

# **No Short Cuts:** Towards a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Recovery

January 2026

## The Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods

The Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON) was launched in September 2024. The Commission is chaired by Baroness Hilary Armstrong of Hill Top to address the significant challenges faced in England's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The Commission aims to build on existing research, generate new insights and propose concrete actions that could improve the lives and prospects of people living in these areas.

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The Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods is further indebted to trustees and staff of Local Trust who have provided considerable resource to enable us to carry out our work as well as giving ICON complete independence.

The evidence and analysis presented in this report are the collective view of the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods and should not be ascribed to any individual Commissioners or organisation. The Secretariat take responsibility for any errors or omissions within the report.

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The Special Areas are not at present depressed, and experience during the war has shown that production there can be as efficient as in other parts of the country. **Much social capital is already invested there in the form of houses, shops, public services, etc. Neither this social capital nor the corporate life of these communities can be sacrificed.** There may be some small and isolated villages, especially in mining areas, which owing to permanent changes in industrial conditions, offer no hope of economic revival. In these rare cases the population may have to be re-established elsewhere. There will be other larger areas where the temporary causes of special industrial prosperity have disappeared, e.g., because of the exhaustion of a wasting asset, but where the economic life of the community could be put on a sound basis if the population were reduced. In these special cases some proportion of the workers may have to be re-established elsewhere. But where a large industrial population is involved, the **Government are not prepared either to compel it to transfer to another area or to leave it to prolonged unemployment and demoralisation."**

**Employment Policy White Paper, 1944**

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# Foreword

**In agreeing to chair this Commission, I wanted ICON to be practical, pragmatic and action orientated.**

It is in this spirit that we have developed our main report, to provide research, analysis and recommendations for government, civil society and business to work together to help the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England. I am grateful to all those that have contributed to this work, particularly those neighbourhoods that we have visited and our Experts by Experience group that provided direct frontline understanding of the challenges we face.

ICON's work has been fundamentally optimistic and hopeful.

We know that we can improve neighbourhoods and we have more than enough information to be getting on with the job.

Commissioners and I have been inspired by the determination of those that have developed successful projects in some of the most challenging neighbourhoods. In many cases they have done this with minimal resources and made impressive progress. They deserve our trust and our support. We need to work with these institutions and community leaders.

They are the physical embodiment of the spirit of recovery that we need across our country.

Our work has been an effort to identify those tools for government, foundations and other stakeholders with the resources to be enable neighbourhood recovery to take place.

Government has an important role as 'first mover' in neighbourhoods. Government can coordinate and deploy sufficient resources to get the ball rolling in the most disadvantaged areas. In making this move, government must then consciously identify opportunities for collaboration with the private sector, impact investors and civil society to leverage their expertise and resources to aid neighbourhoods in recovery. Everyone has their role to play. We can always know more about what we can do to help neighbourhoods, but we know enough to get moving. We do not need to reinvent the wheel but we should improve and refine the principles we have already seen work.

In that spirit, we welcome initiatives such as Pride in Place, Neighbourhood Health Centres and the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee as steps in the right direction. However, if we are honest with ourselves, we know that these policies are nowhere near enough to meet the need that we know that exists. In making a strong start since entering office, it is important that government follows through on this ambitious agenda.

**There are No Short Cuts.** Neighbourhood recovery will take a long time, decades in many cases, but the scale of the challenge is not an excuse for inaction. We cannot take our eye off disadvantaged neighbourhoods until we have created the conditions for success. We have learnt with bitter experience that places will not fix themselves if we ignore them.

The current environment is challenging for everyone, particularly government. We are not unsympathetic to the demands that are placed on the state from every corner. Yet there can be no more fundamental duty of government than to provide the foundations for every citizen so that people can make the most of their lives and contribute to their communities. If we fail to do this, we will stoke political disaffection and social instability. **There is not a moment to lose.**

Over the coming year, ICON will continue to work with partners to take this work forward.

We will also work on those areas where we feel more research is needed, particularly on public service integration and economic development. We will also continue to research how we can build inclusive social infrastructure as well as tackle other challenges such as poor quality housing.

Neighbourhood recovery is a decades long project and we all have our role to play.

We hope that you will join us in making the case for beginning the hard work of neighbourhood recovery now.



**Baroness Hilary Armstrong  
of Hill Top  
Chair, Independent Commission  
on Neighbourhoods**

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# Executive Summary

Over the course of the last year, the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods has identified the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England. On our visits to these neighbourhoods, we have listened to residents about their hopes and aspirations. We have commissioned and undertaken ground-breaking research. We have consulted widely with hundreds of communities, academics, charities, foundations and other experts and we are grateful for their time and support.

## Our conclusion is simple.

The number of disadvantaged neighbourhoods is too large. The causes may have been deindustrialisation and social dislocation, but the reason they have persisted for decades is the lack of large-scale, concerted, long-term national effort to help them. This is not because of a lack of willingness within these neighbourhoods to improve their areas. We have seen from our visits that residents want to be given the tools to put their neighbourhoods back on the road to recovery. When communities, government – local and national – , business, faith groups and civil society come together there is a real chance of change, as they work together to ensure no place is left behind.

The cost of disadvantaged neighbourhoods is vast not only in terms of higher welfare expenditure and loss economic output, but the demoralisation caused through wasted opportunity for hundreds of thousands of people. The country needs a **new spirit of neighbourhood recovery**, akin to the effort we took to rebuild the country after the war.

Our failure to develop an effective and comprehensive national plan has been caused by three things. Firstly, not knowing where to prioritise, given the large number of places that need help. Secondly, a lack of a clear strategy for how to help neighbourhoods recover. Thirdly, the lack of a system to deliver this strategy with firm political commitment behind it.

## Our report presents solutions to all three challenges.

### Targets

In our Interim Report, we called for government to “think neighbourhoods”. This call has been answered through a new ‘Pride in Place’ programme that is providing £20m to 146 neighbourhoods in England for community-led regeneration programmes, putting money directly into the hands of local people.

Crucially, funding is being distributed to places with between 5,000 to 15,000 residents, far smaller than has previously been seen under recent governments. The Long Term Plan for Towns, for example, was targeted at populations with sometimes hundreds of thousands of residents, which stretched limited resources too thinly.

We believe that Pride in Place neighbourhoods are small enough to be reasonably targeted and effective. They should provide the foundation for pioneering a new model of neighbourhood recovery, building on the revival of social infrastructure to bring public services closer to the people that need them and creating the conditions for economic reform.

Given current constraints, we understand that concentrating resources means that not every neighbourhood can be given support immediately. Other neighbourhoods need to know that they have not been forgotten.

To reduce uncertainty, which often inhibits people and organisations in a neighbourhood building social connectivity and action before investment, we recommend that the government creates a **Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline** laying out a clear timetable for rolling out government support for the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. **This pipeline should be backed by investment worth £2-2.5bn a year over the next twenty years.** This Pipeline would provide an opportunity to leverage private and philanthropic capital, as well as social investment as well as providing a runway for civil society to invest in community capacity within the most disadvantaged areas. It would also provide resources to disadvantaged neighbourhoods to implement the strategy and build the system for nation-wide neighbourhood recovery.

Strategy

To help communities recover, we need to strengthen the social infrastructure of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This infrastructure is critical to building social capital. Our research has found that areas with low social capital are more likely to be disadvantaged and this amplifies disadvantage further.

Government needs to see Pride in Place and social infrastructure development as the start of the journey of recovery. Higher levels of social capital encourage better sustained engagement with public services to improve outcomes in key areas such as health, education and crime. Higher levels of social capital further create support networks to help people sustain changes in their lifestyle, stick with training developing their skills and increase their resilience to shocks in their personal lives. Higher levels of social capital, greater levels of public safety as well as better health, education then create the conditions for economic development.

If we can get this cycle of recovery going, we can achieve significant results. The economic ‘gap’ between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of the country has grown by £10bn over the past decade. Closing that gap would create tens of thousands of jobs, bringing new spending power into these neighbourhoods and help to sustain local civic life.

We call this a **Staircase Model** for neighbourhood recovery. However, we cannot rush to the end of the process. Economic growth can only take hold where there are fundamental changes to the institutions and outcomes within neighbourhoods. Previously, we have sought to rush towards sustained economic transformation without doing the hard work of building up social infrastructure and reforming public services. This means that whilst economic development takes places, local people fail to see the benefits. **There are no short cuts to long term neighbourhood recovery.**

The old versus new approach to neighbourhood recovery

Old Approach	New Approach
Spreading resources across all communities	Concentration of resources based on need
One-off programmes and interventions	Step by step approach through building bridging and bonding social capital through community-led social infrastructure
State-led	Community-led
Focus on outputs	Focus on foundations

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## System

For the Staircase Model to work we need to strengthen the foundations of neighbourhoods. We have identified **Eight Pillars of Neighbourhood Recovery** that need to be improved to create the conditions for neighbourhood success. All eight need to be strengthened but there are distinct phases for these pillars, with some (e.g. security) needing to be built in advance of others. We have grouped these pillars in three distinct phases: **foundational, transformational, sustainable**.

