

| What was Our Bigger Story?

Methodological reflections on a qualitative, multi-media, longitudinal study of resident-led change through the Big Local programme

March 2026



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Introduction

Big Local was a resident-led funding programme providing 150 disadvantaged areas in England with over £1m each to spend across 10-15 years, to create lasting change in their neighbourhoods. The programme was run by place-based funder, Local Trust, who believed there was a need to put more power, resources and decision-making into the hands of local communities, to enable residents to transform and improve their lives and the places in which they live. Big Local areas worked at their own pace to use their money according to their own plans and priorities, guided by four broad overarching outcomes:

1. Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
2. People will have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future.
3. The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises.

These outcomes underpinned the programme from the start. They were accompanied by a hypothesis developed in the early years of the programme that: *'long-term funding and support to build capacity gives residents in hyper-local areas agency to make decisions to act to create positive and lasting change'*.

Our Bigger Story (OBS) was commissioned by Local Trust as a qualitative, multi-media, longitudinal evaluation that ran alongside Big Local, charting the stories of change in 15 Big Local areas (ten per cent sample) to draw learning about the programme. OBS was designed to be one element of a wider programme of evaluative research commissioned or undertaken by Local Trust. Reflecting the wider programme ethos, OBS was not set up to measure change or to quantify impact against a set of pre-determined targets. It was guided by the wider programme theory, reflected within the hypothesis set out above, with an emphasis on following the journeys that the areas went on, observing change, and recording residents' own understanding of the learning that they gained along the way. It was predominantly formative, with an emphasis on learning as the programme unfolded. Local Trust stipulated that the research should follow a community development ethos, that there should be an element of capacity building for participants in the research, and that the findings should be accessible for communities. To ensure a complementary fit between the Big Local programme and the OBS research, Local Trust initiated an extensive, multilayered recruitment process for the evaluation team. The aim was to identify a team that would work well with residents and would be open to using creative methods of data collection and analysis.

As a qualitative, multi-media, longitudinal evaluation, data collection included individual interviews and learning conversations with residents, partnership members, Big Local workers, Big Local reps, locally trusted organisations (LTOs), local stakeholders (e.g. councillors), support providers, Local Trust staff and trustees. In total, over 950 interviews and conversations were conducted. More formal interviews were audio recorded and transcribed; the more informal conversations were noted. Focus groups and workshops, most often with Big Local partnerships in each of the areas, were conducted throughout the research period. In the middle years of the research (2018-2021), a handful of residents kept diaries for a period of 3-6 months, recording their reflections on being involved in Big Local, sharing insights that they perhaps would not have done through interviews or workshops. Filming was also an important form of data collection – films created by residents in each of the areas, films of the areas created by the research team and filmed discussions between people across the OBS areas. The Our Bigger Story team made over 150 films, many of which were made accessible on the [Our Bigger Story website](#) and/or [Vimeo channel](#). Each area had its own page within the OBS website providing a space where they could upload, and therefore share, their own films and other materials. These data collection methods were chosen as they were best able to meet the aims of the research (charting areas' stories of change and distilling the learning) and the desired approach and guiding principles (e.g. qualitative, developmental, engaged).

Analysis was ongoing throughout the research period. It was predominantly inductive and thematic (loosely speaking - identifying codes within the data and then grouping them together into themes). Each year the OBS team produced a report (or two) based on the emerging findings of the analysis. Towards the beginning of the research period, these reports focused on sharing learning about the experience and progress of areas to date. The analysis was based on the identification of broad, high-level themes, looking across the whole data set. Later on, reports focused more directly on different topics (e.g. leadership, legacy, capabilities, success). Within these more focused reports we were able to undertake more comparative analysis, examining the similarities and differences in experiences between areas, and longitudinal analysis, examining changes over time within and between areas. Findings have been shared through 13 reports and numerous films, alongside summaries, blogs and graphic illustrations.

This was a unique programme of research. Longitudinal studies of change in communities are relatively rare. As far as we are aware, the qualitative, multimedia dimension – recording change orally, textually, and visually, as it happened, for over a decade – has never been attempted before within the context of a programme evaluation. There has been much learning along the way. In this paper we discuss what the research involved, some of the opportunities that it afforded, and the challenges we faced. The focus is on the research methodology, not on our findings. We structure our discussion around four key elements of the approach – the focus on 15 Big Local areas, being longitudinal, utilising multiple (qualitative) methods, and the emphasis on learning as we went. For each, we reflect on what we did, what went well, what didn't go so well, and key learning. We hope that in sharing our experiences there is learning for others embarking on similar endeavours in the future.

