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CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE 2025

Shaping future communities, together.

WELCOME



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MORNING AGENDA

10.00-11.00: The future of our communities and the future of community investment

11.00-11.30: Refreshment break and networking

11.30-12.30: Practice development workshops

12.30-1.30: Lunch

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THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Sahil Khan (Peabody)

Peter Richmond (Bournville Village Trust)

Aileen Edmunds (Longleigh Foundation)

Andrew van Doorn (HACT)

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PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Employment support and models of practice, including Jobs Plus (BELMONT 1)

Community spaces - their role and future in society (MEETING ROOM 4)

Understanding your impact in communities (AFFINITY 2)

Addressing poverty – reframing crisis support for longer-term change (MEETING ROOM 2)

A just transition and green skills (BELMONT 2)

Residents of the future – what does this mean for our work?(BELMONT 3)

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LUNCH BREAK



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AFTERNOON AGENDA

13.30-14.20: Six lightning talks: provocations to stretch our thinking

14.20-15.20: Workshops to explore what these challenges mean for us

15.20-15.50: Refreshment break and networking

15.50-16.50: Community cohesion, belonging and togetherness

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SIX LIGHTNING TALKS: PROVOCATIONS THAT STRETCH OUR THINKING

Stop social housing stigma - Nic Bliss (Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign)
Young people in housing - Jean Templeton (St Basils)
Anti-social behaviour: the next sector scandal? - Pam Powis (Birmingham City Council)
Divided generations: ageing and connection - Emily Abbott (Intergenerational England)
The need for a trauma informed approach - Phoebe Newton (SNG)
Collaboration: impactful relationships - Anthony Morrow (Sanctuary Scotland)

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“For people to feel like what they do matters, they first have to feel like they matter”

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WORKSHOPS: EXPLORING WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US

Stop social housing stigma (BELMONT 1)

Young people in housing (AFFINITY 2)

Anti-social behaviour – the next sector scandal? (MEETING ROOM 2)

Divided generations - ageing and connection (BELMONT 2)

The need for a trauma informed approach (MEETING ROOM 4)

Collaboration - impactful relationships (BELMONT 3)

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COMMUNITY COHESION, BRIDGING AND TOGETHERNESS

Rebecca Inskip (Belong)

Jennifer Cuthbert (Radius Housing)

Dominic Briant (MTVH)

Andrew van Doorn (HACT)

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belong

THE COHESION AND INTEGRATION NETWORK

Rebecca@belongnetwork.co.uk



- National NGO and membership network
- Based in Manchester, with teams around the country
- Working for a *More connected, less divided society*
- Improving practice and transforming policy
- Evidence based and research led
- Convening and connecting across sectors & geographies
- Providing knowledge, resources and skills

Belong: Leading national policy & local practice

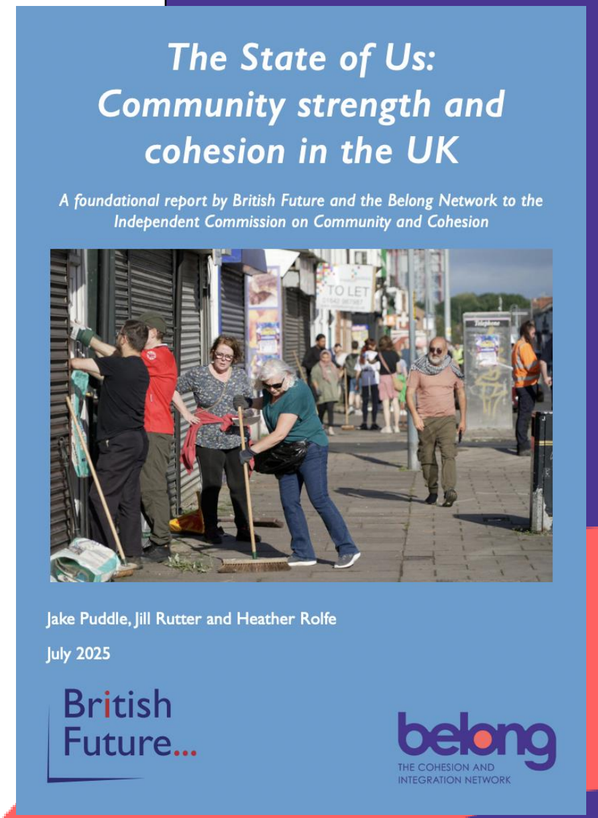
‘The State of Us’ report, July 25

The Independent Commission on Community & Cohesion

- Comprehensive state of nation report
- post riots. Foundational report for Ind Commission
- **Methods:** Engaged over 2,500 stakeholders through 15 roundtables, 8 focus groups, a survey with 2,243 respondents, and 113 call-for-evidence submissions.
- **Themes**: cost of lives/ polarised debates/ low public trust in decision-makers/ misinformation driving anxiety and fear

Key Challenges for Local Cohesion

- Levels of **trust and distrust** in councils, political leadership, and other agencies
- **Effectiveness and reach** of the voluntary, community, and faith sector, and its relationship with the council
- Social mixing and **community distance**
- Quality and depth of **tension monitoring**
- **Responses to division drivers** (e.g. misinformation, immigration concerns, demographic change, racism)
- **Strength and credibility** of political leadership
- Local responses to the impact of **international conflicts**



Belong's research tells us ...