Foundational pillars need to be frontloaded into neighbourhoods to create the preconditions for success. Transformational pillars seek to improve public services and leverage more investment to improve outcomes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Sustainable pillars focus on making social infrastructure and communities more resilient as well as connecting them to better employment outcomes in neighbourhoods. In turn, we have developed nine policy recommendations to enable these pillars to be strengthened.

## Foundational

<b>1. Public Order – Neighbourhood Task Forces</b> Hotspot policing and targeted patrols as well as community engagement to improve public safety.	<b>2. Capacity Building – Pride in Places Partnership</b> A partnership of government, civil society, foundations and other experts to help give neighbourhoods what they need to transform their areas and identify what works.	<b>3. Community Leadership – College of Community Leadership</b> A new institution (or regional institutions) to provide skills and training for neighbourhoods to develop the next generation of neighbourhood leaders.
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## Transformational

<b>4. Policy Coordination – Neighbourhoods Unit</b> A central government unit to coordinate government policy for disadvantaged neighbourhoods and implementing a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Recovery.	<b>5. Policy Coordination – A Neighbourhood Observatory</b> A small team to independently monitor the changes within neighbourhoods and hold government and civil society to account.	<b>6. Public Service Integration – Neighbourhood Service Centres</b> Local authority-led multi-disciplinary teams collaborating with local communities to identify, triage, help and support local residents to improve social outcomes.	<b>7. Transport and Connectivity – Neighbourhood Transport Grant</b> Targeted investment to help reopen bus routes through community transport to enable local residents to access employment and cultural activities.
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## Sustainable

<b>8. Skills – Nightingale Skills Centres</b> Small neighbourhood hubs to provide skills and training support to residents that need foundational skills within local neighbourhoods.	<b>9. Enterprise and Asset Development – Neighbourhood Enterprise Gateway</b> Encourage local developers and government to provide land to local communities through new infrastructure to develop and maintain new community-led social infrastructure, co-operatives and social enterprises.
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## **We are clear that things cannot continue as they are.**

During our visits, through our surveys and focus groups we have heard from people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods that feel angry and frustrated. We need to give people hope again for the future. If we choose to do nothing, we risk stoking social disorder and spreading political disaffection.

Despite the significant challenges within neighbourhoods, we remain optimistic. Relatively small investments can have significant positive impacts. We understand better than ever what works on the ground and the principles for success that can enable us to get moving, there is no excuse for delaying action. We have also met hundreds of inspirational people and organisations working on the ground within these neighbourhoods, there are partners on the ground if we choose to work with them.

Most importantly, we know that people continue to have pride in their places. People living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods want to see them recover so that future generations get the opportunities they did not have. Government, business, civil society, faith groups and philanthropists are critical enablers, but power must be put in the hands of communities themselves to make change long lasting. It is only communities that can develop and maintain the social infrastructure they need. It is only empowered communities

that can change the way that public services are developed to change the way that services are delivered. It is only empowered communities that can create the conditions to attract investment from the private sector and philanthropy to turn places around. So, we need to strengthen community-led institutions, create new public service infrastructure that works in partnership with communities to improve outcomes and create the conditions for economic renewal through improving skills and the employability of local residents.

This paper is the foundation for a national strategy for disadvantaged places in England. We primarily make recommendations to government because the state has the resources and ability to be a catalytic 'first-mover'. However, we need communities, faith groups, philanthropists, social investors and businesses to work in partnership if we are going to ensure that no neighbourhood is left behind.

This cultural shift, prioritising and focusing on the needs of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, is why we say there needs to be a renewed spirit of neighbourhood recovery across England.

If we put our faith in these communities and give them the tools to do the job, we can give hope to hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens.

This is a prize worth straining every sinew to attain.

# Introduction

Since the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods was launched in September 2024 with a focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England<sup>1</sup>, we have visited 17 neighbourhoods, commissioned and published 13 working papers, held several dozen advisory group meetings, conducted four days of policy and research workshops and engaged with

hundreds of community leaders, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, academics, councils, government officials, Members of Parliament and Ministers.

We have published an Interim Report in March 2025 and a Green Paper with initial proposals in May 2025.

**Map 1 – Independent Commission on Neighbourhood visits in England**



<sup>1</sup>ICON was set up with a remit that strictly covers England only. Our recommendations and analysis are, therefore, England only. However, there will be overlap with other parts of the United Kingdom.

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## Our conclusion is simple.

The number of disadvantaged neighbourhoods is too large. This is because in England we have ignored ingrained pockets of deprivation in small communities across the country for years. Governments have failed to invest. Foundations and philanthropists have not distributed grants to these communities. Businesses have closed or moved investment away. Despite the obvious need, England has lacked a large-scale, concerted, long-term, national effort to help these neighbourhoods recover from economic and social dislocation.

The cost of disadvantaged neighbourhoods is vast not only in terms of higher welfare expenditure and loss economic output, but the demoralisation caused through the wasted opportunity for hundreds of thousands of people.

## The case for action

In our Interim Report, we identified 613 'Mission Critical neighbourhoods'<sup>2</sup>. These are communities that are furthest behind achieving the government's five missions. Our work has concentrated on these places, however, there are 5,566 'Mission Priority neighbourhoods' that have also experienced considerable disadvantage.

### ICON classification of neighbourhoods

**Mission Critical Neighbourhoods** – the 613 neighbourhoods (Lower layer Super Output Areas) that have seen the least progress in delivering the government's five missions (roughly 2% of neighbourhoods in England).

**Mission Priority Neighbourhoods** – 5,566 neighbourhoods that have considerable disadvantages in achieving the government's five missions.

It is not morally acceptable or economically viable to have nearly one million people living in Mission Critical neighbourhoods that lack the foundations for success.

On our visits, we have heard first hand from people that feel abandoned and frustrated. There is no lack of appetite for change, but we have simply not given the people in these places the tools that they need to do the job. These are our people and it is our moral responsibility to act.

**The financial cost of inaction alone is vast.** [Our research](#) has found that means-tested welfare spending in Mission Critical Neighbourhoods is £3.2bn higher than the average for the rest of the country. Half of adults living in these neighbourhoods are economically inactive. The gross value added per working age person in these neighbourhoods is 40% lower than the rest of the country. If these neighbourhoods had grown at the same rate as the rest of England since 2010, they would have [added just under £10bn to the economy](#) and generated billions in additional tax revenue.

