

Thriving neighbourhoods, connected communities

Locality's strategic framework 2026-2030

October 2026



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Thriving neighbourhoods, connected communities

> Communities across the country are achieving amazing things – against the odds and despite the barriers. Now is the moment to bring community power from the margins to the mainstream.

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Introduction

Locality is the national membership network supporting local community organisations to be strong and successful. We unlock the power of community to solve society's biggest problems. Our members create the services their communities need most, in spaces where everyone belongs. They are rooted in some of the most disadvantaged, and most inspiring, neighbourhoods in the country.

Local community organisations

Community organisations are locally rooted organisations that exist to transform local people's lives, to improve their area and to create a fairer society. Run by and for local people, they focus on one place, with deep, trusted relationships with local people and partners. They provide the services their communities need, create local jobs, run buildings and spaces, and bring people together in places where everyone belongs. They are community power in action.



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Look closely at what our members are doing and you see something remarkable. In the face of austerity, division, rising extremism and relentless financial pressure, they are holding communities together. They are employing local people, running community buildings and spaces, delivering services that the NHS and local councils cannot provide, and creating spaces where people can meet across difference and build something better together. They are not waiting for national policy to catch up. They are already doing it.

Our members support over 300,000 people every week. They provide an average of 13 different services such as employment and skills, nursery provision, social prescribing, mental health support, housing, adult social care, arts, culture, climate action, and much more. Some were formed only recently to save a local building. Others are over a century old, rooted in the Settlement movement that gave birth to Locality itself.

Locality has roots as an organisation dating back to 1920, although we were established in our current form in 2011. Since then, we have successfully supported local community organisations and influenced the direction of national and local policy. In 2025 we undertook a thorough review of our strategy. This document is the result. We have re-committed to our vision, mission and five strategic objectives. What has changed is our focus: sharper, bolder, and firmly grounded in what we know works.

In this strategy period we are committing to:

- helping members move from crisis response to long-term strength; stepping off the reactive treadmill and onto a development path using our model of the community anchor organisation to help community organisations succeed
- responding boldly to rising division and extremism; supporting community organisations to build cohesion and connection from the ground up
- using a rare and time-limited convergence of political conditions to push for the systemic changes community organisations need
- building a more financially resilient Locality, with a diverse income base and the internal systems to do our work well.

This framework sets out our priorities as we head towards 2030. It is designed to be flexible in the face of continued volatility. But our purpose is clear: **to support local community organisations so they can build thriving neighbourhoods and connected communities.**



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Our operating context

We are living through a period of overlapping, intensifying pressures and challenges – the age of permacrisis. It's a tough environment for everyone, particularly for local community organisations struggling to manage increased demands and pressures with a significantly more challenging funding environment. However, if there is one thing our members show time and time again, it's a clear sense of determination. This challenging environment also offers opportunities, and we're determined to seize them.



An economy that isn't working for many

Communities across the country continue to navigate the long shadow of austerity and the pandemic while facing the relentless pressure of the cost-of-living crisis, accelerating climate impacts, and a technological revolution reshaping how people live, work and connect. Economic insecurity has become a defining feature of daily life for millions, and nowhere is it felt more sharply than in neighbourhoods long overlooked or under-invested in.

These pressures do not land evenly. Years of entrenched disadvantage and fragmented local services have made the role of community organisations more essential, not less. As our Community Powered Neighbourhoods report sets out, the areas most in need of renewal are often those where community anchors already act as stabilisers. It is in these places where trusted relationships, local knowledge and deep commitment drive the kind of change that national institutions alone cannot deliver.

Our members tell us they are under more pressure than ever. Many are spending the bulk of their time and resources on crisis management – food banks, emergency advice, reactive support – when what they want is the space to think and plan for long-lasting benefits for their local community. Helping members make that transition from emergency response to strategic impact, and influencing the systems that prevent and enable that, is one of our most important tasks in this strategy period.

A convergence of political conditions

At the same time, something significant has shifted at the national level. We're not satisfied with the current level of knowledge and attention given to the role of community organisations by decision makers and policy makers. However, after years of piecemeal and fractured policy on neighbourhoods and communities, there is now a genuine convergence of conditions that create real possibility for community power.