Area-level focus, with a ten per cent sample

Reflecting its aim of charting how Big Local areas changed over time and what they learnt along the way, the focus of Our Bigger Story was on the areas themselves, and area-level learning. This stands in contrast to other approaches which might have focused on the (national) programme level, or on individual participants, although the research did encompass all. The evaluation sought depth rather than breadth. The decision was made at the start to work with 15 of the Big Local areas: a ten per cent sample of the 150 communities included in the programme. The sample size, determined by Local Trust, balanced depth of approach with resource availability.

Two key factors drove the selection of areas: an attempt to ensure a diverse set of areas (primarily geographical and demographic diversity); and the enthusiasm of areas to get involved. The latter was key given Big Local was about communities having the power to do what they wished and the significant commitment that the research asked for. In Spring 2015, an information leaflet, application forms and a short baseline survey were sent to all 150 Big Local areas with the aim of assessing interest in involvement in Our Bigger Story, including an understanding of, and a willingness to engage in multi-media activities. This was accompanied by taster workshops at a series of Big Local events organised by Local Trust in 2015. In total, 35 Big Local areas expressed an interest in participating in the evaluation. These were assessed against criteria which were designed to ensure a balanced sample covering, for example, areas that joined the programme at different stages of the programme (i.e. wave 1 areas that were announced in 2010, wave 2 areas announced in February 2012 and wave 3 areas in December 2012); areas that appeared to have got off to a stronger or weaker start; different parts of the country; a mix in terms of urban/rural/coastal areas; and differing population sizes.

The final group of 15 selected evaluation sites included:

- Big Local areas in all regions in England.
- Nine urban areas, three rural, and three coastal.
- Five 'wave 1' Big Local areas, six from 'wave 2' and four from 'wave 3'.
- Big Local areas with populations ranging from around 2,400 residents to around 11,500; with an average of 6,500.

Inception meetings were held with each of the 15 selected Big Local areas, ensuring that each had taken a strategic, collective, and informed decision to participate. Residents asked questions around confidentiality, time expectations and the availability of support from the evaluation team, and about ownership and archiving of evaluation materials. Some residents were concerned about the film making aspect of Our Bigger Story and the challenge of retaining control of public facing multi-media outputs. The OBS team dedicated time to building trust with partnerships and residents, particularly around the use of material. In line with the community development approach underpinning the research, training was provided to all areas on the use of multi-media, with a particular focus on film (69 people attended from across all 15 of the areas). Each area was offered a grant of up to £500 to purchase equipment (e.g. digital cameras) as a way of encouraging residents to develop their own materials.

All 15 areas have stayed involved in the research throughout the programme, albeit to different extents (see section two). Focusing the evaluation at the area level, and working with 15 of the 150 areas, has enabled in-depth insights into the journeys that areas have been on, achieving what has felt like an appropriate balance between depth and breadth. Ensuring that the evaluation was not imposed on areas and instead was something that areas actively sought to get involved in was an important principle, given the purpose of Big Local was to put communities in control. However, it could be challenged in research terms for creating a built-in bias in the initial sampling. At times the number of cases has felt too high, particularly given the duration of the programme. For instance, we amassed a sizeable body of data, including 15tb of film material, which became unwieldy to store and analyse, and there was a risk of getting lost in the complexity which gets exposed when working with a relatively high number of cases. Conversely, at times it has felt too little – we have questioned, for example, whether it would have been easier to identify high level trends and patterns with more areas involved; and whether it is possible to generalise across the programme when ‘only’ working with a ten per cent sample of the areas given the level of diversity that we have seen within them.

There were also ethical issues to work through associated with the selection of the areas, not least of which has been around confidentiality, anonymity and consent. We worked closely with Local Trust to select the areas, and part of negotiating access with them included making it clear to areas that they would be named in discussions with Local Trust and within all our reporting. Whilst our reporting did not name individuals it did include names of areas, and it was then hard to anonymise everyone involved in those areas even when they were not named. In addition, public facing film material makes anonymity impossible. We feel that we struck an appropriate balance here, but it meant compromises. If we had made the areas fully anonymous, they would not have been able to benefit from the interactions that they had through the research, either with Local Trust or with each other. The analysis may have been weakened by the need to disguise some of the important contextual characteristics of the areas. Equally, however, a lack of anonymity may have meant that some participants in the research did not share everything with us, and that we may not have reported things that we would have done if the reporting had been completely anonymous.

