our most stubborn challenges once and for all.

Witnessing the wide-ranging, inspiring work of Locality members, we can see what an equitable, environmentally sustainable future looks like. It's a future where we have a community-powered economy, which is democratic, regenerative and inclusive. We have preventative public services, which offer person-centred, cradle-to-grave support that tackles social inequalities. And we have places and spaces for everyone, where people feel in control and have access to everything they need to live the lives they choose.

So, over the next pages, we set out where the three building blocks of thriving neighbourhoods can get us in 10 years' time – economically, socially and environmentally – and how community organisations can help lead us there.



1. A community-powered economy

Where we can be in 10 years

We want to see local economies which have shifted from being distant, extractive and unequal, to become democratic, regenerative and inclusive.

This means that important economic assets are owned and controlled equitably by local people. Communities have come together to breathe new life into disused public spaces and put them to productive use.

Wealth is generated locally and stays in our neighbourhoods, recirculating around so everyone feels the benefit and no one is excluded. Public and private sector spending is retained rather than leaking out of the local economy, with an active commitment to using local supply chains and maximising local employment opportunities. This creates neighbourhood-level economic opportunities in disadvantaged areas, and reduces supply chain and commuting emissions.

The economy is circular, with materials and products reused, recycled and shared.

The public, private and social sector work closely together in a coordinated way. Small business and social enterprise are incubated and there is flexible workspace on people's doorsteps.

Businesses and social enterprises can access the finance they need to develop. Residents have financial security and literacy, with trusted financial information and affordable credit available to all.

The potential of local people is invested in. Nobody is written off as "hard to reach" and structural inequalities are recognised and proactively addressed. There is committed and caring employment and skills training, based on local knowledge and trusting relationships, which recognises everyone's strengths. There is a clear pathway for people who find themselves a long way from the labour market to return to work, supported by a mix of training and volunteering opportunities that develop people's skills and build their confidence.

There are good local jobs available, where people feel they have a voice and sense of purpose, as well as a secure, living income.

Significant proportions of economic development funding are controlled at the neighbourhood level and invested in the priorities set by all members of the local community.

There is local energy production from a range of renewable sources, and local buildings have been retrofitted to high standards of energy efficiency.

Local food systems are healthy and sustainable, with locally grown, seasonal fruit and vegetables available at affordable prices.

Empty homes have been refurbished, and new social and affordable housing has been built to the highest environmental standards.

The social security system provides an adequate safety net which keeps people well above the poverty line.

How community organisations can help get us there

Community organisations lead local economic development in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

They own community assets and use this as a physical base to earn their own income, generating and retaining wealth for their neighbourhoods. They act as local economic multipliers by using local supply chains and creating good local jobs. This means that the cash they bring in from public sector contracts and charitable funders stays in the local community. They operate in areas of traditional market failure and can often be the key employer in their neighbourhood. They provide a means for minoritised communities, who have traditionally been excluded, to build a tangible stake in the local economy and develop meaningful power and independence.

Analysis of [Halifax Opportunities Trust's Jubilee Children's Centre](#) found that for every £1 of income it generated, it created £2.43 for the local economy.¹

They provide high quality, person-centred employment and skills training. This is based on their deep knowledge of people's lives and the trusting relationships they have built up over time. In cases where the public or private sector might give up or just not care enough to get a result, community organisations will go the extra mile – literally knocking on people's doors to keep them coming to courses, and finding appropriate opportunities to develop skills and experiences when there aren't formal employment options.

In Grimsby, [Centre4](#) has developed the [Ethical Recruitment Agency](#) (ERA) for north-east Lincolnshire. They invest in local people through training, temporary and permanent employment, and support community projects to reach those struggling to find work through normal channels. This helps the area to become economically and socially stronger, with any surplus reinvested into the skills and personal development of local people as well as community projects. ERA is a not-for-profit organisation; their ethical approach means local employers gain motivated staff through a personalised recruitment service.

They incubate small local businesses, using their assets to create business parks and enterprise hubs, and offering flexible co-working space.

As well as providing a wide range of neighbourhood support services for the people of Braunstone, Leicester, [b-inspired](#) has taken The Grove community hub into community ownership. Tenants include a self-supporting cluster of community businesses, offering a range of goods and services that local people can afford. The organisation also owns and manages a thriving managed workspace – The Business Box – supporting micro and small businesses with affordable office space and hybrid co-working solutions.

They forge community economic development partnerships, working with small business and the public sector to proactively change the direction of the local economy so that it works better for local people.

In Liverpool, [Safe Regeneration](#) have led a Community Economic Development plan to expand beyond their business incubation hub. This includes regenerating a derelict local pub into accommodation for visitors and VCSE organisations within the City Region along with a gastro pub. It's also connected with the Canal and River Trust to regenerate a canal towpath to generate more footfall for the local area.



They take up opportunities to hold and directly control economic development funds, making sure they invest in and develop the precise strengths of the local community.

In Leeds, [Barca-Leeds](#) has been the Accountable Body for a Community-led Local Development project, funded by the European Regional Development Fund / European Structural and Investment Fund. This has involved a Local Action Group of residents, private, public and third sector representatives preparing a Local Development Strategy. This sets out the area's economic issues, and potential opportunities, and what might be the best ways of tackling them at a local level.

They generate renewable energy like wind and solar, playing an active role in tackling the climate crisis and generating income for the local economy. They start recycling and reuse businesses, sharing resources and embedding sustainability.

In the post-war housing estate of Lawrence Weston, north-west Bristol, [Ambition Lawrence Weston](#) have built a community-owned wind turbine. Now the tallest onshore wind turbine in England, the initiative is creating jobs, revenue, and renewable energy to benefit the local community.

Elsewhere, [Bradford Organic Communities Service](#) (BOCS), collects and redistributes unused household paint, recycles waste products for use as safe craft materials, and provides fresh fruit and veg for local people from its community garden.

They provide tailored financial advice and support services, combining debt advice, business support and housing advice with help to navigate the social security system.