The government's Pride in Place Strategy, alongside long-term funding for communities experiencing the double disadvantage of high deprivation and weak social infrastructure, signals that neighbourhoods matter to government in a way they have not for years. The Civil Society Covenant represents an explicit commitment to partnership with community organisations. The Community Right to Buy, for which Locality has campaigned for nearly a decade, become law in 2026. And neighbourhood governance reform offers, for the first time, a statutory framework for community voice at the most local level.

This convergence will not last indefinitely. Policy windows open and close, and conditions will shift. Our task is to use this moment deliberately to push for the specific, achievable changes that will make the biggest difference to community organisations for the long term, and to demonstrate through our delivery work what community power looks like in practice.

Rising division and the case for connected communities

Social division is deepening. Members across the country are reporting more racist incidents, more local tensions, and the emboldening of narratives that pit communities against each other. Toxic online discourse fuels mistrust. People who are understandably angry about the state of their lives are being offered simple, divisive answers to complex problems. Some politicians and commentators are fanning mistrust and division.

Our Creating Places for Everyone programme has shown how deeply racial injustice is woven into the lived experience of communities, and how central it must be to any credible vision of social change. It has also shown the courage and creativity of local organisations who, often quietly, create spaces where people meet across difference, rebuild trust, and refuse the pull of division.

What we know from our members is that the antidote to division is found at the local level. It is in places where people actually come together, do things alongside each other, and find their shared purpose and identities. That is what community organisations do every day. Our job is to make sure they can keep doing this work and do more of it.

We will be clear about where we stand on this. Fearlessness is one of our values and we intend to live it. We will speak out against extremism and injustice. We will support members navigating difficult conditions locally. And we will hold our position without aligning ourselves with any party or political interest. Our independence is vital in supporting members and speaking up for them.

Bewildering and unexpected changes in how we live our lives

Two further forces will shape the environment we work in: technological change and the climate emergency. On these areas, many community organisations do not have the bandwidth or the resources to be able to take proactive action, or build knowledge of how to use technology to improve efficiency or support business models.

On technology: AI and digital tools are creating real opportunities for community organisations to extend their reach, improve their evidence and deliver better services. They also carry real risks – digital exclusion, the amplification of bias, and the replacement of relational work with automated processes. We do not yet have all the answers, but we have a clear position: technology should serve communities, not extract from them. We will support our members to use it well, and we will be part of the national conversation about what good looks like.

On climate: we see community ownership and climate resilience as deeply connected. Organisations that own their buildings, generate their own energy and manage their own assets are not just better for the environment – they are more financially sustainable, more independent and more powerful. There is huge interest from community organisations in taking more action on climate. There is an opportunity to link this interest and the moral case for action with hard-nosed business case improvements.

> **Look closely at what our members are doing and you will see something remarkable.**







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The community anchor model

Local community organisations support local people in a specific place over the long term. They come in all shapes and sizes, and will often own and run places like community centres, parks, libraries, cafés and swimming pools. Community spaces are a vital part of this model – providing the places where people interact, get connection and feel part of their neighbourhood. They run a range of services that their community needs most, from housing, employment, health and wellbeing to arts and culture. This rich diversity is important for the health of our civil society.



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Local community organisations support a specific place. They are often set up and run by and for local people, or have grown out of funded regeneration projects. Some of our members were established by philanthropists in the 19th century, and have evolved and adapted to become community-led powerhouses in their neighbourhoods. New community groups are being set up all the time, and our dual role is to both build this movement of new community groups, and to support them to become strong community organisations. Strong, locally-rooted community organisations play a vital role: they provide spaces for people to come together; they develop services to meet local needs; they are important local employers; they support people into training and volunteering to build confidence and skills; and they provide a strong local voice, working alongside public and private sector partners.

The most well-established community organisations are community anchor organisations. They tend to be the strongest and most successful, employing staff, delivering services and owning or managing community spaces. The community anchor model is central to our theory of change on how we create thriving communities and a fairer society.

What is a community anchor?

A community anchor organisation is a locally rooted, independent, multi-purpose organisation that exists to support the long-term wellbeing of its neighbourhood. These organisations are run by and for local people, with deep, trusted relationships that have often been built over decades. They typically combine:

- a strong local identity and presence in the neighbourhood
- long-term stewardship of buildings or community-owned assets
- a mix of services, activities and enterprises shaped around the needs of local people
- a role convening and coordinating local groups, networks and partnerships.