Longitudinal

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Perhaps the most notable feature of Our Bigger Story was that it was longitudinal – following the 15 areas as they progressed through the programme over a ten-year period. The first wave of 50 Big Local areas began in 2011, with Our Bigger Story commencing in 2015. Some of the areas were already well underway with an established partnership and plan delivery, others were just beginning. The research continued until 2025, although data collection effectively finished in the areas by December 2024, by which stage most of the areas had spent out.

Research was continuous throughout the ten-year period. Local Trust initially intended to have four distinct waves of fieldwork with some downtime in between each wave to allow for review and re-contracting. The research team, however, were concerned about maintaining relationships built in each area and so whilst the study took on a roughly annual cycle of interviews, films and observations in each of the individual areas, in practice this meant that the research team was continuously ‘in the field’ throughout the ten-year period.

The longitudinal nature of the research offered unique insights, working through the highs and low as areas experienced them in real time, ensuring that we were able to chart the stories of change as they happened rather than retrospectively. We were able to gather accounts as activities were planned, as those plans were enacted, and as they were reviewed. We were able to track progress in each of the areas, but also of the programme as a whole, and of some of the individuals involved. This was made possible through collecting data from the same areas and many of the same people (e.g. key partnership members) repeatedly over time, whilst also involving new people as individual and area level circumstances changed and people came and went from Big Local (e.g. reps, workers, partners). This mix gave rich insights from different perspectives – those embedded in the programme, those coming to it afresh, and those stepping back from their association with it. It is fair to say, however, that the data collection focused most heavily on those who were most closely associated with Big Local – with partnership members, reps, LTOs, workers, partners. Whilst we included wider residents from each of the areas, this was less frequent. As such, our findings may not reflect the views of all residents within each of the Big Local areas.

The building of trusting relationships with residents and the witnessing of meaningful change throughout the programme was important. This was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic when in a separately contracted two-year research study the research team were able to pivot the approach to online conversations with a wide range of residents and organisations in each of the 15 OBS areas, alongside 11 other areas, to learn about [how Covid-19 was impacting on communities](#). Local Trust commissioned the OBS team to undertake the Covid-19 research because of the relationships already established with the areas - vital during such challenging times for each of the communities. Through this additional research we strengthened our relationships with each of the areas even further, as the intensity of our contact with them grew and the research took on even more of a developmental approach.

There is no doubt in our minds that the longitudinal approach was valuable, and the areas involved spoke positively about its value. It was not, however, without challenge. Big Local demanded a lot from areas and the OBS research was an additional commitment, particularly for partnership members who met with the research team regularly over many years. We worked hard to make it meaningful, enjoyable, and to keep the demands on residents to a minimum. The annual residential weekends, bringing all Our Bigger Story areas together, were a highlight for residents and for the research team alike, but it was the developmental support provided by the lead fieldwork-based researchers that was most valued by partnership members. We had to ensure that we maintained informed consent over time, working through changes in leadership within the Big Local partnerships and navigating the sometimes-fleeting involvement of individual volunteers.

Perhaps inevitably, the research team also went through changes across the ten years, both institutionally and individually. Initially the project was based at University of Birmingham. As two of the research team moved on from Birmingham and the lead researcher retired, the project moved to Sheffield Hallam University in the final years of the study, with the logistical, ethical and regulatory challenges of moving a complex study from one university to another. Whilst three of the core research team were involved throughout, others joined the team part way through. The consistency was important for the relationships with individuals and areas and the real-time insights. The change was valuable through bringing fresh perspectives to the analysis, but also meant some depth of relationships with residents, workers and others was lost.

Whilst the research was longitudinal, following the areas throughout most of their involvement in the programme, it did not start right at the beginning of Big Local, and it finished just before the end. Some – including some residents from the areas themselves – suggested it would have been better if it continued for a few years beyond the closure of the programme to better understand its legacy. There is rarely the opportunity to fund research beyond the lifetime of an initiative through programme funds, and Big Local was no different.