Operating from its centre in South Gosforth, [Disability North](#) supports the disabled community in Newcastle and surrounding boroughs. This includes support in accessing welfare benefits, direct payments, Personal Assistants, and wider community care. It also includes rights-based work, supporting people to manage their own health and stay independent at home and in the community, including by accessing the support to which they're entitled.

2. Preventative public services

Where we can be in 10 years

We want to see our public services shift from being centralised, bureaucratic and siloed to being person-centred, preventative and local-by-default.

This means high quality, cradle-to-grave provision available to all in every neighbourhood, tackling entrenched inequalities and focussing on wellbeing and happiness.

Early years education and childcare is integrated with wider family support programmes.

There are great local schools, designed to both promote learning and build community.

Children and young people have access to safe and trusted community spaces which keep them engaged and support them to thrive.

Services are coordinated at a neighbourhood-level, rather than outsourced at scale, with collaboration – not competition – the principle behind service planning and commissioning. Local organisations are able to harness their local knowledge and trusting relationships to intervene early and prevent problems from mounting up over time, and provide culturally competent and inclusive services.

Public services see people's strengths rather than solely their needs, and harness this asset-based approach through co-production.

Pressure on the NHS is reduced as community organisations keep people healthier for longer. They support the wider determinants of their health and tackle the health inequalities they face. As such, social prescribing is embedded within existing community infrastructure, with organisations resourced to deliver activities that prioritise community development for long-term health creation. And clinical provision sits alongside community-led support, with services co-located in trusted and accessible community spaces.

The focus of social care is to keep people living in their communities for as long as possible, surrounded by people they know and love, with people connected to the local community and in control of the services they access.

How community organisations can help get us there

Community organisations provide preventative local services that support the wider determinants of people's health across all stages of life.

They run children's centres which connect up early years provision with wider support for parents.

As part of its support for the Barton Hill neighbourhood of Bristol, [Wellspring Settlement](#) runs a 13-week Parenting Programme. The course promotes emotional literacy between parents and children, helping them to better communicate, empathise, and cope with challenging situations. It gives children and parents an emotionally healthy springboard for their lives and learning.

They host youth centres and services that are open to all, as well as providing commissioned specialist services for children and young people.

Based out of a former derelict pub in Camden, north London, [The Winch](#) provides "cradle to community" support for children, young people and their families. It offers a "depressurised space" to help tackle social issues affecting young people and support their mental health and wellbeing. This includes providing space for groups offering dedicated support to young people from particular demographics.

The services they provide are shaped around and with the person in front of them – a person they are deeply invested in, whose family they know, whose circumstances they understand. It's this connection, these relationships, that mean community

organisations can get to the heart of the challenges people face and stop the escalation which can lead to more intense and urgent care requirements.

In Foleshill, Coventry, [FWT – A Centre for Women](#) runs [MAMTA](#), an award-winning service aimed at improving child and maternal health outcomes for women from ethnically diverse communities. As a women-only centre, it provides a safe, trusted, and inclusive space. The service takes a holistic, whole-person approach, supporting the same individuals across, for example, employability, domestic issues, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Central to this is the strengths-based approach. Community organisations see and build on people's potential, rather than exclusively focusing on their needs and how to serve them. They walk alongside and co-produce services with their community, rather than simply diagnosing and delivering to a service-user.

Along the Sussex coast, [Sussex Community Development Association](#) delivers the [Making it Happen](#) programme. Community Development Workers support people to connect with others, find the right expertise, resources, or information, and access funding to create positive change locally. The programme is designed to understand what works best to create communities that are stronger, more resilient, and therefore healthier.

Crucially, they are multipurpose organisations, so they can join up an often fragmented and disparate local service landscape in one place. They hold out the prospect of a much wider and deeper community connection, that isn't just focused on accessing a particular service, but can create new relationships and help anchor people in their places.

The Selby Trust manages community facilities primarily for racially minoritised, refugee, and other communities in Tottenham and across north London. This includes co-locating over 130 social action organisations, attracting co-produced services, job programmes, training and other opportunities. It also provides a grassroots support package through Selby Support Hub that responds to the needs of the community.

Community organisations led by and serving minoritised communities often work to adapt health guidance and services to make them as culturally competent and inclusive as possible. This is key to reducing the health inequalities these communities face.

In north west London, CB Plus is part of a collaborative partnership delivering a peer-to-peer health prevention and wellbeing service using 'Health Educators', commissioned by the local authority. As peers, Health Educators are able to speak local community languages to discuss and translate guidance with target audiences. For example, to promote diabetes awareness amongst South Asian communities, the Health Educators attended faith institutes. Here they share food to begin discussions about adapting meals and lifestyles to reduce sugar content, lower the risk of diabetes, and promote healthier alternatives. This way, information "spreads like wildfire" and is far more effective than telling people to change their diet with no relevant guidance.

They play a transformative role in adult social care, providing highly personalised services based around trusting relationships and local connection. This includes formal services like home care or personal budgets or working to reimagine their neighbourhood's adult social care offer.

And it includes services which are on the “edges of social care” – activities which build relationships and social connection for people who might not qualify for statutory care, and with the right support can be prevented from requiring more acute services for years to come.

In Hull, [Goodwin Development Trust](#) provides over 700 hours of care each week for adults with complex needs. Thanks to its ability to connect individuals to a range of services across the city, it is rated “Outstanding” as a Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered care provider.

And across Bristol, local community organisations having been working with the city council and other city-wide and equalities organisations to [Make it Local](#) in adult social care. This means improving outcomes through more preventative services that use strengths-based approaches to improve choice and control for local people. This has included the development of ‘Introductory Agencies’ – local matching platforms to connect individuals looking to access care services and those who provide them.



3. Places and spaces for everyone

Where we can be in 10 years

We want to see places where people feel in control and have access to everything they need to live the lives they choose.

This means they have access to a range of community spaces where they can come together and forge relationships with their neighbours. These are places which bridge divides and create connection between people from different backgrounds.

There are affordable housing options for all, with a mix of tenures, so families can stay in the area as they grow, and older people can downsize and still be near loved ones.