Our membership and the anchor development journey

Locality has an open, inclusive membership for local community organisations. We provide support for all of our 2,000 members who come in every size, legal form and stage of development – from newly formed groups taking their first steps, to century-old institutions at the heart of their neighbourhoods. Not every member would describe themselves as a community anchor, and there is no checklist or threshold that organisations must reach. Membership is for all community organisations that share our values and our belief in the power of local action. We're not interested in pushing a local organisation to follow a defined path for their development.

What the anchor model gives us is a direction of travel. It describes what is possible when a community organisation has the space, the support and the conditions to fully develop, and it provides a framework that helps organisations understand their own strengths and what they might build towards. We want to support organisations that aspire to develop along this pathway, helping them build stronger business models, take on assets, deepen their community roots and extend their impact over time. But this is an aspiration we share and enable, not a requirement we impose.



The five things that define the community anchor model

1 Strengthening local voice and influence

Facilitate resident involvement in decision-making, champion the neighbourhood's needs with partners, and convene local groups and networks to work collaboratively.

2 Bringing investment into the local economy

Attract and retain wealth locally through enterprise, asset ownership and contracts. Create local jobs, build skills and ensure economic benefits circulate within the community.

3 Providing the services people need

Design and deliver local services that are relational, holistic and responsive to real needs. Enable access to statutory services and include people that mainstream provision overlooks.

4 Building connection, belonging and cohesion

Provide inclusive spaces where people meet across difference, build trust and resist division. Embed racial justice and cohesion as everyday practice, not an afterthought.

5 Acting as a hub of connection

Support grassroots groups to develop and thrive. Act as a bridge between residents and the public and private sector. Provide the social infrastructure that aligns local action.

Why the community anchor model is at the heart of our strategy

Community anchors are not just service providers. They are democratic spaces, economic multipliers, drivers of cohesion and engines of long-term change. In areas where private investment is weak and public services have retreated, they are often the main economic driver, the largest local employer and the most trusted institution. They are, as our research and experience over many years shows, essential civic infrastructure.

Essential civic infrastructure

Anchors hold communities together during crisis – as demonstrated through the pandemic, the cost-of-living emergency, and extreme climate events. Their resilience enables neighbourhoods to withstand shocks and recover stronger.

Drivers of long-term neighbourhood transformation

Our Community Powered Neighbourhoods research shows that when anchors are properly supported, they can transform social and economic outcomes – particularly in places experiencing the most entrenched disadvantage.

The missing ingredient in national strategies

The government's Pride in Place Strategy acknowledges the need for long-term, neighbourhood-level action. Locality's analysis shows these investments will only succeed if community anchors are central to design, governance and delivery – not peripheral.

Leaders in cohesion, social and racial justice

Our Creating Places for Everyone programme has demonstrated that anchors have a unique role in building racially just, cohesive communities. This strategy embeds racial justice and cohesion at the heart of our work with anchors.

Critical to realising community power

Anchors are where community power becomes real – where people gather, organise, influence, create and build. They turn abstract commitments in manifestos and funding streams into tangible outcomes for local people.

Community anchor organisations are the foundations of thriving neighbourhoods. They are practical, hopeful and resilient. They turn community power into action. And they are at the heart of Locality's vision for a fair society where every community thrives.



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Our vision, mission and values

Our vision

A fair society where every community thrives

Our mission

We support local community organisations to be strong and successful

Our values

Our values define how we work – with each other, with our members and with the wider world. In a period of rising division and deepening challenge, being clear about what we stand for matters more than ever.

Ambitious

We are optimistic and believe change is possible.

We set big goals and work hard to get there.

We inspire our members and each other to achieve more.

Respectful

We're open and honest.

We value the work and ideas of others.

We work together with others wherever we can.

Fearless

We do not stay silent in the face of injustice, division or extremism.

We speak up for what we believe in.

We challenge each other and the sector.

These values are not aspirational – they describe how we already work and how we hold ourselves accountable. Fearless, in particular, carries specific meaning in this moment. We will speak out against extremism and injustice. We will support members when they are under pressure for standing up for their communities. We will not be silent when silence would mean complicity.