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Qualitative, multi-media, engaged

The research design took inspiration from participatory action research (PAR) based approaches and principles, although it does not claim to be a PAR study. Although the research was not fully participatory in the sense of involving residents in the design and delivery of the study, it was highly engaged. Efforts were made throughout to share learning from the research with residents – on a one-to-one basis, through partnership meetings, and at workshops and residentials organised by the research team. Through such mechanisms researchers' interpretations were challenged and verified whilst residents were supported to reflect on their planning and delivery, what had worked and what had not, and what they had learnt along the way. Residents were also encouraged to contribute ideas about research themes/issues, both in terms of data collection and analysis. The annual residentials, to which all OBS areas were invited to send participants, were particularly important forums for sharing and verifying emerging findings, shaping future stages of the research, and building relationships between the participating areas and with the research team. These were trust based relationships, built over years, and became highly valued by both the research team and the residents. The skills and knowledge of the research team – which included community development expertise – were vital here. As one partnership member reflected:

“It's like knowing them [researchers and film maker] and you feel comfortable with them. Just like, to be honest, how many people would actually sit there and let them record you if you don't know them, that they have that way, that they make you feel part of it. They make you feel as though you're important and they want to listen to what you're saying. They all listen, and you can tell that they're interested.”

As outlined above, the data collection methods included interviews, workshops, diaries, photographs and films (made with and by residents), and gathering social media content produced by the areas (although not consistently over time). These were selected as they were the methods deemed most suited to address the research aims and desired approach. Across all the data collection there was an emphasis on being inclusive, flexible and developmental. Whilst the filming could have been intimidating, for example, interested residents were provided with training early on in Our Bigger Story on how to produce their own films, and the skills of our film maker helped put residents at ease. Collectively the films have given areas – and the programme as a whole – a unique visual record of change. This combined range of methods proved valuable, though individually some were more effective for the purpose of evaluation than others. For example, we could ensure a degree of consistency in interviews and workshops as they were within our control whereas posts by areas on the OBS website varied in their quality, frequency and relevance.

The approach was not without challenge. As noted, we produced a vast amount of data, leading to data storage and management issues. Analysis was challenging given the volume and varied nature of the data. We tended to foreground data from interviews, workshops and diaries in more formal analysis, with the data from the films – ironically – being somewhat invisible within our written reports: although fundamental to the analysis, they were not explicitly referenced in the same way that extracts from interviews are included as referenced quotes. We questioned at times whether it was systematic enough; whether a clear enough baseline was created; whether it could have been better designed to enable a deeper comparative analysis. We questioned whether it complemented, challenged or chimed with the considerable body of additional research and evaluation that Local Trust commissioned, and whether this mattered. We asked whether the research team got too close to the areas, leading to a loss of any critical edge within the research. Checks and balances were put in place to mitigate some of these risks – the latter issue, for example, was mitigated through having half the research team embedded within the areas through leading on the data collection, whilst the other half focused more on analysis – but it is important to recognise the limits, as well as the strengths, of the research approach.

Real-time learning

As indicated above, there was an emphasis within Our Bigger Story on continuous analysis to share findings as we went, with the principle of facilitating learning at an individual, area and programme level. This was realised through a cycle of (more or less) annual reporting (longer reports, short articles or blogs, films, animations etc), and more informally through discussions, workshops and meetings with residents and Local Trust staff.

The emphasis on reflection, development and learning embedded within Our Bigger Story – through our approach to data collection and analysis – was supported by two of our researchers also being community development professionals and by all the academics involved being able to work well with communities. This expertise was highly valued by the residents, helping to facilitate their reflexive learning – skills which are important for community leadership and which areas had identified as challenging during early stages of the programme. Indeed, the findings evidence how being involved in the research helped build skills and capabilities of residents. Participants told us that they valued this approach and the learning that they gained:

‘...And it's made me really think very deeply. I really, you know, changed my whole attitude to everything I do. “Why do I do it? Who's it for? What benefits do I hope these people get? And what benefits to me?” and I think it's made me really stop and think about this, and I hope, I hope I'm a better person.’

‘I feel like I've developed more confidence and self-reflection to actually have a lower anxiety to sit around the table and talk to people I don't know.’

This approach did, however, raise questions. The research process influenced how the areas involved in the study engaged in the Big Local. We provided opportunities to reflect with researchers and to gather and share with peers at the OBS residential, potentially influencing the results that we were reporting on. Does this matter, especially bearing in mind that all other Big Local areas also had reflection and networking opportunities and some were selected for other in-depth research studies too? Local Trust analysis of the OBS areas compared to all other Big Local areas showed little difference in terms of their experiences and outcomes. Perhaps more significant, there was also a risk that a dependency was created between the residents in the Our Bigger Story areas and the research team – did their involvement in the study affect their chances of sustaining beyond the programme? Overall, we think that the effect will be positive, but we are alert to the risk that it might not be.