Communities have coalesced around neighbourhood plans, setting out their visions for how they want their places to develop and what they want to conserve.

The local environment is clean and sustainable, with good quality air and accessible green spaces. People are engaged in environmental projects and able to connect up the impact of action they take locally with tackling the wider climate emergency.

There are good public transport links, ensuring connectivity with the wider local area, and local infrastructure enables people to walk and cycle to the places they need to go to meet their daily needs.

Meaningful powers are held at the neighbourhood level, with people participating in local democracy and all communities engaged in decision-making,

in particular those who have been traditionally excluded and minoritised.

How community organisations can help get us there

Community organisations help create places and spaces for everyone. In a world that can feel increasingly daunting and out of control – from the cost of living to the climate crisis – community organisations build a sense of connection and possibility. They provide local people with the foundations they need to live their lives well, in the way they choose.

They bring places together, offering safe and welcoming spaces and providing inclusive services, where people with different experiences of life can get to know each other and build relationships.

In South Gloucestershire, an increase in community tensions and incidents of hate crime led the council to ask [Southern Brooks](#) to support them in the development of the Community Cohesion Action Group and the latest action plan. This has included a range of projects to build community cohesion, such as the facilitation of “Harmony” events across the area to promote understanding of various faiths and cultures.

They build community-led homes, so people have good places to live. They engage people in neighbourhood planning, so people have a say over what gets built where.

In Sunderland, a group of determined local residents in the post-industrial neighbourhood of Hendon bought empty and dilapidated homes, refurbishing them to develop a model of community-led regeneration to put their neighbourhood "[Back on the Map](#)". Over 10 years, they have purchased and refurbished 87 homes and four local shops. They've also brought a disused library back into community hands as a local hub, supporting over 4,500 residents.

And in 2015, Abram Ward Community Cooperative (now [Wigan and Leigh Community Charity](#)) brought together a group of local residents, residents' groups, ward councillors, businesses and schools from across the five villages of Abram Ward, Wigan, to discuss the opportunity to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. Along with the formal opportunity to shape planning and infrastructure decisions, the Neighbourhood Plan was seen as having broader opportunity to reach out and engage the community. Younger people were seen as a particular challenge - so the group got creative. They used the popular video game 'Minecraft' to get year 5 students at local schools, as well as their parents, involved in thinking about what their Neighbourhood Plan should look like. The community has now created a plan that focusses on how to protect and enhance the internationally significant landscapes and green and open spaces, with improved access and better connectivity.



They save much-loved local spaces, ensuring they stay at the heart of the community, protecting them for years to come.

In Trafford, Greater Manchester, Friends of [Stretford Public Hall](#) took on the building from the council in 2015 through a Community Asset Transfer, turning it back into an accessible community space. It now delivers a wide range of community, arts, and health and wellbeing activities. It's also one of six Community Hubs operating across the borough, working closely with the council's health and social care teams to provide support and access to services for local residents.

They preserve the local environment, supporting nature and biodiversity, and engage people in community climate action.

In north Birmingham, [Witton Lodge Community Association](#) has opened Witton Lakes Eco Hub, a former park-keeper's cottage that now serves as a multi-functional eco-friendly community facility. It showcases and promotes energy efficiency, and provides advice on how to tackle fuel poverty, cultivate home-produce and pursue outdoor activities.

They build community power, supporting participation in local democracy, advocating for neighbourhoods and communities that can feel like they've been forgotten.

Since 1998, [Paddington Development Trust](#) has been working to reverse years of decline and socio-economic neglect in four wards bordering Westminster – one of the wealthiest areas in the world. It remains committed to local power and governance, assisting in the formation of the North Paddington Board in partnership with Westminster's new Labour council.



Five big reforms to unlock community power

A hopeful vision can feel a long way off at the moment, given the huge challenges our neighbourhoods face. But we see it as a practical reality that's being built out of the inspiring work Locality members are doing right now, right around the country.

Community power is building thriving neighbourhoods against the odds. We need policy makers to catch up and provide it with the bold policy support it needs to go further and faster. With supportive systems in place, we believe community organisations can provide the foundation of transformative change, offering some long-term answers to the ever-escalating challenges our country faces.

We need nothing less than a **community power revolution**, that reaches far and wide, washing

through Whitehall and into our cities, towns and villages. It needs a mix of big reforms, practical policies, and targeted investment to rewire policy to support community power and sustain a strong network of community organisations as key building blocks of thriving neighbourhoods.

It should start with a **Community Power Act**, a path-breaking piece of legislation to make the decisive shift in the balance of power local people have been waiting for. The Community Power Act would create a powerful set of new community rights, giving communities real control over local spaces, public services and local spending. It would also establish Community Covenants across the country – power sharing agreements between councils and local communities which would devolve a range of powers to the neighbourhood-level.

To spread community power far and wide we need a **step change in community ownership**. Establishing the Community Ownership Fund has been a great start, demonstrating the demand from local people to save the spaces they love and take control of their neighbourhoods. We now need to go much further, with a new National Community Ownership Strategy to hardwire community ownership across government policy. From energy to housing to health, all areas of policy should have an explicit commitment to boost community ownership and build capacity in minoritised and disadvantaged communities, backed by an expanded and extended Community Ownership Fund.

Community ownership can help **put communities in charge of local economic development**. With the right tools and support, local people can lead economic revival in the places our economic model has failed the most. This means supporting sustainable community anchor organisations to develop in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to build power in minoritised communities; giving residents more control over local economic development spending; and radically devolving employment and skills support to the hyper-local level.

We also need bold reform to **make collaboration – not competition – the guiding principle of public services** and prioritise prevention. The next

government can do this by making two big shifts. First, by replacing the current focus on competitive tendering with a system which supports long-term partnerships between the public sector and local communities. Second, by committing to increase the share of NHS budgets going towards prevention by at least five per cent over the next five years, with a focus on community-led services.

Finally, we need **community-led housing and planning**. All parties want to build more homes, but have consistently struggled to achieve their ambitions. Too often they see local people as the problem, standing in the way of progress. We see them as the solution, with huge opportunities to give communities a tangible stake by supporting the growth of community-led housing; building in community ownership opportunities to major new developments; and spreading the use of neighbourhood planning.