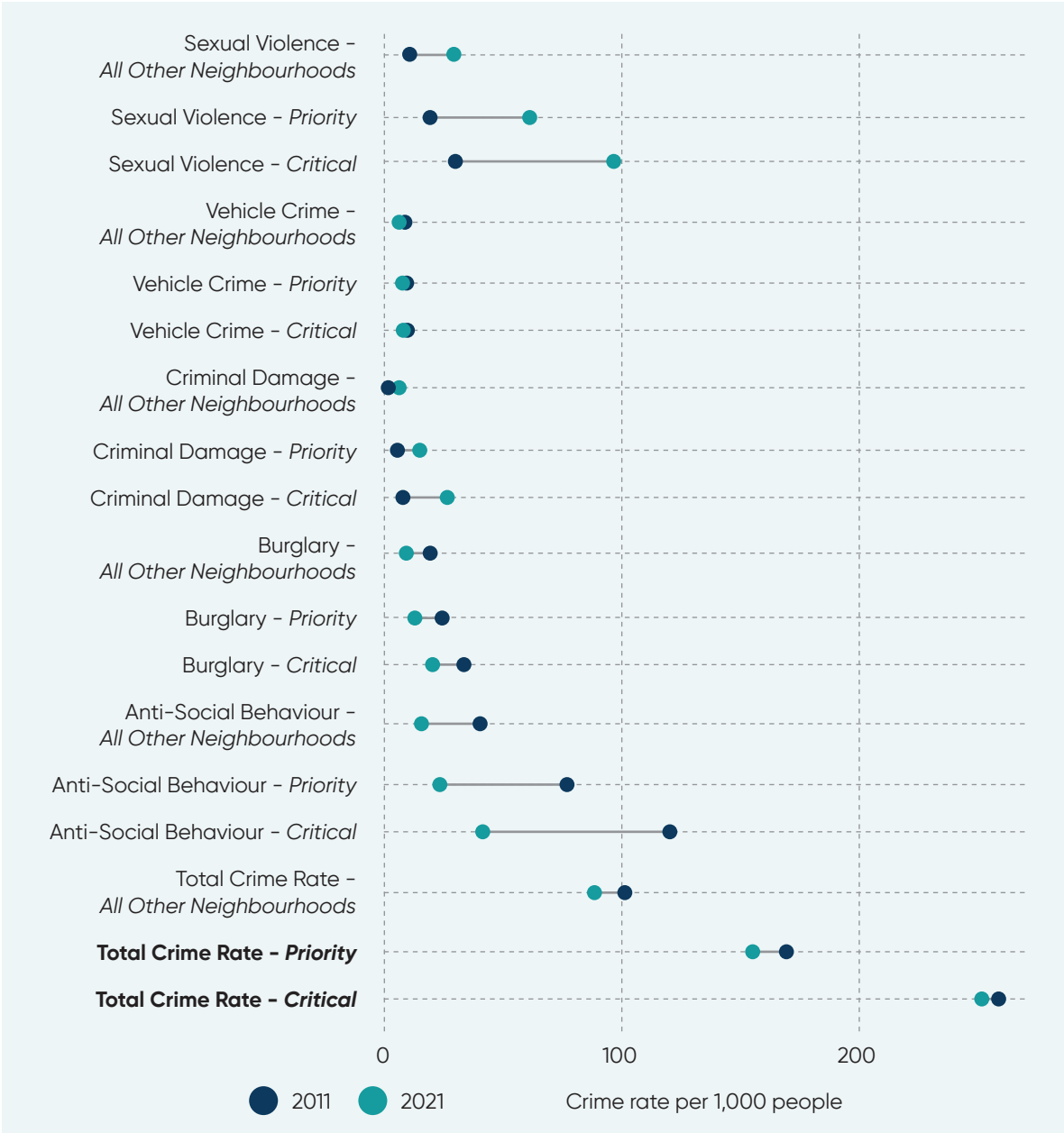
**Disadvantaged neighbourhoods are living in a different country.** While crime has generally fallen across the UK, crime in Mission Critical neighbourhoods has barely changed, with crime rates two and a half times the rest of the country and rising levels of criminal damage and violence. Where total neighbourhood crime has fallen by 13% (from 102 crimes per 1,000) for England as a whole, neighbourhood crime in mission critical neighbourhoods has fallen by just 2% (from 258 crimes per 1,000). One in ten people in Mission Critical neighbourhoods have bad or very bad health, compared to one in twenty for the country as a whole<sup>3</sup>. A quarter (26%) of people living in neighbourhoods have a limiting long-term illness.

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<sup>2</sup> Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, Think Neighbourhoods, March 2025

<sup>3</sup> Farrar et al, Anatomy of Mission Critical Neighbourhoods, May 2025

Figure 1 – Crime Indicators in ‘Mission Critical’ and ‘Priority’ Neighbourhood Type (2011 vs 2021)



Source: ICON analysis of Police UK; ONS Small area population estimates; ICON-OCSI Hyper-Local Need Measure (HLNM).

**The demand for change is clear.** Our latest survey with Public First conducted in November 2025 found that only a third of voters (36%) think that the government is getting the balance right between national issues and fixing local areas.<sup>4</sup> This builds on our initial research which found that 54% of people that live in the highest quintile of mission disadvantage say that their

neighbourhood has changed for the worse over the past decade – 12 percentage points higher than those in the least disadvantaged neighbourhoods.<sup>5</sup> The public has repeatedly voted for parties on the basis that they will fix these local areas and so far we have not made enough progress.

4 Public First, Online Survey of 4127 adults in England, 9th Nov – 14th Nov 2025

5 Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, Think Neighbourhoods, March 2025 p.12-15

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## We know what to do

The good news is that policy makers know enough to be getting on with the job of neighbourhood recovery. We do not need to reinvent the wheel.

[Our research](#) has found that during the 2000s there was a broad period of neighbourhood improvement. The gap between the best and worst-off areas narrowed, while the overall position of the worst-off areas rose. For example, between 2001 and 2011, employment outcomes improved significantly across all neighbourhoods but especially for those at the bottom. The employment rate in the worst-performing 10% of neighbourhoods rose from 31.4% to 54.6%, a dramatic gain.<sup>6</sup>

The [previous independent evaluation](#) of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) also found that neighbourhood level regeneration can work. The 39 places that benefited from the NDC saw an improvement in 32 of 36 core indicators spanning crime, education, health, worklessness, community and housing and the physical environment, and closed the gaps on otherwise comparable areas<sup>7</sup>. There is a consensus across politics that the NDC was one of the most successful regeneration programmes in our history<sup>8</sup>.

[Our own independent analysis of Big Local programme](#) has shown that hyper-local social infrastructure building can be successful. Big Local areas saw stronger improvements in employment, and larger falls in economic inactivity, than comparable neighbourhoods. This is particularly striking given the relatively modest sums involved in the program, with around £1m per neighbourhood. This was a broad based improvement. More residents gained higher-level qualifications. Crime fell faster than in other similar places. In a period when many disadvantaged neighbourhoods often saw stagnation or decline, Big Local neighbourhoods appear to have been more resilient.<sup>9</sup> We estimate that the £102mn invested in social infrastructure through Big Local

between 2014–2020 may have contributed to £323mn in direct fiscal savings to the Exchequer, with the potential wider benefits to society being worth around £1.1bn over 5 years.<sup>10</sup>

Analysis of successful programmes and our visits have highlighted a number of critical success factors: local leadership and institutions, a long-term commitment to a place, rebuilding the social infrastructure and investing in the capacity of local people. This is the philosophy that underpins ICON's work.

To make these interventions sustainable, however, we need broadly spread economic growth which neighbourhoods can plug into.

## A new spirit of recovery

The case for helping disadvantaged neighbourhoods is clear. There are strong economic, social, political and moral arguments for action. We also know enough to begin our work, building on the legacy of programmes such as the New Deal for Communities and Big Local. However, the barriers are cultural as much as they are practical.

**We must believe that recovery is possible. Far too often policy makers and the media discuss disadvantaged communities as if there is nothing that can be done to help them and that they can never be fixed. We cannot accept such defeatism.**

Government needs to show leadership and put its full force behind a national effort to help these neighbourhoods to recover. As we have argued consistently throughout our work and in this paper, it is neighbourhoods themselves that hold the power to make change, but they cannot do this on their own. The state needs to be prepared to act as a catalytic 'first-mover', using its resources and convening power to create the conditions for local people to strengthen and build the institutions they need to improve their areas. This needs to be done in an enabling way,

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6 R. Mudie, E. Farrar & C. Signori, Progress and Pressure: Understanding economic and social change in England's neighbourhoods, June 2025

7 E. Batty et al, The New Deal for Communities Experience: A final assessment, March 2010

8 W. Tanner & J. Blagden, Turnaround: Learning from 60 years of regeneration policy, September 2021

9 R. Mudie, E. Farrar & C. Signori, Progress and Pressure: Understanding economic and social change in England's neighbourhoods, June 2025

10 Ibid.

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not “doing onto” places, but providing them the tools to succeed particularly through building their skills and resilience. Governments need to step forward to help but hold back from dominating. The same can be said for businesses, foundations and philanthropists that wish to help.

We are pleased to see the government stepping up and putting disadvantaged neighbourhoods at the heart of its policy agenda. We have had record investment in programmes such as Pride in Place, a new wave of Neighbourhood Health Centres, targeted recovery funding for local councils and a recommitment to neighbourhood policing.

However, this can only be the start. Policies need to be joined up and focused on creating institutions at a neighbourhood level that are led by and serve the needs of local communities. This will create the foundations for neighbourhoods to sustainably recover and attractive private sector investment.

Neighbourhood regeneration is hard work. It will take decades and a significant number of resources to create the conditions for the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods to succeed. We have heard time and again from communities that there are no short cuts towards sustainable transformation. This does not mean that we cannot make progress in places through well designed interventions to rebuild social infrastructure and reform public services in disadvantaged areas, but we must be prepared to stick with communities as they change.

Previously, we called for the government to “think neighbourhoods”, but it is important to be honest about the scale of the effort required. Now that we have put the needs of disadvantaged places back at the heart of the national policy conversation, we need to summon a greater level of ambition to help hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens. Like the spirit we saw in the wake of the Second World War that saw a new social and economic settlement for the country. Only if we are prepared to bring everything together with a renewed purpose, can we expect to make progress.

The whole of government, the whole of the nation, needs to be infused with a spirit of recovery, an optimism and determination to succeed, something that we have not seen at scale for generations.

To turn that spirit into practical action, the country needs three things:

- 1. Targets** – a clear sense of where we are seeking to help
- 2. Strategy** – a coherent plan for how disadvantaged neighbourhoods can recover
- 3. System** – a functioning set of institutions and policies to deliver the strategy

The rest of this report outlines how these can be constructed.

