Levelling up 'left behind' Britain –
the importance of a hyper-local focus
Chat Transcript

14:02:21 From Trin G to Everyone : Thank you for joining Big Tent Digital today for our event with Local Trust and FINN Partners: Levelling up 'left behind' Britain – the importance of a hyper-local focus.

14:06:38 From Trin G to Everyone : To become a Big Tent Friend visit: https://bigtent.org.uk/membership/

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Please note this session is being recorded and will be used for promotional purposes. A full replay will be available on our website: https://bigtent.org.uk/digital-replays/

Thank you to everyone who shared questions when registering - we also encourage everyone to share your questions, comments, thoughts and ideas in the Chat throughout today's discussion. We'll get to as many of these as we are able.

We expect this event to last an hour, after which we will stop the recording and you are invited to stay for a short while after for a more informal discussion.

Please keep your mic muted at all times unless invited to speak by the Chair.

14:07:03 From Trin G to Everyone : Big Local: https://localtrust.org.uk/big-local/

14:08:20 From Trin G to Everyone : https://localtrust.org.uk/policy/left-behind-neighbourhoods/ - link to Local Trust's webpage where you can find all the information on 'left behind' neighbourhoods, including an interactive list of the 225 areas.

14:13:10 From Joe ZL to Everyone : Interesting that you speculate that the Brexit vote was an 'anti-establishment' vote. Is another potential explanation that a vote for Brexit was a vote against the culture of globalism and a wish to have a renewed focus on the local? Which I guess is what you're arguing for also.

14:16:08 From Trin G to Everyone : https://localtrust.org.uk/insights/research/left-behind-understanding-communities-on-the-edge/ - the initial research report published in 2019 alongside the updated information published in 2020.

https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Local-Trust-Left-Behind-Report-Executive-Summary-December-2019.pdf - exec summary of the initial report.

14:16:31 From Wiebke R to Everyone : Could you name some examples of what counts as long term illness?

14:16:34 From Gordon L to Everyone : I suspect, from my position within 3 miles of two of them, that the sense of alienation from "establishment" applies as strongly to local bodies as national government. These are not the local areas where it is easiest to engage people in initiatives of any sort

14:19:43 From Paul W to Everyone : That would be a fantastic study Angela!

14:20:10 From Chris T to Everyone : Localism is so important but you seem to be tinkering round the edges. Lots of data about a dysfunctional system. As a teacher of economics, the importance of location in tax policies is very neglected and misunderstood. We tax work (labour) but we leave location and the generation of economic rent (formerly called unearned income) out of account. Should we/you not be campaigning for location value taxation to replace taxes on production such as income tax and profit taxation. This would free up the left behind areas.

14:22:41 From Gordon L to Everyone : I recognise entirely the reality which Angela describes. I'm old enough to remember the substantial investment in local-based community development between about 1965 and 1980. What we lack now is the sense of "animateurs" who enable, support, engage and, sometimes, represent those communities baas

14:23:09 From Gordon L to Everyone : based on relationships rather than structures.

14:24:09 From Jay S to Everyone : New to these groups, so apols in adv.
 Q1. Are any of the findings on characteristics & correlations surprising?
Q2. Do local people participate in weighting the data?
Q3. Do local people see themselves reflected in the data/conclusions?
Q4. Do local people express empowerment/agency through the exercise and/or from the conclusions?

14:25:21 From Gordon L to Everyone : A by-product of the alienation of people from local establishments is a degree of alienation that has grown in both directions between councillors and communities. "Talk differently" is exactly the point.

14:27:22 From Gail K to Everyone : Angela, thank you for this wonderful perspective.

14:27:24 From Mark M to Everyone : Very well said Angela - thank you!
14:29:37 From angela fell to Everyone : If what I said sings to your soul and you'd like to join in, here's some ways:
https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org
https://dememove.org

Twitter: @DemeMove

If anyone here feels like they want to join in then do please feel to join in with this event of the 20th May
https://www.losingcontrol.org/open-house/

14:30:42 From Lee Whitehead to Everyone : Good stuff from Angela. A whole-government, ministerially approved statement is here (3 years old now but not forgotten):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732765/Civil_Society_Strategy_-_building_a_future_that_works_for_everyone.pdf - see Chp 5. How much is this a central and local government commitment?

14:35:40 From Paul W to Everyone : I am worried this focus on 'left behind' areas is going to be done to us! The 'richness' of my neighbourhood will not show up on a data study! If you start with a misery map then you will just find more misery! If you start with a treasure hunt then you will find abundance!