These are five big ideas that can inspire the community power revolution we need. The rest of this manifesto sets them out in more detail. We believe they can provide the hope that is so often missing from political debate. Solutions to the big challenges we face are growing from the ground up; imagine what we could do if we got behind them.

Our policy proposals in detail

Community organisations provide the building blocks of thriving neighbourhoods. They help kickstart community-powered economies in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. They provide preventative public services that are person-centred and tackle inequalities across the life course. And they create places and spaces for everyone, where people feel in control and able to live the lives they choose.

Across the Locality membership, we see the huge impact they have every day. But we know they could do so much more with the right support.

So, as we approach a general election, we are calling for a community power revolution. We need to rewire our policy systems so they support and nurture local innovation as the key means of achieving our collective national goals.

To do this we are proposing five big reforms that can end centuries of centralisation and finally put significant power in community hands.



Five big reforms to inspire a community power revolution

Big reform one:

Introduce a Community Power Act

The next government should commit to implementing a Community Power Act as a priority piece of legislation in its first 100 days.²

This would send a clear signal from the outset:

that unlocking the power of community is a central means of achieving the government's ambitions and that it plans to govern in partnership with local communities across the country.

Polling has shown that 71 per cent of voters feel they have "no" or "not much" control over important decisions affecting their neighbourhoods and local communities.³

There is a huge opportunity here to make devolution not just something that passes power around different parts of the public sector, but really means something to local people. We know devolution currently feels too distant. Just 17 per cent think having a mayor has led or would lead to better outcomes for their community. However, 46 per cent think local community groups having

more power would lead to better outcomes.⁴

The Community Power Act is the key plank of [We're Right Here](#), the campaign for community power. It's led by community leaders from a range of backgrounds across the country and supported by Locality and many other national organisations. The Community Power Act would do nothing less than reset the foundations of public policy, so it supports and incubates the solutions that are already there in our communities, rather than always starting with a blank sheet of paper in Whitehall.

This is a huge task – and we know that serious efforts in the past have failed to decisively shift the balance of power. That's why we need a path-breaking piece of legislation, to light a fire under a community power revolution.

The Community Power Act is made up of three key parts:

Establish three new community rights – learning the lessons from the Localism Act and expanding the scale and scope of

community action in three important areas:

- ☀️ **A Community Right to Buy** – giving communities the right of first refusal once buildings and spaces with significant community value come up for sale. This would considerably strengthen the existing Community Right to Bid, meaning that if a community was able to raise the funds when an Asset of Community Value came up for sale, it would be theirs to purchase without competition. The window to do this would be extended from six to 12 months, to give communities extra time to pull together the necessary funds.
- ☀️ **A Community Right to Shape Public Services** – encouraging greater collaboration between communities and public institutions when designing, commissioning, and delivering local services. This new right would strengthen and expand the scope of the existing Community Right to Challenge, enabling communities to trigger a joint review of a local service. There would be a set period of community consultation and co-design, with the option of triggering a full commissioning exercise, which could lead to a community-led delivery partnership.
- ☀️ **A Community Right to Control Investment** – increasing community control over the key spending decisions which affect local neighbourhoods. This would see a significant proportion of all public regeneration and local economic devolution funds devolved directly to accountable community-level decision-making institutions (such as those created by Community

Covenants outlined below or parish councils).

Introduce Community Covenants – neighbourhood-level arrangements that would bring local people, community organisations and local authorities together to share power and make decisions.

We need strong local governance institutions to ensure power sticks at the neighbourhood-level in all communities, no matter where they are. The formation of Community Covenants would represent a major shift in the governance of this country, and a deepening of a devolution agenda which has not joined up the hyper-local with the regional.

Community Covenants would be shaped flexibly to reflect the circumstances of the neighbourhood in question and would seek in particular to build power in communities which have traditionally been excluded and minoritised. The Community Power Act would include provisions enabling Community Covenants to be formed by local authorities and a range of potential “Covenant partners”, including:

- Parish Councils
- Neighbourhood Forums
- Established independent community “anchor” organisations
- Local alliances of community organisations, associations and informal and unconstituted groups.

Once established, these neighbourhood-level “Covenant partners” should be able to draw down a range of powers from an agreed menu of options. These powers could encompass: local economic planning; neighbourhood planning; protecting the local environment; community assets; local service delivery; control over government funding streams; scrutiny of spending decisions.

Establish a Community Power Commissioner – an independent office charged with ensuring action is taken across government.

The Commissioner would be tasked with the job of holding the government’s feet to the fire on its decentralisation commitments, in a way no other government has ever done in the past. First and foremost, they would evaluate the government’s performance in unlocking community power, with statutory powers to conduct reviews, require departments to produce information and make recommendations. They would have a particular role working with the Treasury – so often the key centralising part of the system – to investigate practices and make binding recommendations. They would also be responsible for supporting the development of Community Covenants, ensuring each area has the opportunity to form one and the resources they need to make it effective, and providing the oversight to ensure they are functioning well and properly accountable.



Big reform two:

Inspire a step change in community ownership

Community ownership is the foundation of community power.

It enables local people to generate and retain wealth for their neighbourhoods, sustain and direct their own activities, provide an independent voice for their community, and operate at

a scale where they can work collaboratively with the public sector. It is a key means for communities who have been minoritised and excluded to take control and build power over the long term.

Over recent decades, governments of all parties have started to provide significant policy support for community ownership.

The New Labour government established what is called the “General Disposal Consent” in 2003; a dry sounding name for a transformative change.⁵ This created the Community Asset Transfer mechanism, the main route through which communities have taken on ownership of important local buildings and spaces.