# The Targets: A pipeline for neighbourhood recovery

## Summary

- There are challenges with any framework to prioritise neighbourhoods. Decisions will ultimately need to be made on a combination of data and ethics.
- There are limited resources: financial, institutional, personnel which mean that we cannot help everywhere at once.
- We accept that the government's use of Middle-Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) are a useful way to target neighbourhood investments using of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Community Needs Index (CNI) to identify neighbourhoods in need.
- However, we need a plan to help all neighbourhoods in need to recover. As a catalytic first mover with the scale to convene other stakeholders, the government should develop a clear Pipeline for Neighbourhood Recovery identifying the target areas and steadily expanding to cover all the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This pipeline should be backed by £2-2.5bn a year in investment.
- These neighbourhoods would be in line for substantial public investment over a ten-year period bringing together social infrastructure investment, public service reform, skills and infrastructure development to create the conditions for sustainable recovery.
- For practical reasons, we should start by concentrating on those 146 neighbourhoods in England that have received Pride in Place funding as there is significant investment already taking place there, starting with crucial investments in social infrastructure.

- We recommend that government investment is expanded in four tranches over the next decade, slowly expanding to cover all the remaining MSOA-level neighbourhoods that have the most disadvantaged communities within them.

## Concentration is key

The starting premise of our Commission has been that concentration of resources and effort is essential for success.

The scale of the challenges facing neighbourhoods mean that one single intervention is not going to be enough. Moreover, we know that the challenges facing disadvantaged neighbourhoods are 'sticky'. Multiple overlapping negative social and economic factors contribute to make change difficult to achieve. Our research has found that for six out of the ten economic and health indicators at least 80% of Mission Critical neighbourhoods have been "trapped at the bottom" over the past twenty years.<sup>11</sup> This indicates the overlapping nature of the challenges in Mission Critical neighbourhoods.

Given this, we must be realistic. Even if government, businesses and foundations made a commitment tomorrow to invest considerable sums of money into neighbourhoods it would take time to build the infrastructure required for sustainable recovery. This is not simply a matter of finance. In many places, neighbourhoods lack the capacity to deliver programmes effectively immediately, particularly trained volunteers and staff. Government also lacks the institutional structures to monitor, design and develop interventions for many of these places. There is a danger that we spread resources too thinly, trying to help too many neighbourhoods too quickly because we

<sup>11</sup> R. Mudie, E. Farrar & C. Signori, Progress and Pressure: Understanding economic and social change in England's neighbourhoods, June 2025



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are, rightly, concerned about the scale of communities that are disadvantaged.

We are aware that there are several arguments for not concentrating resources within a smaller number of neighbourhoods but spreading them more evenly across all neighbourhoods in England.

Firstly, we accept that there are a very large number of communities that need support and more than are contained within our list of Mission Critical Neighbourhoods. We have never attempted to provide a definitive list of neighbourhoods in need, but we do believe that you cannot develop successful policy interventions without a clear understanding of where you can help.

Secondly, we accept that there are many ways of measuring need.

To ensure our independence, ICON developed our own [Hyper-Local Need Measure](#) to identify areas that we considered to be furthest behind on the government's stated objectives<sup>12</sup>. We have also used the [Community Needs Index](#) (CNI) extensively in our research. The CNI has considerable overlap with our own index but is focused on the 'doubly disadvantaged' communities that are both deprived and lack social infrastructure. Moreover, since we have issued our Interim Report, a further iteration of the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) has been published. None of these measures are perfect, however, what they all demonstrate is that it is possible to collect data at a neighbourhood level to inform the identification of places that need help.

Policy makers must be humble enough to accept these limitations and to make decisions with their eyes open. Evidence will not remove the need for individual judgements to be made. These will often be ethical in nature, considering both the history of communities and matters of social justice. We cannot leave everything to 'the data', although data aids effective judgement.

Thirdly, some argue that it is not possible

to isolate neighbourhoods and provide meaningful improvements at that level<sup>13</sup>. Neighbourhoods are connected to wider geographies, at a local or regional level, and improvements for these places require improvements in other areas.

We accept that neighbourhood regeneration cannot be isolated from everything else. Under New Labour, for example, programmes such as the New Deal for Communities were combined with regional investment programmes, skills and training initiatives, Sure Start, tax credits and a range of our measures. Equally, neighbourhood regeneration cannot fix wider structural problems, particularly in our economy.

It is certainly true that if the country or a region is heading in the wrong direction, neighbourhood interventions alone cannot overturn these larger forces. However, our own research has found that wider changes in local economies do not 'trickle out' to disadvantaged neighbourhoods if they lack the necessary social and economic infrastructure within their communities<sup>14</sup>. Our view is that strong neighbourhoods are a necessary, but not sufficient, foundation for national and regional renewal. Nothing at a regional or national level will work without strong neighbourhoods, but neighbourhoods need supportive policy at a regional and national level.

These challenges notwithstanding, our research and visits have strengthened our initial recommendation that we need to prioritise and concentrate our efforts.

## The constraints on neighbourhood recovery

As we highlighted in our Interim Report, the evidence is clear that the most effective work is done at a hyper-local level<sup>15</sup> – neighbourhoods with a population of under 10,000. In some cases, the neighbourhoods are slightly bigger, in some cases, slightly smaller. However, as we argued in that report, we are not tied to a particular size or

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<sup>12</sup> OCSI, Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods: Hyper-Local Need Measure, February 2025

<sup>13</sup> . Fothergill, The Demolition of British Regional Policy, December 2025

<sup>14</sup> R. Mudie et al, The Missing Links: Connecting disadvantaged neighbourhoods to new economic opportunities, December 2025

<sup>15</sup> Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, Think Neighbourhoods, March 2025 p.15-18



rigid definition of a neighbourhood. For the purposes of our strategy, a neighbourhood is simply a way of describing an area where the residents living within it are motivated to undertake actions to improve it and their own lives. Generally, these are small areas, where there are thick social relationships between people and where small actions can have a disproportionate impact (e.g. volunteering to run a five-a-side league for teenagers, fixing broken windows, providing a check-in for elderly residents). As we argued in our Interim Report, this means that neighbourhood boundaries should be fluid, defined by local people and, as far as possible, have a strong emotional connection to motivate change.

We are, therefore, pleased to see the government's new Pride in Place programme operating at a much lower level than its predecessor, the Long-Term Plan for Towns. Pride in Place seeks to fund community-led regeneration programmes coordinated through Neighbourhood Boards that operate at a population level of between 5,000–15,000 residents, using Middle-Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs). Reviewing the programme, we are content that MSOAs are a useful way to deploy resources and identify neighbourhoods, although these should be subject to revision by local people, local government and other relevant stakeholders. It is important, however, for government and policy makers to go in with their eyes open and recognise that targeting a smaller geography for neighbourhood recovery will bring capacity challenges, as we lay out in this report.

There are 349 MSOAs in England that contain one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England, what we have called 'Mission Critical Neighbourhoods'. These are the neighbourhoods that are the most disadvantaged in comparison to the government's five missions. Those MSOAs that contain Mission Critical neighbourhoods, we believe, should be the starting point for prioritising on the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

If we accept that we should concentrate our resources and that these should be at a MSOA-level, or smaller, the next question is how many places can we realistically help given the resources available to communities, government and civil society?

During six rounds of funding between 1994 and 2000, the Single Regeneration Budget distributed £5.7bn across 1028 projects<sup>16</sup>. This works out on average £5.5m per project, with some neighbourhoods having multiple projects. The NDC was focused on 39 places, around £44m per area alongside other investments from local government, regional development agencies and other actors<sup>17</sup>. The Big Local programme provided £1m to 150 places. Size and scale interventions have, therefore, varied over time and based on objectives. The NDC took a more holistic approach to investment, addressing a range of challenges, whereas the Big Local programme was concentrated on social infrastructure. Given the scale of the challenge in the neighbourhoods we have identified, resources we will need resources equivalent to the scale of the NDC and taking into account over a decade and a half of falling public investment in many places.

One of the constraints in supporting disadvantaged neighbourhoods is the capacity within these communities. Policy makers cannot expect effective plans for neighbourhood recovery to be generated from within disadvantaged neighbourhoods in weeks or even months if they lack access to the social and civic institutions that usually undertake this work. Many of these neighbourhoods will require additional support from external agencies to help develop necessary skills within communities, such as financial planning, legal issues, governance and volunteer management to get things moving forward. This will take time. In identifying the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, we have found that 70% of our Mission Critical Neighbourhoods are 'doubly disadvantaged'<sup>18</sup> which means that they have the lowest levels of social infrastructure. Forthcoming research from

<sup>16</sup> S. Gibbons et al, The local economic impacts of regeneration projects: Evidence from UK's single regeneration budget, *Journal of Urban Economics*, Vol. 122, 2021

<sup>17</sup> E. Batty et al, The New Deal for Communities Experience: A final assessment, March 2010

<sup>18</sup> Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, *Think Neighbourhoods*, March 2025 p.37

ICON on the social infrastructure within Mission Critical neighbourhoods has found that many of these places have formal social infrastructure (e.g. community centres) but lack informal social infrastructure (e.g. pubs, cafes and gyms).<sup>19</sup> So whilst policy makers should not assume that everything needs to be built from scratch, the most disadvantaged areas will require some additional institution and infrastructure building. Given the challenges facing charities and foundations, who are also overstretched financially and organisationally, it will not be possible to immediately reach many places with appropriate support. This enabling infrastructure will need to be built up over time.