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Our approach 2026-2030

We believe that in a period of economic insecurity, rising division and seismic technological change, the future will be shaped at the neighbourhood level. And it will be community organisations that hold communities together, confront injustice and build something better.

This is not wild optimism in the face of evidence. It is the conclusion we draw from what our members do every day. Across the country, community organisations are proving – often in the most difficult conditions – that local people, given the right support and the right conditions, will come together, solve problems and build something that lasts. The blueprint for a better future exists. It is already being built, right here on our doorstep.



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Our task is to support more of this, in more places, with better conditions for it to succeed. We want to see the power of community move from the margins to the mainstream: embedded in how government programmes are designed, how public services are delivered, how assets are owned and how neighbourhoods are governed.

Our approach is organised around the community anchor model. We support organisations to develop along the anchor pathway. We use our network, evidence and influence to change the systems that hold them back. And we build the kind of national body that community organisations actually need: one that is led by them and their experience, that does the work alongside them, not just on their behalf, and where solutions are co-created.

To achieve these goals, we focus on five strategic objectives that guide and shape all of our activity.

By 2030, we want to see:

More strong and successful community organisations

This is especially important in communities facing the greatest disadvantage. We will help them to develop along the anchor model pathway so they own assets, employ people and provide what their neighbourhood actually needs.

More community-led solutions to climate and economic crisis

Community organisations use local knowledge and action to involve local people in funding solutions, through green business models and owned assets at the core of local climate resilience.

More neighbourhoods with real power

People should have control over the buildings, services and investment that shape their futures. Community anchor organisations should be at the heart of national, regional and local priorities We will work with partners to see support and investment in community organisations to support local economic development, people-centred public services, and local decision making.

More cohesive, connected places

With greater connection, division and extremism cannot take root. We want to see racial justice is embedded in everyday practice. Community organisations should be equipped and resourced to support connected and cohesive communities where equity is built into everyday practice.

More use of technology that delivers benefits for local organisations and communities

Technology can help organisations extend their reach, strengthen their evidence base and deliver better services. An inclusive approach means that communities can shape the impact of technology on their neighbourhoods, rather than being shaped by it.



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Our strategic objectives

Our five strategic objectives describe the work we do and who we are. What has changed in this strategy period is the sharper focus and bolder ambition within each one – shaped throughout by the community anchor model, our commitment to tackling division and racial injustice, and the urgency of the moment.

The strategic objectives are not a list of actions, so we have deliberately not included a list of metrics and performance indicators. The volatile climate means that a flexible tactical approach is needed within a strong direction setting framework. This strategy sets the direction for our work, rather than presenting a list of activities. We will set out more detailed annual business plans, which provide measurable annual targets and milestones and help us to assess progress in delivering our strategic priorities.



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Strategic objective 1: Resources and tools

Make it easier for community organisations at every stage to access the support they need



Strategic objective 2: Direct support

Deliver expert support that helps community organisations be stronger, more resilient and better connected



Strategic objective 3: Membership network

Build a national network where community organisations learn, connect and lead together



Strategic objective 4: Influence

Change the systems and policies that hold community organisations back



Strategic objective 5: A strong and successful Locality

Be a financially resilient, values-driven organisation that earns the right to lead

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Strategic objective 1

Resources and tools

Making it easier for community organisations at every stage to access the support they need

We have built a substantial library of resources, tools and practical guidance over many years. Our My Community platform reaches community organisations across England. In this strategy period we will make better use of what we have built – more targeted, better organised, clearer about what it is for – while working with partners and investing in new resources for the issues that matter most right now.

We will be more deliberate about the advice and resources that communities need. The goal is a coherent journey that takes an emerging community group from first steps to fully developed community anchor organisation, with the right support available at every stage.