New Labour continued to support the burgeoning community assets agenda, with the Quirk Review⁶ in 2007 feeding

into the “Communities in Control” White Paper, which established the Asset Transfer Unit.⁷ Also in 2007, the Third Sector Review made clear that community “anchor” organisations were key partners in achieving the government’s social justice goals and backed them with strategic long-term funding to support asset development.⁸

The coalition government picked up the baton in 2010, with localism the glue which bound the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats together. The Localism Act created a set of community rights, with the Community Right to Bid providing a bottom-up route to community ownership.⁹

However, the coalition’s interest in community ownership coincided with a huge programme of austerity, which saw local authorities face disproportionate levels of cuts.¹⁰ This created conditions for a fire sale of public assets: Locality’s report, “The Great British Sell-off”, estimated that 4000 publicly-owned buildings and spaces were being sold by councils every year.¹¹

So in 2016, Locality launched calls for a Community Ownership Fund, to enable communities to save much-loved publicly-owned buildings and spaces from being sold off for private use. Following

widespread campaigning across the sector, the Conservatives committed to establishing an £150m fund in their 2019 manifesto and subsequently brought it forward as a key plank of the government's levelling up agenda in the March 2021 budget.

The Community Ownership Fund is now up and running and achieving huge impact, helping inspiring local groups breathe new life into pubs, police stations, schools, music halls and more.

But it is only scratching the surface when it comes to the potential power of community ownership to build thriving neighbourhoods. We need community ownership to go wider and deeper – spreading it across all areas of government and expanding its reach into communities.

We are therefore calling on the next government to build on the progress made so far to inspire a step change in community ownership. All areas of government policy should be in scope, with a new **National Community Ownership Strategy** tasked with coordinating the intentional development of community ownership opportunities across government.

The National Community Ownership Strategy should encompass:

Energy

Community energy should be a priority means of decarbonising our energy supply and meeting our net-zero goals. It should also be recognised as one

of our biggest opportunities for building and sustaining community capacity in the long-term. For example, Ambition Lawrence Weston in Bristol is demonstrating how the income generated by a community-owned wind turbine can provide vital funding to invest in local priorities over time. If every neighbourhood had a community-owned energy asset, it could support the foundations of a sustainable community infrastructure in perpetuity.

The next government should therefore proactively plan-in community energy as a key means of both achieving net-zero and building strong communities. It should come with significant funding to support the development of community energy projects, including support for capacity building, particularly focused on disadvantaged areas and minoritised groups, and development grants and loans. The Local Electricity Bill should also enable community energy schemes to sell direct to local people.

Retrofitting community buildings to be energy efficient is also a critical part of this agenda. The current government has made £25m of grant funding available, alongside loan finance from dormant assets. This is a useful start, but insufficient to ensure community organisations have an environmentally and financially sustainable long-term future. So the next government must ensure that community buildings are a key part of its retrofitting plans and make sufficient resource available to match the scale of the task.

Local government

Many of the key opportunities to support community ownership lie at the local authority level. Councils have all the policy tools they need to drive a step change in their areas, through the Community Asset Transfer mechanism. But what they often lack is strategic commitment – to prioritise the long-term social, economic and environmental value that can be realised through community ownership over the short-term financial return of a capital receipt.

These pressures are, of course, heightened by the severe budget pressures councils face, and we are clear that a long-term sustainable funding settlement is required to put councils on a secure financial footing. But even within our current tough fiscal environment, councils across the country, like Calderdale and Kirklees in West Yorkshire, are developing pioneering and progressive approaches to community ownership, which recognise the long-term strategic benefits community ownership can bring to their places.¹² The problem is that these trailblazers are the exception rather than the norm, and local authorities' support for community ownership is wildly uneven around the country.

The National Community Ownership Strategy should therefore require all councils to develop Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policies that are co-designed with the community and strategically adopted across the council, with a cabinet lead for community assets.

While different councils will have different priorities and approaches, having clear CAT policies will provide greater consistency for communities and enable councils to: demonstrate their commitment to



community ownership; provide clarity for community organisations and accountability for decisions; and align support available for community owners, with a particular emphasis on overcoming barriers for underrepresented groups.

Health and social care

Much of the focus on the opportunities for Community Asset Transfer has been on local authorities. But the NHS owns vast amounts of property – and with a growing recognition of the benefits of community-led approaches to health, this should be the moment to join up supply and demand.

In particular, Locality research has shown the value that the sharing of physical space by community organisations and local health bodies can have for the quality of services and levels of local engagement.¹³ Community spaces are often the most comfortable, trusted, and accessible places for people, particularly those most at risk of health inequalities. Considering the NHS Long Term Plan's focus on prevention priorities, and the Department of Health and Social Care's Major Conditions Strategy, there are real opportunities for improving the level of community-led action on issues like mental ill health, respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular disease.

The health system should therefore have a specific remit to build community capacity through community ownership; and proactively support the co-location of clinical and community services. Integrated Care Systems and NHS Property Services should be tasked

with identifying opportunities for Community Asset Transfer, as well as proactively co-locating clinical services into existing community-run spaces to support them to develop.

Long-term funding

Much of the task of the National Community Ownership Strategy is to embed community ownership across government policy and therefore into existing, mainstream budgets. The goal is to maximise the opportunities within our investment in achieving our net zero goals, our health and social care ambitions, our drive for equity and inclusion, and our approach to local government.

However, the success of the Community Ownership Fund has demonstrated the demand for a standalone fund for community ownership. The current fund has been deliberately designed around fairly narrow parameters, aimed at saving community assets at risk. Given our overall financial conditions, this will sadly continue to be a growing market. But to encourage the step change in community ownership we want to see, we believe we need to extend the Community Ownership Fund beyond its current timescale and expand its scope to support the full breadth of community ownership potential.

We therefore propose the next government creates a **new 10 year, £1bn Community Ownership Fund**, with additional government funding catalysing

wider investment. This could include future rounds of dormant assets funding, a coordinated approach to social investment, and aligning charitable funders and foundations. The focus of the Community Ownership Fund should be to continue to support ambitious communities to save the important local places and spaces they love. But alongside this, with expanded resource it could also seek to proactively support community asset and enterprise development. This could focus on building community capacity to develop community anchor organisations around the country who can be key partners to the public sector in achieving shared social, economic and environmental goals.