In addition, there is constrained capacity within local and central government. Over the course of the past year, ICON has engaged with communities, MPs, foundations, local councils and government who are working to deliver the second phase of the Pride in Place programme. We have found considerable variation of capacity within local government and within government departments. Some local councils have a clear vision and dedicated neighbourhood capacity. Many do not. This means that some councils are trying to build up their own knowledge of how to support local communities alongside trying to deliver support to communities themselves. Central government also lacks the knowledge of how to design programmes and guidance effectively because it has not undertaken a neighbourhood regeneration programme at scale for over a generation. Given the need for the government to act and invest as a catalytic first mover in these neighbourhoods, these capacity constraints within local and central government are key constraints moving forward.

## A Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline

Given these constraints, initial focus for neighbourhood recovery should be given to the 146 neighbourhoods in England that are receiving Pride in Place investments. Government, civil society and business should prioritise these places for interventions. Moreover, support should not stop at social infrastructure rebuilding but use Pride in Place as a platform for public service

reform, training and reskilling programmes as well as other interventions, giving them as much help as possible.

However, neighbourhood recovery cannot simply stop at the 146 neighbourhoods that have received investment through Pride in Place. It is not fair for other disadvantaged neighbourhoods to live in uncertainty about whether government will provide a kickstart to neighbourhood recovery in their area.

We recommend, therefore, that the government develops a **Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline (NRP)**.

This would create a pathway over the next ten years for government intervention in the 424 MSOAs in England that have the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods within them, including the 146 Pride in Place MSOAs and the 278 MSOAs that have the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods within them but have not received a Pride in Place investment so far. On the back of these interventions, we expect the government to be able to leverage considerable investment from other parts of the public sector, the private sector and foundations who can plan with the knowledge of government investment to anchor other interventions.

Table 1 shows that our proposed pipeline would be heavily weighted towards the North of England, with 61% of MSOAs located in Northern regions. This aligns with our data which has found places such as Blackpool, Bradford, Durham, Hull and Liverpool have particularly large concentrations of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Pride in Place itself has been more heavily weighted towards the Midlands, which means that the North of England would feature more prominently in Tranches Two, Three and Four. London is in the first tranche through Pride in Place investments but not in later tranches as greater density of need is outside of the capital.

Consideration will also need to be given to the local footprint and capacity that each place has. For example, an area like Blackpool will clearly need support across more than one neighbourhood, but it may not be possible to provide one for every neighbourhood that needs it simultaneously as that would put too

<sup>19</sup> E. Farrar et al, *Pride in Parades*, Forthcoming

much stress on the local system. We provide an illustrative example of what the pipeline could look like in Annex A to take these factors into account. However, even trying to build space in neighbourhoods to enable local systems to cope with interventions is challenging, with some councils such as Liverpool having nine neighbourhoods

within one tranche. In these special cases, councils, combined authorities and central government should develop broader place-based strategies that still provide a focus on neighbourhoods in need but seek to optimally spread capacity and investment across communities.

**Table 1 – Number of neighbourhoods within the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline per region**

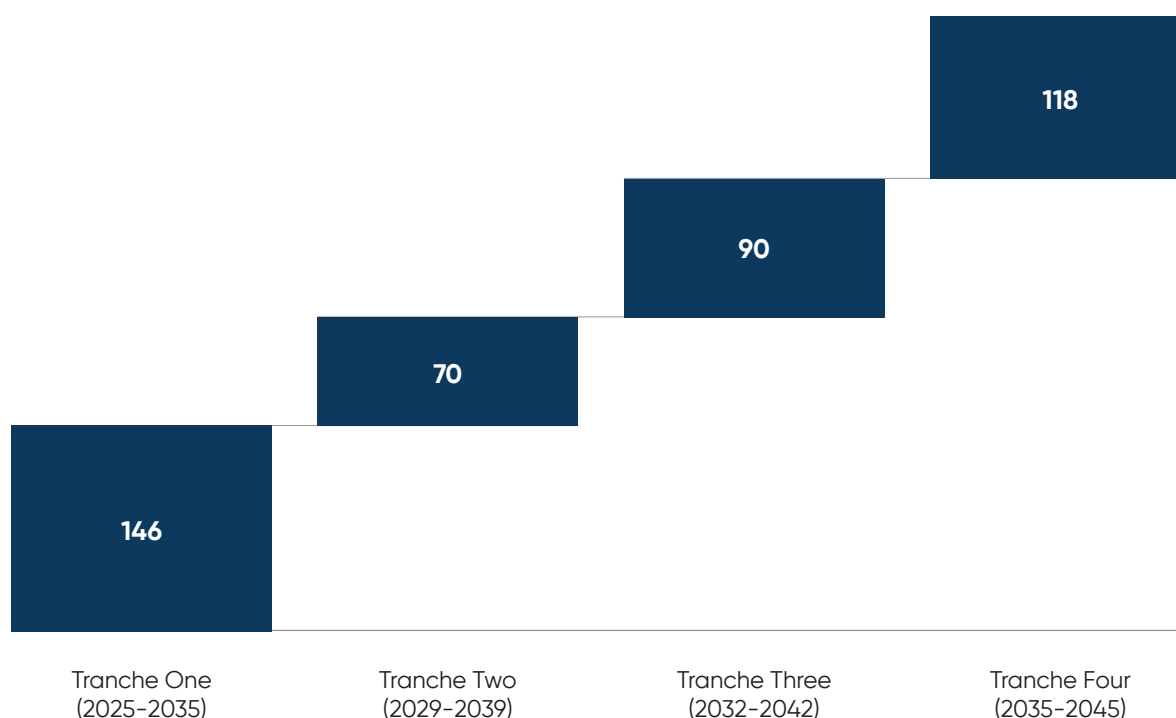
Region	Tranche One*	Tranche Two	Tranche Three	Tranche Four	Total by region
East Midlands	14	6	5	8	<b>33</b>
East of England	11	7	2	4	<b>24</b>
London	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
North East	13	9	13	19	<b>54</b>
North West	38	26	31	29	<b>124</b>
South East	14	3	7	10	<b>34</b>
South West	11	0	3	5	<b>19</b>
West Midlands	22	3	6	8	<b>39</b>
Yorkshire and The Humber	21	1	23	35	<b>80</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>424</b>

Source: ICON analysis

Figure 2 provides an illustration of how this could be done over the next decade. As we develop more learning and capacity through supporting the initial tranches of neighbourhoods, we should be able to support progressively more neighbourhoods through each tranche. Once the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are supported, we should be able to reach hundreds of additional neighbourhoods in future years. We have projected out a pipeline for a decade, but this pipeline should be maintained until all Mission Critical and Mission Priority neighbourhoods have been supported.

Unfortunately, a pipeline of this scale and size will take several decades to reach every place that needs support. This is difficult to accept, but failure to support places effectively will not only lead to worst outcomes but could demoralise neighbourhoods further. As we have seen in our visits around the country, many communities are angered by repeated promises of support that have not been delivered. However, we should seek to be as ambitious as possible, and our proposed pipeline should be seen as a floor and not a ceiling. If more rapid progress is made in building up the necessary infrastructure or additional funding can be found, this pipeline can and should be accelerated.

Figure 2 – A Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline



Source: ICON analysis

Crucially, this pipeline should be published and regularly updated to enable local areas to 'build up' for interventions as well and provide philanthropists, foundations and businesses the time to identify opportunities to support neighbourhoods as well as ramp up necessary capacity within communities. It will also ensure that all neighbourhoods can see that they have not been forgotten and that progress is being made. A tranche model will also give earlier tranches the opportunity to help later tranches through peer support and to take a 'test and learn' approach to interventions that can improve outcomes for later areas.

Importantly, neighbourhoods must be given support beyond simply rolling out Pride in Place to more neighbourhoods. As we outline in our strategy section below, there are a number of factors that will determine the success of a neighbourhood regeneration programme. If every neighbourhood programme is rolled out in a different list of neighbourhoods, then different neighbourhoods are going to lack the interventions that they need to succeed. At present, we think that there is a significant risk that government spending will be less than the sum of its parts due to fragmented delivery. A suite of interventions covering the

key areas outlined below, should be provided to all the neighbourhoods in this pipeline.