14:36:27 From angela fell to Everyone : I talk about the way I've come home and the hopes for my neighbourhood here https://www.compassionate-communitiesuk.co.uk/podcast/Angela-fell

14:36:36 From Tom B to Everyone : Unlock Democracy published some research last week which documented the decline in local govt powers in England over the last 40 years. Can levelling-up be achieved without more powers being held locally?

14:37:30 From Julia C to Everyone : Its not even doing 'with' people, its as much about empowering communities to do it for themselves. Not done to, done with or done for, but 'done by'

14:40:58 From Jay S to Everyone : I wonder if a case can be made for approaching this by integrating "data driven/evidence based" interventions, with "purpose driven, commitment framed, locally delivered"?

14:43:55 From Andrew D to Everyone : What reforms would the panel suggest to address the challenges facing local government finance. The two leading parties seem to blame each other for the challenges in this space.

14:44:56 From Gail K to Everyone : For those who have not yet read this (2019), I'd recommend: The Third Pillar: The Revival of Community in a Polarised World (Raghuram Rajan).

14:45:10 From Rob Day to Everyone : A Community Wealth Fund would go some way to overcoming the top-down, short-term nature of previous "regeneration" schemes that have failed to make an impact in these areas. It would also build the social and civic capital that Paul is speaking about now. This proposal seeks to use funding from the expanded dormant assets scheme to create a permanent endowment to invest in 'left behind' neighbourhoods. It would provide funding over a 10-15 year period, and put residents in 'left behind' neighbourhoods in charge of spending decisions, whilst providing the support that residents need to achieve their own objectives for their area.
https://localtrust.org.uk/policy/community-wealth-fund-alliance/

14:45:30 From Gordon L to Everyone : The UK is now one of the most centralised structures of government in the democratic world. It is more about power than money. If local government raised and spent its own money that would enable much more long-term planning and engagement.

14:45:36 From Mark M, Village In The City to Everyone : "Why have a meeting when you can have a party?" :-)

14:49:32 From Mark M, Village In The City to Everyone : "We can't know what we need until we know what we've got" - a great starting point

14:52:25 From Gordon L to Everyone : A side-point is that a "ward" is often a top-down construct rather than a community. I was in one of the communities on the list yesterday, but it's actually part of the neighbouring ward which is the town's richest!

14:53:02 From Andrew D to Everyone : Well said Chris! FairerShare.org.uk is a de facto location value solution for the community but we are bumping up against government and civil servant inertia.

14:54:03 From angela fell to Everyone : Agree Gordon..thats the starting point, defining the community. Where I live the ward boundaries work for us, but in may places they dont make sense.

14:55:43 From Gordon L to Everyone : The starting point on tax is that there isn't enough of it to pay for what's needed! The democratic legitimacy of taxation is also under threat.

14:55:54 From Joe ZL to Everyone : Finding the balance between local and central is not all plain sailing. What any local area does has externalities that impact other areas as we have seen in so many places in the world. Politically, there is also the temptation to use local powers to create conflict or one-upmanship - as we are seeing in some devolved UK nations. None of this is to argue against the need for more localism. Just to caution against believing that the answers are obvious.

14:56:46 From angela fell to Everyone : much of what we need is right under our nose...waiting to be invited in

14:57:23 From angela fell to Everyone : Jim Diers work in Seattle too - neighbourhood power

14:57:26 From Rob Day to Everyone : Local Trust partnered with New Local to research the work of Elinor Ostrom and how it can be applied to the UK context: https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/ostrom/

14:58:09 From Mark M, Village In The City to Everyone : I propose more at the global and hyper-local levels, and less at the national and regional levels

14:59:43 From Daniel C to Everyone : There's certainly the potential for the APPG for 'left behind' neighbourhoods to seek to learn from similar communities overseas as part of its work programme

14:59:51 From Gail K to Everyone : May I suggest you have a look at this solution that is working with citizen monitoring of development projects in 9 'emerging' market countries: https://integrityaction.org/

15:00:24 From Tom B to Everyone : one advantage of more local autonomy is that the more autonomous local authorities in Europe are, the more trusted they are.

15:01:00 From Jay S to Everyone : Technology can greatly enable "subsidiary" - through a "blockchain" method of trust and confidence building in decision making processes.

15:01:36 From angela fell to Everyone : Camerados, Asset Based Community Development, Organising, community businesses - coops, well funded publics services = eco system

15:03:07 From Trin G to Everyone : Thank you to our partners today; Local Trust and FINN Partners for their support and to our wonderful speakers for giving their time to participate and to you all of you for joining.

A full replay (including a write-up, speaker's presentations + chat transcript) will be made available on our website: https://bigtent.org.uk/digital-replays/

The recording will now stop, and we welcome everyone to stay for a short informal discussion.