The fund should have equity at its heart, with a significant amount ringfenced for groups from disadvantaged areas and minoritised communities. Ownership of assets and investment in community capacity has been historically much lower for these groups. Levelling the playing field in this area is crucial for achieving shared economic, social, and environmental opportunity across all of our communities.



Big reform three: Put communities in charge of local economic development

For many years it has been clear that our economic model has not benefited all communities equally. According to research published by the Resolution Foundation, the UK has the highest income inequality of any major European country.¹⁴

The rise to political prominence of the levelling up agenda has been a recognition that these inequalities have a significant geographical dimension. There are often hyper-local areas of disadvantage, which can exist just a stone's throw from our most affluent neighbourhoods.

This is a long-term challenge. From the Single Regeneration Budget to the New Deal for Communities to the Levelling Up White Paper: successive governments have tried, but so far failed, to narrow the gap. But there is a growing body of evidence that community-led approaches provide the answer policymakers have been searching for.¹⁵

Community organisations exist to renew and regenerate disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This manifesto has set out how, in places where the market has failed and the state finds "hard to reach", they

create sustainable, low carbon economies that tackle poverty and entrenched inequalities, engineer local opportunities and operate within environmental limits.

They truly are the economic engines we need right now. They have the commitment and local knowledge to kickstart economic activity in places where big government money just tends to wash through and the private sector struggles to gain purchase. Critically they are leading the way to net zero: their supply chains are short, the employment opportunities they create are local, their activities are circular and regenerative rather than extractive.

So the next government needs to put communities in charge of local economic development. Our first two big reforms set the foundation for this. Introducing a Community Power Act would include a Community Right to Control Investment, as well as creating a structure for community economic development partnerships through Community Covenants. And inspiring a step change in community ownership will boost community enterprise across the country, creating a sustainable asset base from which community organisations from disadvantaged areas and minoritised communities can proactively drive their local economies forward.

But we believe the potential of community-led local economic development is so great, it requires its own specific focus. There is growing frustration with an approach to economic development funding that sees multiple different funding pots aligned to similar aims, many of which are accessed by competitive bidding processes. The Levelling Up Fund, the Towns Fund, the Shared Prosperity Fund, the new Long-term Plan For Towns: significant money is being spent, but it feels uncoordinated and much of it is passing communities by. Indeed, in a recent survey of Locality members, only 14 per cent said they'd seen any benefit from levelling up.¹⁶

That's why we need to put communities in charge. We believe the next government can do this by:

☀️ **Allocating long-term economic development funding to local areas.** We need to end the tyranny of multiple centrally-held competitive funding pots, and instead ensure communities can take control and plan for the long-term. There are clear models to build on here which put communities in charge. The Community-led Local Development (CLLD) strand of the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) took a genuinely "bottom-up" approach to economic development. It sought to create partnerships between councils and communities, prioritising the most disadvantaged areas.¹⁷ The Community Economic Development Programme was funded by government to support communities to develop and implement their own local economic plans.¹⁸ We can build these approaches into future economic development funding, and ensure that rather than having to bid in to various different funding strands, neighbourhoods have control over significant

long-term resource. So future local economic development funding should be streamlined, and a significant proportion ring-fenced for community-led partnerships, so local people can invest in their own priorities.

☀️ **Designating community "anchor" organisations as key strategic partners in local economic development and neighbourhood renewal.** Locality's strategic framework defines community anchors as "the most well-established community organisations, employing staff, delivering services, and owning or managing community spaces."¹⁹ They operate at a neighbourhood-level, with sufficient scale to connect with the public sector and play a key role in local service provision, but are hyper-local enough to offer genuine community connection and relationship building. Previous governments have recognised that community anchors play a unique role, with the ability to act as an intermediary between an often fragmented public sector and grassroots activity.²⁰ Locality research has described this as acting as "cogs of connection".²¹ Research by the Ubele Initiative has highlighted the particular role they play in building power and capacity in racially minoritised communities.²²

We therefore believe the particular qualities of community anchor organisations should be recognised across government and, in particular, embedded in approaches to tackling poverty and structural disadvantage, neighbourhood

renewal and local economic development. This should include community anchors playing a strategic role in local policy design and having access to resources to become sustainable through support for asset development and income generation, with a particular focus on building capacity in disadvantaged and minoritised communities.

☀️ **Devolving employment and skills support to neighbourhoods.** Our report “Communities Work” highlighted the distinctive role community organisations play in providing tailored and sensitive employment support for their community.²³ Their approach sees the whole person - knowing what type of support people need, taking into account the varied circumstances of their lives, and caring passionately about securing positive outcomes.

Often it is not just about helping the individual, but also their family. For example, Halifax Opportunities Trust run a Holiday Kitchen for children and families and this provides opportunities to talk to parents and engage them in possible education or training pathways, according to the aspirations they have. They are also able to support people to tackle barriers they might be facing to getting into work. For example, if they are working with a mother as part of their employment service, but find out she is struggling with supporting her son who is facing mental health challenges, then they can help them access the right support they need.

But the huge resource we have in organisations like this is never harnessed effectively by large scale, centralised approaches to employment support, like the coalition government’s flagship Work Programme.

There are growing calls for a more localised approach. The LGA’s “Work Local” model proposes giving local leaders a single pot of funding to work with local partners.²⁴ Demos’s “Pathways from Poverty” report looks at three alternatives to the Department for Work and Pensions.²⁵ Hilary Cottam’s “Radical Help” agenda outlines an approach centred around relationships, with “systems that make participation easy, intuitive and natural.”²⁶

The government has recently announced a small Universal Support programme.²⁷ This is what the Centre for Social Justice calls “the often forgotten ‘sister’ to Universal Credit – designed to help those facing barriers to the labour market into work and to overcome complex challenges”.²⁸ This is a welcome intervention, but at £53m is too small. What’s more, as is so often the case with government programmes, it overlays a new architecture on top of the existing tailored support infrastructure we already have in our communities. So we propose that Universal Support is not only expanded to roll out across the whole country, but is radically devolved to neighbourhoods. This service should not be delivered by the public sector alone. Instead, local authorities should work in partnership with local community organisations – particularly those led by and serving minoritised groups furthest from the labour market – to support them to provide highly localised, personalised support that builds on people’s strengths.