The aim of this pipeline would be to provide the investment required to kickstart recovery in these neighbourhoods. Beyond the initial decade of intensive support, neighbourhoods will require public service investments and economic development. Whilst we should encourage financial sustainability for social infrastructure, it will be necessary in some cases for local government and foundations to continue to support community-led institutions. However, without an initial push at the beginning, neighbourhoods will lack the momentum to be able to develop a pathway to sustainable recovery. The aspiration is that once this decade of investment has taken place, a lower intensity of investment will be required than would otherwise be the case.

The failure to develop an ambitious pipeline for neighbourhood recovery in the past has been in part due to lacking a clear theory of change. This means that individual policies are designed in isolation from other neighbourhood interventions.

We outline what this should be in our next section.

# The Strategy: A 'Staircase' Model for Neighbourhood Recovery

## Summary

- The evidence is clear that social capital is an essential foundation for all other interventions to succeed. Social capital is enabled through strong local institutions, what we term social infrastructure.
- However, social capital building can only lead to sustained neighbourhood recovery with public service reform and economic development.
- We are concerned that there is no clear theory of change for how we are attempting to reconstruct the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- We advocate a 'Staircase' Model for neighbourhood recovery with social capital building linking people to public service improvements which can then create the healthy, skilled workforce that will attract and sustain economic investment.
- This model should be used to guide policy development and the timing of investment to give programmes maximum chance of success.

## Social capital – the foundations for neighbourhood recovery

In our Interim Report we made two assertions. Firstly, that many of the national challenges that we face are geographically clustered at the neighbourhood level. The places that have the highest levels of crime also have the worst health outcomes, poor educational attainment and economic outcomes. Fixing these challenges requires hyper-local interventions to overcome the negative feedback loops that make it impossible to simply fix one challenge in isolation.

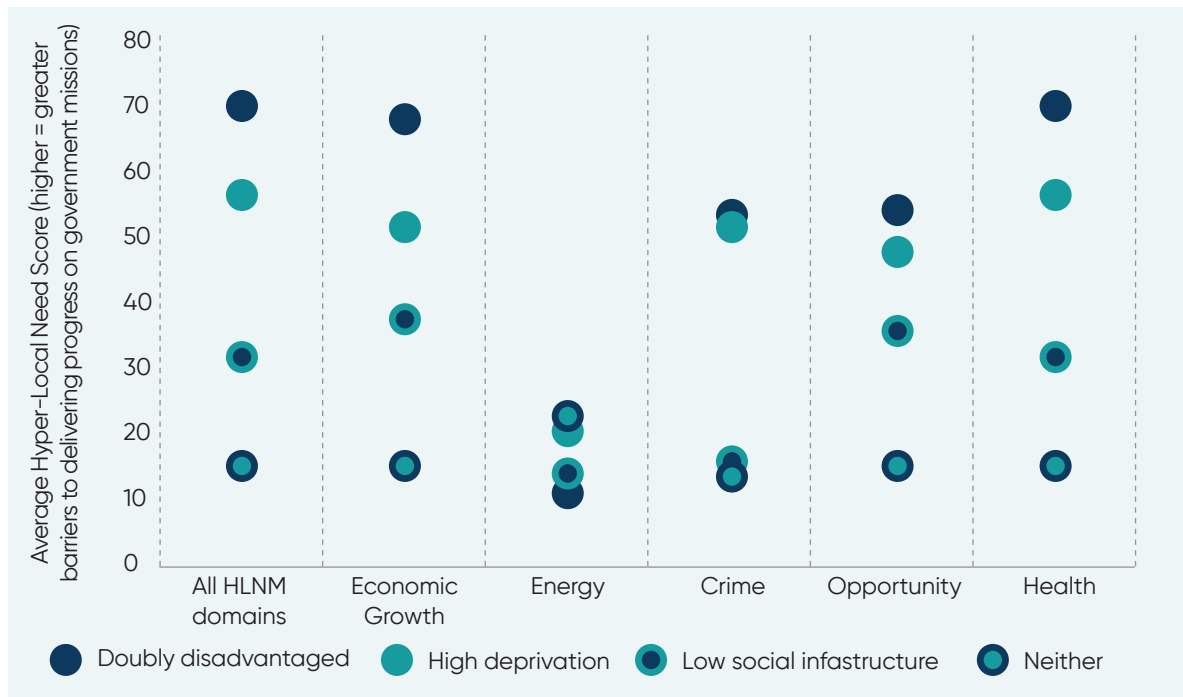
Our second assertion was that the way to begin to fix these challenges is through rebuilding the social foundations of these neighbourhoods. We found that most of the Mission Critical Neighbourhoods are 'doubly disadvantaged' through a lack of social infrastructure as well as high levels of deprivation<sup>20</sup>.

Essentially, two neighbourhoods may share many of the same characteristics in terms of geography and demographics, but the neighbourhood with lower levels of social infrastructure will have disproportionately worse outcomes. There is a growing recognition of the importance of social infrastructure. One of our Commissioners, Professor David Halpern, and Andy Haldane, former Chief Economist of the Bank of England and former Head of the Levelling Up Task Force, have published an influential paper on the importance of social capital<sup>21</sup>. As a consequence, we need to start any process of neighbourhood recovery through strengthening the social infrastructure within neighbourhoods to strengthen social capital.

Further research developed and commissioned by ICON has reinforced our initial conclusion.

<sup>20</sup> Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, Think Neighbourhoods, March 2025 p.37  
<sup>21</sup> D. Halpern & A. Haldane, Social Capital: The Hidden Wealth of Nations, December 2024

**Figure 3 – Breakdown of Hyper-Local Need Measure by levels of neighbourhood deprivation and social infrastructure**



Source: ICON analysis of OCSI Hyper-Local Need Measure; Indices of Multiple Deprivation; OCSI Community Need Index

## Social infrastructure and social capital

In this report we refer to social infrastructure and social capital. Both concepts are closely connected but are distinct.

**Social infrastructure** we define as “physical and community facilities which bring people together to build meaningful relationships.<sup>22</sup>” These are often the ‘third spaces’ such as community centres, football pitches, pubs, cafes etc. Social infrastructure investments create the spaces where these active elements of social capital can flourish<sup>23</sup>.

**Social capital** we define as “the resources available to individuals and communities through their social relationships and networks<sup>24</sup>”. Bonding social capital refers to close ties between members of the same social circles, facilitating trust and mutual aid among friends and family members. Bridging social capital describes association ties between members of different social groups, built through workplaces, unions, volunteering, sports clubs, and local associations. Linking social capital refers to vertical ties connecting residents to local, state, and national authorities.

22 Kenny, M & Kelsey, T, Townscapes: The Value of Social Infrastructure, Bennett Institute for Public Policy, 2021

23 A. Coutts & D. Velasquez, Social infrastructure and social capital – the active elements of community resilience, November 2025 p.8

24 I. Kawachi, SV. Subramanian, D. Kim, Social capital and health, 2008

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Disadvantaged neighbourhoods typically have lower levels of all forms of social capital, but particularly bridging and linking social capital. Generally speaking, therefore, when discussing social capital we are referring to bridging and linking social capital.

In our evaluation of the Big Local programme we found that social infrastructure investments can have a significant positive influence on key metrics from crime to employment<sup>25</sup>. An ICON commissioned independent policy review by Crest Advisory into crime and justice concluded that “the evidence is clear: the social and physical conditions of neighbourhoods are not incidental to crime – they help to generate it and shape how people respond to it”<sup>26</sup>.

An ICON commissioned independent policy review by Dr Adam Coutts and Dr. Diego Mauricio Diaz Velaquez similarly, found that low levels of social infrastructure directly contributed to lower levels of social cohesion and propensity for civil disorder<sup>27</sup>. ICON's own analysis of the economic performance of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in partnership with the Growth and Reform Network found that that areas which had lower levels of social capital had worse economic performance than similar areas with higher levels of social capital<sup>28</sup>. Repeatedly, we find the link between better social and economic outcomes and the strength of social capital.

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25 R. Mudie, E. Farrar & C. Signori, Progress and Pressure: Understanding economic and social change in England's neighbourhoods, June 2025

26 S. Davies et al, Why place matters: neighbourhood effects on crime and anti-social behaviour, July 2025

27 A. Coutts & D. Velasquez, Social infrastructure and social capital – the active elements of community resilience, November 2025

28 R. Mudie et al, The Missing Links: Connecting disadvantaged neighbourhoods to new economic opportunities, December 2025 p.16



# Case Study: The Scotlands Estate, Wolverhampton

The Scotlands and Bushbury Hill estates in northeast Wolverhampton are among the most deprived neighbourhoods in England. Once tied to a strong industrial economy, they now experience persistent poverty, unemployment and poor health, with over 74% of residents living in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally. Job density is extremely low, and many households face pressures such as debt, food insecurity and social isolation. Children in the area experience some of the worst wellbeing outcomes in the country, and healthy life expectancy is around nine years below the national average.