- **Community anchor development resources:** practical toolkits on building stronger business models, asset ownership, community shares and financial resilience – supporting organisations at every stage of the anchor development journey
- **Cohesion and racial justice resources:** practical guidance drawing on Creating Places for Everyone learning, helping community organisations to embed racial justice and tackle division in their everyday practice
- **Climate and digital resources:** tied directly to business model development – helping organisations understand how energy ownership reduces costs and increases resilience, and how digital tools can extend reach and improve evidence
- **My Community platform:** developed as the national hub for community action, accessible to the widest range of organisations and kept as a genuinely open resource
- **Activities that build new community organisations:** projects that involve more people in their local communities and support the development of emerging organisations, with particular focus on areas of high deprivation and low social infrastructure

Strategic objective 2

Direct support

Delivering expert support that helps community organisations be stronger, more resilient and better connected

Our direct support work, our consultancy, projects and programmes, is how we create lasting change with community organisations and the partners who work with them. It is also how we generate the income that makes everything else possible.

One of the most important things we can do for our members is help them escape the reactive treadmill. Too many community organisations are stuck in crisis mode, providing emergency food, plugging gaps in public services, firefighting, with no time or resource to think strategically, develop their business model or build the kind of organisational strength that would let them do so much more.

Our direct support in this strategy period will be increasingly focused on that transition: from emergency response to long-term development, from dependency to independence, from service provider to genuine community anchor.

- **Anchor development support**: working directly with community organisations – especially those in the most disadvantaged areas – to develop their business models, strengthen their governance, build their financial resilience and move along the anchor development pathway
- **Specialist consultancy**: community ownership, service transformation, cohesion and racial justice, neighbourhood health, climate resilience and community-led economic development – work that is grounded in evidence and delivers lasting change
- **Programmes and projects**: larger-scale funded work aligned with our strategic priorities, including delivery of national programmes where we can have significant reach and impact
- **Agile and responsive service offer**: a proactive approach to identifying and responding to issues facing community organisations and leading on horizon scanning opportunities
- **Joining up services and membership**: ensuring that our direct support work connects to our member network – so members know what we can offer, services staff know who our members are, and the whole organisation is pointing in the same direction

Strategic objective 3

Membership network

Building a national network where community organisations learn, connect and lead together

Our membership network contains over 2,000 organisations, rooted in their communities, with decades of collective knowledge. This is our greatest asset and provides our legitimacy as a national voice, and our evidence on how we can build a better future. It is where peer learning happens, where solidarity is built, and where community organisations find the connection and support that keeps them going.

We will maintain our open, inclusive approach to membership. Keeping financial barriers low is a deliberate strategic choice: we want to support organisations at every stage, of every size and type, to succeed. We will also be more intentional about what we offer to organisations at different levels of maturity. Our larger, more established anchor members need a different kind of support to our emerging members, and they have told us they want us to do more for them that is relevant to their particular conditions.

We are a member-led organisation with members leading our strategy through our board of trustees. We are proud of our knowledge and connections with our members as a national organisation. Our team has deep local knowledge and strong relationships and we want to maintain and build on this to do the best we can in representing their needs with national decision makers. We aim to constantly respond to regular feedback on the priorities, concerns and issues raised by our members.

- **A more segmented member offer:** maintaining an open and inclusive network while developing a clearer, more targeted offer for community anchor organisations, including national and regional peer learning sessions, policy roundtables, and connections between anchor leaders
- **Strong member engagement:** building the time and space for peer connection, through events, networks and diverse communication channels, and ensuring all parts of our team are able to build a deep understanding and relationships with members
- **Support and advice on cross-cutting challenges:** supporting members to tackle division and build cohesion in their communities. Supporting members to use technology well and understand what climate action means for their business models
- **Celebrating and recognising community organisations:** using our major national events to celebrate community power, amplify member voices and build the connections that sustain the network
- **Growing and diversifying the membership:** with a particular focus on under-represented communities and organisations in areas with weak social infrastructure, where membership and peer connection matter most

Strategic objective 4

Influence

Changing the systems and policies that hold community organisations back

We have never been better placed to influence the national agenda on community power. There is a genuine convergence of conditions: neighbourhood policy is moving in our direction, government has made explicit commitments to civil society partnership, and the evidence base for what community anchor organisations achieve has never been stronger. Our task is to use this moment deliberately.

We will be bold and specific about what we are asking for. We will be honest about what is working and what is not. We will name the barriers, including when they are created by well-intentioned policy, and we will push for the changes that will make the biggest difference over the long term.