Big reform four:

Make collaboration – not competition – the guiding principle of public services

Community organisations work collaboratively with the public sector to join up services and systems at the neighbourhood level. As our manifesto sets out, they play a unique role in local services, with prevention in their DNA, able to tackle the most complex problems due to their trusting relationships, local knowledge and intrinsic commitment.

However, their ability to do this effectively and consistently around the country is hampered by top-down, bureaucratic commissioning and procurement processes. The last decade has seen a trend towards scale, where local authorities seek to drive down short-term costs by bundling up services into big outsourcing contracts. The large size of these contracts, and the complex competitive tendering processes that award them, have increasingly made local services the preserve of multinational outsourcing companies and big national charities. Competitive tendering, in a climate of austerity and with a bureaucratic procurement culture, has

made it very hard indeed for community organisations to compete and has time and again crowded out community power.

There are a growing number of examples of local authorities doing things differently. Locality has built up a growing network of [Keep it Local](#) councils, who are committed to finding a different way and are developing long-term public service partnerships with local community organisations.²⁹ However, they are doing this despite the wider national policy drivers. These are clearly described by the Crown Commercial Services procurement guidelines, which state that the over-riding requirement is to achieve value for money through competition.³⁰ While in theory “best value” incorporates broader notions of social value, the marketised policy framework, tough financial climate and risk averse procurement culture mean that it is invariably conflated with “lowest cost”.

This is recognised by the very fact that social value legislation was introduced by the coalition government, as an adjunct to its Open Public Services agenda. The Open Public Services White Paper in theory opened up public service commissioning to a wider range of providers, including small local

charities.³¹ However, in practice, it has led to scale and standardisation, with local community organisations at a huge competitive disadvantage compared with big companies and national charities.

The Social Value Act was an attempt to rebalance the scales and inject a more explicit consideration of wider social, economic and environment benefit into procurement decision making. However, it has been ineffective in fundamentally shifting the dial. There are a number of practical reasons for this: the fact that it only requires commissioning bodies to “consider” social value; its focus is on additional rather than intrinsic social value. But fundamentally it is limited in what it could ever achieve, given it is attempting to graft on social elements to an essentially unsocial system. We need to create an approach to public services where a Social Value Act is unnecessary, because social value is the point.

The government’s post-Brexit procurement reform legislation – Transforming Public Procurement – has been an opportunity to chart a different course. But this has not been taken. It makes some small tweaks that will be picked up and run with by those who are instinctively inclined to make use of them. But it leaves in place the fundamentals of a competitive, marketised approach.

We therefore require a much bigger reset. The Community Right to Shape Public Services, proposed by the Community Power Act, would be a great start. This would strengthen the existing Right to Challenge to give local people an effective means of working in partnership with the public sector to provide better services.



To go further, the next government should also:

- ☀️ **Embark on a major reform of how public services are commissioned**, making collaboration – not competition – the guiding principle. It should prioritise long-term partnerships between the public sector and local communities, replacing the current focus on competitive tendering with mechanisms which support collaboration.

They could do this by reforming what is called the “make or buy” decision, where a commissioning body considers whether a service will be delivered in-house or go out to tender.

At present, the option of building a partnership with a local community organisation to provide a local service sits within the “buy” route, meaning it is subject to competition. Instead, we propose that establishing a long-term partnership with a local community organisation to provide a person-centred service should be part of the “make” process.

This would take community providers out of the strictures of an inappropriate procurement regime, and instead enable proper co-design and collaboration to create services that really work.

- ☀️ **Ensure long-term funding that prioritises prevention.** It is clear that our public finances will continue to be very tight for years to come. But there are two structural funding questions that are critical:
 - **A sustainable long-term funding settlement for local authorities.** Councils have borne the brunt of the cuts over the last decade – and have

seen their finances descend into a scramble for centrally-held, prescriptive short-term funding, often requiring competitive bidding into multiple different pots. This regime makes it impossible to plan for the long-term, and has seen preventative funding slashed, with barely enough resource to cover statutory duties.³³ That’s why we have backed calls from the local government sector, including the Local Government Association (LGA), for the government to resume the Fair Funding Review, and to address the fragmented funding landscape local government is facing. Local government funding should be settled on a multi-year basis to ensure that councils can maintain and build their relationships with communities through stable and sustainable funding. Local government finances should be in a secure position, to enable them invest in their relationships with communities in their places, not just through funding, but also through capacity building, advice and partnership.

- **A shift to prevention.** The next government should revisit [The Hewitt Review](#) and prioritise – and even go further than – its findings on illness prevention and health promotion.³⁴ It should commit to increase the share of NHS budgets at Integrated Care System level going towards prevention by at least five per cent over the next five years. Our research, alongside NHS England and the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities, on the role of communities in

the health system has shown the importance of taking a community-led, prevention-first approach.³⁵ There is a growing understanding that the pressures on elective, urgent and emergency, and primary care will only worsen if people aren't supported to live healthier lives in their communities. Increasing resource in this area and coupling it with wider policy shifts to support collaboration – particularly with community organisations led by and supporting those most at risk of health inequalities – can help local organisations shift the focus of the health system towards prevention. Key to this is a sustainable strategy and funding for social prescribing that prioritises community development and localised approaches. Community organisations are often expected to deliver activities for patients but without the necessary funding to resource them. Where this results in GP surgeries taking social prescribing in-house, it severely impacts the quality of the service, losing the trust and knowledge such organisations hold with local people to make real impact on their health and wellbeing.



Big reform five: Community-led housing and planning

Adequately addressing the housing crisis is a challenge that successive governments have failed to meet. There is no sharper divide in our country than the one created by our dysfunctional housing market.