Alongside facilitating learning for the areas, Our Bigger Story also facilitated learning within Local Trust. The Our Bigger Story research team worked closely with the Local Trust research team throughout the study, regularly sharing emerging findings for discussion, feedback and sense making. The study provided Local Trust with access to new findings and outputs almost every year. The Our Bigger Story research team often presented and facilitated discussions with staff, management, and Trustees. This

ongoing production of findings created an important feedback loop for Local Trust, providing content that was used to inform their plans for programme delivery, management and support, as well as identify topics for exploration by their own research team. As Our Bigger Story progressed, the exploration of specific themes such as leadership, support and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) influenced the delivery of the programme and the development of programme support. For example, findings in relation to the differing needs of areas informed the organisation's move towards a more tailored and diverse support offer for areas; the exploration of leadership influenced the creation of a new programme for new and established community leaders (the Community Leadership Academy); and towards the end of the study, findings in relation to EDI within the study areas helped inform research into EDI within the wider Big Local programme.

The Our Bigger Story study was a significant, ongoing, investment for Local Trust. This was a demonstration of a continued belief in- and commitment to- the study and its longitudinal approach. For Local Trust, the complexity of the Big Local programme meant that it was particularly important to have researchers working on the study who could deeply understand the programme and its complexity to be able to evaluate it. Because of the ability of the Our Bigger Story researchers to do this, and the development of a close relationship between them and the Local Trust research team over the years, the Our Bigger Story researchers and their findings were trusted by the organisation. Although there were clear advantages to developing a close working relationship with the study researchers over the course of the longitudinal study, there was also a reflection that each could have done more to challenge one another over the years.

Finally, Local Trust felt that the study was valuable in terms of documenting and increasing understanding about the everyday *practice* of resident-led decision making, including its challenges and how it could be supported. These findings not only informed the delivery of the Big Local programme itself but were also shared to increase understanding outside of the organisation and inform practice and policy after the end of the study in 2025 and the Big Local programme in 2026.

Conclusions

Big Local offered an innovative approach to supporting resident-led change, and Our Bigger Story a novel approach to its analysis. Adopting a qualitative, longitudinal, multi-media approach that sought to work developmentally with residents proved rewarding both for the individuals involved (researchers, community members and programme staff), and invaluable for ongoing programme learning and adaptation. Building trusting relationships between the research team, residents in each of the participating areas, and the programme staff at Local Trust was crucial in ensuring that the research provided rich insights and ongoing learning for all involved. This was dependent on the willingness and openness of the residents to engage whole heartedly in the process and on the expertise and credibility of the research team, particularly those who drew on their community development experience to lead the fieldwork.

There were plenty of challenges along the way, and it will inevitably face critique from those who would have preferred a different approach. The nature of the Big Local programme meant that a more formal, top-down, quantitative, measurement-based approach was less suited to analysing the myriad changes experienced in Big Local areas. It would have been unlikely to have engaged the diverse range of participants or led to the local learning that was made possible through the building of trust and support provided to participants through the approach adopted. Were we to start it again, though, we would put in place stronger systems and processes for research governance and data management right from outset. We might also spend more time developing a stronger programme theory (e.g. a theory of change) to allow for the multi-layered changes we observed to be more fully articulated and explained.

Overall, however, we are confident that the learning amassed has already proved valuable to those involved in Big Local. We hope that it will prove similarly valuable for those looking to develop, and evaluate, similar initiatives in the future.