We will be clear about where we stand on division, extremism and injustice. Our influencing work is not just about policy levers. It is about making the case for a different kind of future: one built on community power, shared belonging and the belief that people are more than the problems they face. That argument needs to be made, clearly and persistently, in the current climate.

- **Championing the community anchor model in national policy:** making the case for it to be at the heart of Pride in Place, neighbourhood governance reform, the Neighbourhood Health Service, Get Britain Working and public service reform more broadly

- **Pursuing specific, achievable asks to support community organisations:** such as a National Community Ownership Strategy, neighbourhood governance regulations that put community anchors at the centre, commissioning reform that stops crowding out community organisations, and sustained investment in social infrastructure

- **Working alongside members to support them to have a stronger voice:** helping members have more influence locally, and working together to build a strong collective voice on issues which matter to members

- **Speaking clearly on division and extremism:** a strong, principled public position rooted in our values and our evidence. Supporting members navigating difficult conditions and making the case that community-led cohesion is the most effective long-term response to division

- **Building the evidence base:** systematic collection and use of what our members experience: what works, at what cost and why it matters, to make compelling arguments to government, funders and commissioners

- **Strengthening partnerships:** working with other national organisations, campaigns and sector bodies to amplify our collective voice, including through We're Right Here and the wider community power movement

Strategic objective 5

A strong and successful Locality

Being a financially resilient, values-driven organisation that earns the right to lead

We cannot support others if we don't have a strong foundation for our work. Like all charities and infrastructure organisations, we also face significant funding challenges. We are committed to building an organisation that is as strong and purposeful as possible to support our members.

Financial resilience means a diverse income base – programmes, consultancy, grants, sponsorship, investment income and more – that does not leave us exposed when a single source of income ends. It also means being disciplined about what we pursue. We don't accept work that contradicts our values. We actively pursue work that generates income to cross-subsidise our member support, our policy work and our open resources. This is a strategic choice we make with confidence: we do not see our members as our primary source of income by design.

We will focus on people – supporting and investing in our staff team and being a good and transparent partner within the wider sector.

Organisational strength means working smarter. We have an enormous amount of knowledge, expertise and institutional memory. We will be more purposeful about investing time in knowledge management.

- **A diverse, resilient income base:** large-scale programmes running alongside a healthy consultancy pipeline with agile, proactive business development to drive income that enables us to support our members and meets our values
- **People and culture:** investing in staff development, specialist expertise, wellbeing and cross-team working; and ensuring every staff member feels confident in supporting members and delivering our goals
- **Leadership on equity and inclusion:** fearless external communications on division, extremism and racial justice; diversity, equity and inclusion celebrated and embedded in how we recruit, develop and support staff and how we engage our membership; an organisation whose values are visible in how it operates, not just what it says
- **Working smarter:** strategic investment in knowledge management and using technology and digital tools to work more efficiently and effectively – and ensuring we are a credible voice on technology for the members we support



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Our business model

Locality is a membership organisation, but we do not base our business model on generating income from our members. We are incredibly grateful to our members for contributing to our costs through membership fees and some consultancy projects. We keep membership affordable because we want community organisations of every size and type to be part of our network, regardless of their income. Over three-quarters of our members access a free membership tier.



To fund our work, we generate income through contracts to deliver projects and programmes; consultancy work with community organisations and their partners; grant funding to support our goals; and other sources of earned income. This model is challenging, but it allows us to cross-subsidise member support, policy work, and advice and support to local organisations that we could not otherwise provide.

Some of the most important things we do for the community sector cannot be charged at commercial rates to community organisations who cannot afford to pay. The gap between what good infrastructure support costs and what communities can pay for it is a real area of pressure. Generating income through consultancy and programmes allows us to bridge that gap, and often funds us to work directly with our members.

We have a values-based approach to our business model and will not pursue work that contradicts this. We will not accept funding from organisations or administrations whose purpose conflicts with ours. Within those boundaries, we are entrepreneurial, commercially capable and happy to deliver a wider range of work that meets our goals and secures the income we need to do our job.

By 2030, our target is a business model that:

- is not over-reliant on any single contract, programme or funder
- has a mix of large-scale programmes running alongside a healthy consultancy pipeline
- generates enough cross subsidy to invest in supporting our members, our people, systems and future capacity
- gives us the financial independence to focus on long-term transformational change.