More socially connected, cohesive local areas

bring individual and community level benefits:

- resilience against crisis, shock and change
- higher levels of individual subjective wellbeing
- increased levels of volunteering
- active social engagement
- more extensive participation



belongnetwork.co.uk

How Belong see social cohesion





INFLUENCING FACTORS

- Opportunities for bonding, bridging & linking connections
- Demography & changing demographics
- Shock events & unifying moments



STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS

Education & skills	Employment, income & basic needs	Policing & justice	Housing, infrastructure & environment	Health	Democratic institutions & governance

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Local Trust
trusting
local
people



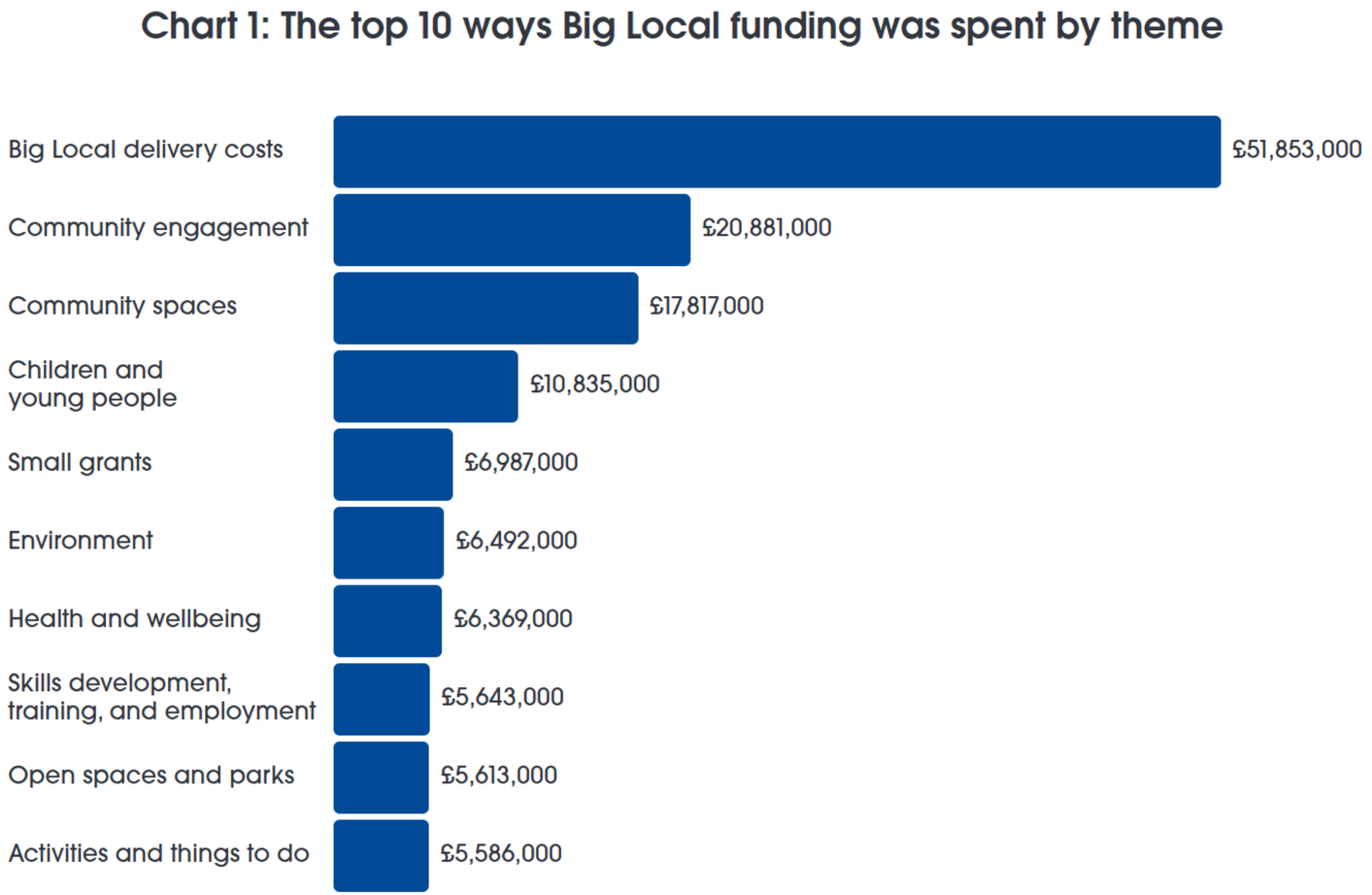
Community belonging in the Big Local programme

Lucy Terry, Research Manager, Local Trust

COMMUNITY FUND


10-15
years
£1.1m
£150m
150
communities
United
Isle of Man
Irish Sea
Dublin
Oxford
Exeter
Calais
Bruges
Lille
Belgium
Amsterdam
2
3
5
16

Priorities for residents in the Big Local programme



SOURCE:

- *How did Big Local areas spend their funding*?, Laura Fisher, September 2025.
- Available on Learning from Big Local.
- Data up to date as of August 2025. Based on £159 million of funding distributed to 150 communities across England.
- Initial budget headings provided by Big Local areas and then recoded by our research team.

Community buildings and belonging





“The presence and quality of assets and spaces can have high symbolic significance, as a deeply felt marker of community pride and spirit; conversely, a lack of decent facilities can be a signal of decline and stigma.”

Rob Macmillan, Sheffield Hallam University, in: "Why were physical assets and spaces an important investment for Big Local areas?” Learning from Big Local

Where to find out more

- Our legacy website www.learningfrombiglocal.org.uk: includes a theme on “Community assets and spaces”.
  - Now open to select audiences (not for socials!) and we welcome feedback

- The Centre for Collaboration in Community Connectedness, funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) c4.ac.uk
  - The Centre is a collective of researchers, practitioners, policy makers, funders and residents collaborating to deliver a vision for better connected communities across the UK.
  - Local Trust is a lead partner, and is working within the Centre to share what we’ve learnt about this topic in delivering the Big Local programme.
  - Key to involve practitioners as well as researchers and policy leads
  - Email lucy.terry@localtrust.org.uk to find out more

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