Appendix 1: Our Bigger Story Reports

Report details	Summary	Links
<p>Our Bigger Story: The First Chapter Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson, Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans and Matt Edwards 2016</p>	<p>Identifies common themes emerging across the 15 diverse OBS areas, including areas of focus, achievements, challenges and long-term goals. Identifies a series of balancing acts which partnerships were navigating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Resident Led Plans and Reviews film
<p>Big Local: Beyond the Early Years Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson, Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans and Matt Edwards 2017</p>	<p>Presented early examples of progress against the four Big Local programme outcomes from the across the 15 OBS areas. It also discussed the different approaches adopted by each area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Summary report • Working for Change: The Big Local Outcomes film • What Works film • Big Local Diary Lines film
<p>Big Local: Reflections on 'resident led' change Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans 2018</p>	<p>Explores questions of resident identity, qualification and authenticity. It also discusses levels of resident activity, and different structures for negotiating or mediating residents' views and priorities; and it proposes a series of enablers for resident-led change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Resident led change film
<p>Big Local: Reflections on Community Leadership Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans 2018</p>	<p>Explores community leadership in Big Local areas in terms of tasks and skills. It identified several aspects that can help build community leadership, such as prioritising outreach work in order to engage 'quieter voices' and providing progression routes to leadership development. The report also explores challenges around leadership, such reaching diverse communities and being able to access power.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Community Leadership film

Report details	Summary	• Links
<p>Big Local: Reflections from ‘the Outside In’ Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans 2019</p>	<p>Considers the views and perspectives of key external stakeholders connected to OBS areas, such as local government and voluntary sector representatives. The report highlighted mixed views amongst stakeholders on the progress being made in OBS areas. The analysis highlighted positive stories about new or rebuilt relationships between councils and communities, but challenges around the small scale of Big Local versus the larger geographies of other decision-making bodies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report
<p>Big Local as Change Agent Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans, Phil Ware and Creative Media 2020</p>	<p>Reports on analysis of how the funding associated with Big Local has contributed to it being seen as a ‘catalytic change agent’. Funding, and other resources, have been mobilised through Big Local and this has been fundamental to change. The report explores elements of the programme design and how they have all affected the change progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Summary report • Changing Communities film • Big Local Voices: change and power film
<p>Building on Local: Learning about Big Local in 2020 Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans 2021</p>	<p>Analyses how areas had been affected by COVID-19: they had to suspend many projects and services, start up new ones in response to urgent needs, and move some activities online. Many areas built stronger local relationships as a result and identified new priorities moving forward. The pandemic also uncovered deep levels of need and pushed residents to their limits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Summary report
<p>Building Big Local Futures: Building systems of community connection and control Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans 2022</p>	<p>Examined whether and how community power was built through Big Local. Concluded that more powerful communities arose through Big Local through a combination of: the development of agency, of organisation, of effective relationships, and the investment of money and time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Building Community Power film
<p>Building Big Local Futures: Towards legacies for people and places Angus McCabe, Mandy Wilson and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans 2022</p>	<p>Examined how residents understood their achievements and the legacies being created through Big Local: physical legacies; improved local services and facilities; better lives for individuals through building confidence, skills and experience; and cultural legacies around perception of place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Legacies film
<p>A delicate balance: national support provision in the Big Local programme Mandy Wilson, Angus McCabe, Angela Ellis Paine</p>	<p>Analysed the support offer within Big Local, what is offered, how it was assessed by OBS areas, what they thought of it, and what affect it had. It concluded that there were tensions and balancing acts for Local Trust in providing support, including balancing the local with the national, mitigating risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Summary report • Support in the Big Local programme film

Report details	Summary	• Links
and Rob Macmillan, with Paul Morgans 2023	with control, enabling flexibility and ensuring compliance, understanding supply and demand, and utilising both expertise and relational support.	
Understanding success in Big Local Mandy Wilson, Ellie Munro, Angela Ellis Paine, Rob Macmillan, Peter Wells and Angus McCabe, with Paul Morgans July 2024	Examined 'success' against the four Big Local outcomes. Seven conditions were found to be particularly influential in shaping success against these outcomes, all of which interacted in complex ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Creating even better places to live film • Building skills and confidence film • Making change in communities film
Learning practices, skills and capabilities for resident-led change in Big Local Areas Mandy Wilson, Ellie Munro, Angela Ellis Paine, Rob Macmillan, Peter Wells and Angus McCabe, with Paul Morgans 2025	Identified eight practices for resident-led change Some residents brought prior learning to Big Local, while others learnt over time, through getting on and doing and through engaging in training and support. Found that the development of practices, skills and capabilities was uneven across areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full report • Research team film
Learning from Our Bigger Story: Synthesising ten-years of research findings Angela Ellis Paine, Ellie Munro, Mandy Wilson, and Ian Wilson, with Paul Morgans 2026	Synthesises learning from across the 12 main Big Local reports, focusing on the programme conditions, the practices of resident-led change, the development of community-based resources; the achievement of Big Local outcomes; and the longer-term impact of the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report