Big Local became the turning point. Its most visible legacy is the Big Venture Centre, saved from closure when the partnership secured the former adventure playground and building through a 25-year asset transfer. Renovated and now self-sustaining, it is the beating heart of community life. The centre hosts a café, children's activities, a community garden, summer programmes, the community shop, and holistic support linking food, mental health, debt advice and family wellbeing.

The partnership is proudly down-to-earth and unmistakably resident-led. It is driven largely by a group of local women, known affectionately as the Pink Ladies (after their distinctive t-shirts), who describe themselves as “doers, not strategists.” They are at the Big Venture Centre every day, cooking, organising activities, solving problems and keeping the atmosphere warm and energetic. During ICON's visit, they emphasised that their model works only because it is rooted in trust: trust between volunteers, and trust earned from local residents over many years. Because of the relationships they have built, the Pink Ladies have become a first port of call when someone is struggling. Residents often alert them to neighbours facing hardship, loneliness or mental health challenges, knowing they will respond with compassion and practical support.



A central aim of their work is to build confidence and break cycles of intergenerational unemployment. Through cooking classes and other activities, they create safe spaces where people can seek help without stigma or formality. These sessions offer much more than recipes: they provide informal mental health support, social connection, and a doorway into wider opportunities. By strengthening social capital, the partnership is helping the community become more resilient and more able to support itself.

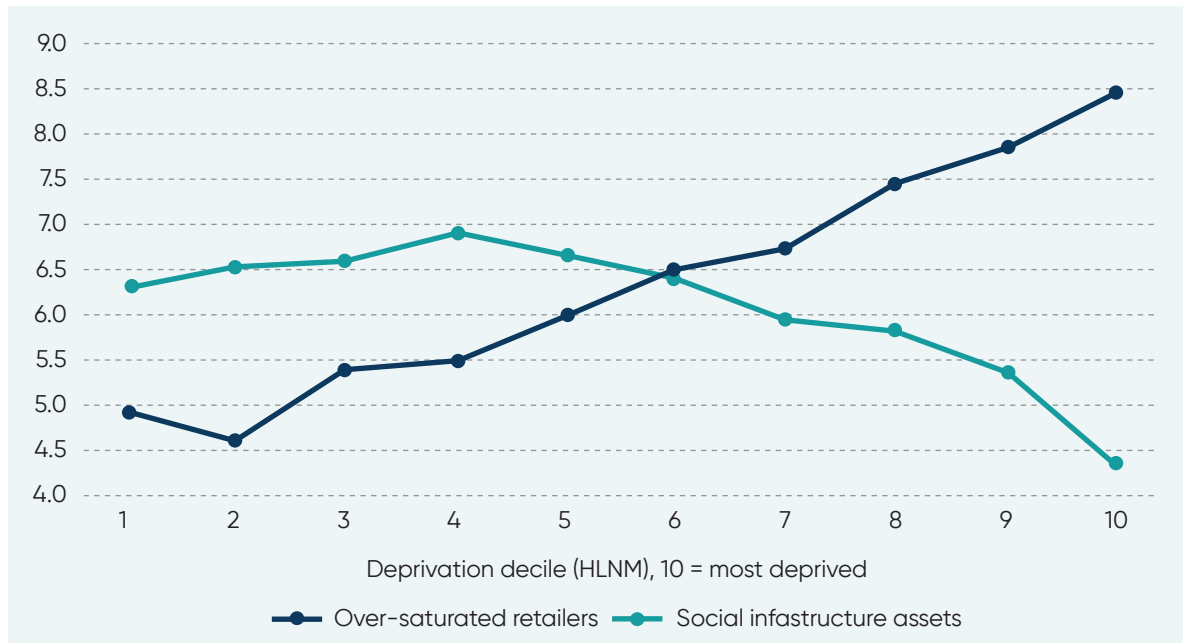
The Pink Ladies have not only repaired the social fabric but created a confident, collaborative neighbourhood infrastructure with momentum that is being valued both by residents and the council. Although the group maintains positive relationships with the council and other agencies, they are clear that control must remain with residents. In their view, local ownership turns people from passive recipients of services into active contributors and problem-solvers. This approach builds skills, strengthens confidence, and improves wellbeing while nurturing a community that looks after its own.



Further ICON research has found that social infrastructure within the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods is significantly lower than the rest of the country. Figure 4 shows the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods have fewer pubs, coffee shops, cafés, community centres, advice centres, social clubs, private clubs, village halls, snooker halls, bingo halls,

GPs, leisure centres and swimming pools, health clubs, and sport clubs than other places. By contrast, the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are far more likely to have low-value retail (e.g. gambling, fast food shops etc.) than positive social infrastructure. Neighbourhoods cannot succeed when they lack the vital ingredients for success.

**Figure 4 – Average number of social infrastructure assets and low value retail units per neighbourhood (Middle Super Output Area), local parades only.**



Source: Hyper Local Needs Index (2025), Green Street (2025), ICON Analysis

It is for this reason that we support the focus within the government's Pride in Place programme on social infrastructure and community capacity building. We believe that there is a strong evidential basis for prioritising social infrastructure improvements within the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, this needs to form part of a holistic approach to neighbourhood recovery.

Strengthening social infrastructure is only the beginning of the journey.

### **'Staircasing' Neighbourhood Recovery – A practical theory of change**

One of the challenges we have identified is the lack of a clear vision or strategy for neighbourhood recovery across government, civil society and the private sector. Government is often developing policies in a vacuum

without a clear understanding of how to deliver change. This traditionally involves developing interventions in siloes and without recognition of the importance of community leadership.

Informed by the research that we have undertaken and commissioned alongside our visits, we are confident that without strong levels of social capital and social infrastructure it is not possible to build anything sustainable. This is why initial efforts should be focused on reconstructing the social infrastructure of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, these interventions need to be done in a way that align with the work of local councils and public service providers so that higher levels of social capital and trust with local institutions leads to better engagement with public services and more positive outcomes.

Social infrastructure needs to be developed in a way that is genuinely community-led and not beholden to a specific policy outcome, so

that it effectively creates social capital through giving agency and power to local people. But local government, NHS, police, schools and other public services need to work in partnership with local communities, using the social capital created at a local level to reengage people with public services and deliver better outcomes. We are not confident that policies are being designed to encourage this or that local service providers have the capacity to make the most of these interventions.

We have heard repeatedly from our visits and engaging with local councils and other public services that it can be difficult to reach those that most need support due to a lack of knowledge and trust in local service providers. Where support has been given, sustained improvements are hard to maintain because there is a lack of a supportive environment through which to maintain changes. This aligns with the evidence on the prevalence of poor health, education and employment outcomes in households with low levels of social capital<sup>29</sup>. Improvements in social infrastructure can help to address these challenges, but they also require public service reform which sets clear expectations around engagement with local communities, building their trust and confidence alongside giving agency to local residents and service-users where possible. As part of this partnership, as we seen in places such as Wigan, we need to develop clear expectations of how residents within neighbourhoods will change their behaviour to make the most of reformed public services.

We are also concerned that governments have repeatedly asked the private sector to do the impossible to invest in and sustain employment in places which have a high prevalence of social challenges and difficulties in securing workers with the necessary skills. Far too often we have focused on the physical infrastructure transformations and not enough on the people within an area. This can lead to significant economic infrastructure building within areas, but with the most disadvantaged residents not benefiting from change. We need to recognise that economic development is based on high levels of social capital enabling good public service outcomes.

## The limits of a neighbourhood strategy

We must recognise the limits of any national strategy for neighbourhood recovery. It is clear to us from our work that building a new economic model where all parts of the country can participate and share in the opportunities created through growth is essential. However, economic reform is hard to achieve. An economic strategy can only succeed if disadvantaged neighbourhoods are reintegrated back into a successful economic model, but neighbourhood interventions cannot be sustainable without a broader shift in the country's economic performance to provide the finance, the infrastructure and jobs that can help places to thrive.

Ultimately, many of these neighbourhoods have been the victims of previous national policies that have shifted away from industry and production towards agglomeration-based services and consumption, with a particular focus on cities. We are concerned that the current devolution model could compound this problem.

**We can create the conditions for neighbourhoods to succeed, but they also need to be wired into successful regional and national economic strategies.** The Industrial Strategy is a good start, but as we have noted in our research, The Missing Links, many of the sectors that have been targeted for government support are not present in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Our strategy is focused on the first two steps – rebuilding social infrastructure and improving public service outcomes – which are essential foundations. However, more needs to be done to develop an Industrial Strategy that can sustainably support thriving neighbourhoods across all parts of the country.