Supply is clearly the core issue: for a long time, we have failed to build enough homes. Recent research shows Britain now has a backlog of 4.3m “missing homes”.³⁶ England’s current target of building 300,000 homes per year is consistently undershot – but even meeting this will not be enough to catch up the deficit of years of undersupply. At the same time, in some neighbourhoods there are high levels of long-term empty homes, as well as disused retail and commercial spaces. These could be refurbished to meet housing needs and address the blight of low quality housing in those areas.

The impact of this failure on people’s lives is severe: high rents, unaffordable mortgages, homelessness on the rise. A good place to live is fundamental to people’s health and wellbeing; yet it is disproportionately younger adults, people from racially minoritised communities,

and those on low incomes who are more likely to experience housing affordability problems.

Building the right homes in the right places is politically fraught. People often feel disempowered by centralised decision making seemingly imposing unwanted development in ways local people can’t control. So-called NIMBYism has proved a powerful brake on political ambition and sits at the root of numerous policy retreats over recent years.

The solution to this, however, must be more local control not less. The success of neighbourhood planning shows that areas with a neighbourhood plan allocate more land for housing than areas without one.³⁷

It’s not that people are against homes being built in their neighbourhoods – it’s just that they want the right homes in the right places, that support the needs and aspirations of the local community.

This is why community-led housing and neighbourhood planning should be seen as central planks of our solution to the housing crisis.

There are growing numbers of community organisations building small-scale, locally developed housing that is designed

and managed according to local priorities. This burgeoning movement has been encouraged by government policy in the past, not least the Community Housing Fund. However, revenue support for pre-build stages has been stopped, just at the moment it should be ramping up.

So the next government needs to **turbocharge community-led housing**. To be able to deliver viable schemes, communities need the right mix of early-stage revenue support along with access to capital grants and finance. A National Community Ownership Strategy would provide an opportunity to embed this in long-term housing strategies to avoid the start/stop nature of one-off programmes.

Beyond supporting community-led housing, **all large-scale development projects should build in opportunities for community ownership**. Each big development should be required to co-design with the local community a building that would be transferred into community ownership, to provide a viable multipurpose community hub that enables residents to develop capacity and build community power. The building transferred should include an income generating element – such as retail space, flats, car park or wind turbine - which are also in community ownership and can provide a long-term income stream to support community action.

Reviving derelict land and buildings is also a key opportunity for community ownership. Various proposals have been made recently: the government's own plans to turn vacant plots of

land and derelict buildings into new homes and community spaces via a "Right to Regenerate"³⁸ the New Economics Foundation's call for a community right to buy empty homes in disadvantaged areas³⁹ Power to Change's plans for a British High Street Investment Vehicle to help communities buy disused high street assets.⁴⁰ The government's Empty Homes Programme in 2012 was a hugely successful initiative, which provided grant funding accessed by numerous community organisations to purchase and refurbish empty properties.⁴¹ These ideas could be brought together under the auspices of the National Community Ownership Strategy to set out a clear, consistent and far reaching approach to revitalising our places.

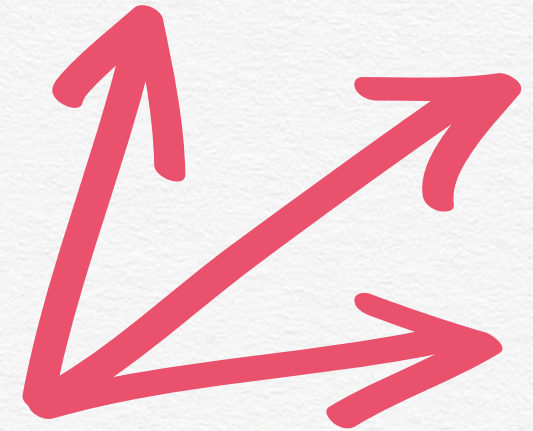
Finally, **extending support for Neighbourhood Planning** would be a crucial means of ensuring local support for building the homes we need. Since it was introduced in the Localism Act in 2011, well over 1,000 neighbourhood plans have been brought forward, and there are thousands more in development. The Commission on the Future of Localism showed how neighbourhood planning had been the most successful of the Localism Act's community rights, due to its mix of real statutory weight and funded technical advice and support.⁴² It gives communities power to shape the growth of their neighbourhoods in their own image, securing housing that reflects local need, bringing forward more housing than would otherwise have been the case, and protecting locally-valued green spaces.

The next government needs to build on this success, in particular by extending the reach of neighbourhood planning into disadvantaged areas and minoritised communities. There is necessary complexity to developing neighbourhood plans, in order to ensure they are taken seriously within the wider, highly technical planning system. While there is support on offer to help communities through the process, so far the opportunities have been taken up more in affluent rural areas than

disadvantaged urban ones. For example, 94 per cent of “made” neighbourhood plans were led by a parish or town council.⁴³ So to maximise the opportunity of neighbourhood planning, the next government should significantly increase resources to disadvantaged and minoritised communities to enable them to engage in the process and help put them in control of development in their areas.



Conclusion: Signposts to a hopeful future



For those working to support community power to flourish in the here and now, our current political moment can feel hugely frustrating. We see our economy and wider political systems driving inequality, ill health and environmental degradation; the consequences of which heap mounting pressure on community organisations to pick up the pieces. Yet in their response to these multiple crises, community leaders are signalling a way out, with approaches that get upstream of potential problems and stop them at source.

The frustration stems not just from the systems which are placing community organisations under such strain, but also from the lack of recognition and visibility of the powerful solutions which are emerging.

Our task is to change that. At Locality we are determined to bring this agenda to the heart of our politics. As the national membership network for community organisations, we see our members overcoming the odds every day, providing hope for communities through the toughest of times.

This manifesto showcases the positive vision of thriving neighbourhoods we believe we can achieve if we unlock community power. We need politicians from all parties to understand that despite the huge challenges, the pressing problems that will dominate incoming ministers' red boxes, there are community-powered solutions signposting a hopeful future.

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Locality supports local community organisations to be strong and successful. Our national network of over 1,800 members helps hundreds of thousands of people every week. We offer specialist advice, peer learning and campaign with members for a fairer society. Together we unlock the power of community.

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