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Thriving neighbourhoods, connected communities

Across England, community organisations are doing something that no amount of national policy can replicate. In the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods – in the industrial and post-industrial heartlands, urban centres, coastal communities, and overlooked estates that have borne the weight of decades of under-investment – they are showing what is possible when local people are trusted, supported and given the conditions to act.

They own buildings that would otherwise have been sold off. They run services that the NHS and local councils struggle to provide. They create jobs, build skills, develop local enterprise and hold space for people to come together across difference. In times of crisis from pandemics, flooding, the cost-of-living emergency, to community tension, division and civil unrest, they are the first to respond and the last to leave.



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This is what community organisations do. Not as a new idea, not because of a government programme, but as the product of decades of community-led effort: rooted in trust, shaped by local knowledge and sustained by a long-term commitment to place. Our research, and the stories of our members, show that where community organisations are properly supported, they can transform places. They regenerate local economies, reduce demand on public services, build cohesion and create the conditions for people to take genuine control of their own lives and neighbourhoods.

> **Local community organisations are the foundations of thriving neighbourhoods. They are practical, hopeful and resilient. They turn community power into action.**

The challenge and the opportunity

Too many community organisations are stuck in crisis mode. They are providing emergency food, plugging gaps in statutory services and responding to immediate need with no time or resource to invest in their own strength and development. The gap between what they make possible and the resources they have to do it is one of the most significant challenges in our civic life.

At the same time, the conditions for community power have rarely been more favourable. National policy is moving in the right direction. The Civil Society Covenant, the Community Right to Buy, Pride in Place and neighbourhood governance reform all signal that government understands, at least in principle, that the future must be built from the neighbourhoods up. The evidence base for what community organisations achieve has never been stronger. There is a growing recognition, across government, funders and the public sector, that community organisations are not a supplement to the system – they are part of its essential infrastructure.

The question is whether that recognition translates into the kind of sustained, long-term support that community organisations actually need. That is the question this strategy is organised around.

What Locality does

Locality exists to make sure that community organisations have what they need to thrive, and that the systems around them support rather than obstruct that aim. We do this in four ways.

We support community organisations directly: practical advice, specialist expertise, peer connection, funded programmes and the tools that help organisations get stronger. We work alongside our members, not just on their behalf, and we take the development of the community anchor model seriously to help organisations at every stage of their development journey.

We build and sustain the network: 2,000 organisations connected across England, sharing what works, holding the sector together, giving local organisations access to a national conversation and a collective voice.

We use our influence: making the case to government, funders and commissioners for the systemic changes that will make the biggest difference. We bring evidence from the frontline into national debates. We campaign for the policy reforms that will unlock community power and we make the argument, persistently and factually, that investment in community organisations delivers for everyone.

We hold our position: In a period of rising division and political volatility, an independent national body that speaks clearly about the value of communities, stands with organisations navigating difficult conditions and refuses to be silenced on questions of justice and cohesion matters more than it has for a long time.



Thriving neighbourhoods, connected communities

This strategy is our commitment

Between now and 2030, we want to see more community anchor organisations in more places. We want these organisations to be stronger, better resourced and more deeply embedded in the success and joy of neighbourhood life. We want the community anchor model at the heart of national policy. We want communities that are cohesive, connected and resilient in the face of the pressures they face. We work for social justice, and we know this is not possible without racial justice.

This strategy is our plan for how we get there. It is ambitious because the moment demands ambition. And it is grounded in something we have seen, again and again, in every community we work with:

> **When communities come together, they can transform lives and build a fairer society.**

We are proud to stand alongside the organisations that are making it happen, and we are ready to work with everyone who shares that belief. Now is the time to bring the power of community from the margins to the mainstream.





Locality is the national membership network supporting local community organisations to be strong and successful. We unlock the power of community to solve society's biggest problems.

Our 2,000 members bring people together in places where everyone belongs, building connections, drawing on local strengths and responding to local needs. From creating opportunities in disadvantaged areas to leading climate action, they support over 300,000 people every week.

Locality helps our members grow their impact and secure their future. We work with government, funders and local authorities to remove the barriers community organisations face. Through specialist advice, peer learning, resources and campaigns we help every neighbourhood thrive.

locality
the power of community

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