29 Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, Think Neighbourhoods, March 2025 p.34

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Half of adults in Mission Critical neighbourhoods are economically inactive, compared to just 39% of adults elsewhere. One third of adults (250,000) in Mission Critical neighbourhoods have no qualifications – almost double the national average<sup>30</sup>. This is linked to low educational attainment which itself is often linked to health and care challenges within households.

Greater levels of economic investment and job creation depend upon high quality public services delivering positive outcomes which in turn depend on high levels of social capital forged through a diverse range of social institutions. Moreover, sustaining training and employment is more likely if people have strong social networks<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Farrar et al, Anatomy of Mission Critical Neighbourhoods, May 2025

<sup>31</sup> M. Wessel & A. Silva, Friends with benefits: How to connect communities to create opportunities, December 2025

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# Case Study: Warwick Estate, Knottingley

ICON visited Knottingley, located in West Yorkshire, a neighbourhood falling within the most disadvantaged 3% of areas in England.

The Warwick Estate was built in the 1960s to house miners employed at Kellingley Colliery, once a major employer and the last deep coal mine in the UK. Despite the pit remaining open until 2015, the community never recovered from the wider industrial decline of the 1980s. Today, insecure, low-paid work in logistics, manufacturing and care define the job market in the area, with large distribution warehouses becoming major employers. Long and irregular shifts make it difficult for families to maintain routines or participate in community life, contributing to social fragmentation.

Weak infrastructure compounds these pressures. Bus services stop early due to safety concerns, isolating residents from jobs and services. The high street has lost essential amenities, including banks, shops and the post office, while council services have been centralised elsewhere. The result is a daily struggle for many households. Social institutions that once provided solidarity like pubs, clubs and sporting teams have disappeared, while youth crime and anti-social behaviour have become growing concerns.

Within this challenging context, Warwick Ahead has emerged as an important stabilising force within the neighbourhood. Funded through Big Local, it was created to support resident-led change, rebuild confidence and strengthen local networks. Although the partnership faced early

difficulties, including internal conflict and low capacity, it has since matured into a more stable and trusted organisation. Warwick Ahead now has a core group of resident leaders, stronger relationships with public and voluntary agencies, and a community base located in a previously empty shop at the heart of the estate.

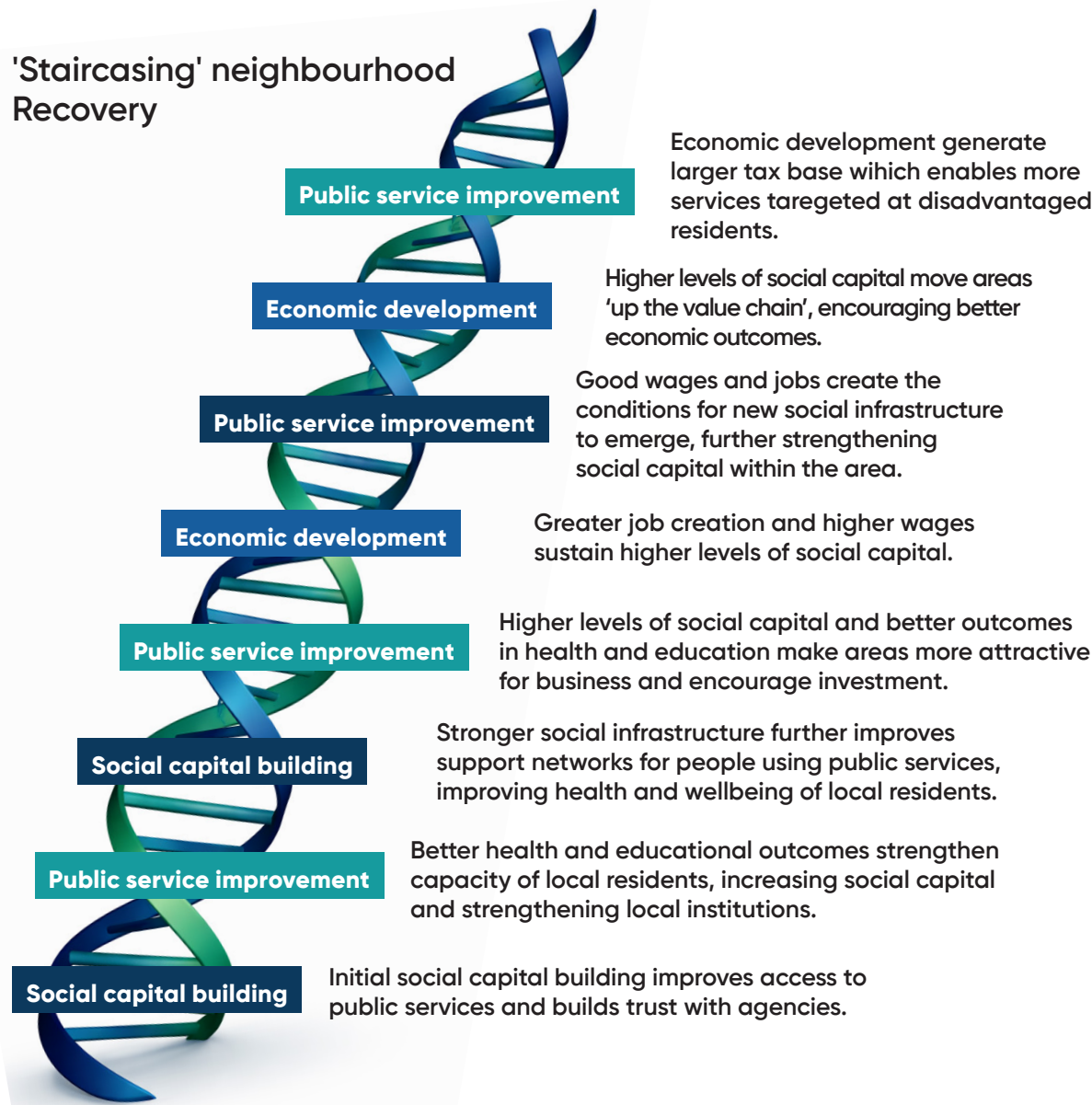
Warwick Ahead's work focuses on rebuilding the social fabric through youth activities, skills development, community events and training opportunities. These projects offer structure, aspiration and belonging, especially for young people who lack safe spaces and positive outlets. The partnership has also prioritised listening to residents, gradually widening participation and nurturing local leadership. While challenges such as limited services and persistent deprivation remain, Warwick Ahead has demonstrated the value of long-term, locally rooted investment. It has provided a platform for collective action, helped restore community connections, and laid early foundations for a more hopeful and confident future on the Warwick Estate.

Far too often we have sought to rush this process, trying to reach the end state of self-sustaining economic growth without creating strong foundations. Our data on the progress made during the New Labour government has shown that gains through investing in local social infrastructure and public services failed to lead to sustainable recovery because we did not see a fundamental shift in the country's economic model to enable neighbourhoods to take advantage of these investments<sup>32</sup>. There is no short cut to sustainable recovery for neighbourhoods.

In early roundtables with stakeholders presenting our overall findings and ideas, we presented a relatively simple 'three phase' approach to neighbourhood recovery. Helpful feedback from stakeholders highlighted the interconnectedness and fluidity between different interventions.

We recommend a 'Staircase' Model for neighbourhood recovery with investment in social infrastructure being followed up through linking public service interventions, which in turn strengthen social capital and create the conditions for economic development.

Diagram 1 – A theory of change for neighbourhood recovery



Source: ICON analysis

32 R. Mudie, E. Farrar & C. Signori, Progress and Pressure: Understanding economic and social change in England's neighbourhoods, June 2025

In many cases these interventions can be carried out concurrently, particularly when it comes to social infrastructure building and public service improvements, however, they need to appropriately build upon each other and must be done in a way that consciously builds the foundations for future interventions. This avoids an approach that develops interventions in silos and avoids the temptation of short cuts that seek to focus purely on physical infrastructure improvements.

For example, we have seen on our visit to Matson in Gloucester how the development of new social infrastructure, a community centre, has consciously sort to create the space for the delivery of health services and integrated sports and recreation facilities to improve public health. Better health and wellbeing will create the conditions for social capital to be strengthened which in turn can feed back in to strengthening public service outcomes in areas such as education and training. The best examples we have seen on our visits have taken a layer by layer approach taking the neighbourhood on a journey through social infrastructure rebuilding, improving the delivery of public services and encouraging economic development through upskilling and training local people.

## Case Study: Matson Estate, Gloucester

ICON visited the Gloucestershire Gateway Trust. Formed in 2007 the Trust, comprising of local business experts, in the pursuit of creating a community enterprise that would support the neighbourhood of Matson, one of the most disadvantaged in England.

The GGT partnered with a private family business, Westmorland, to create an environmentally sustainable service station that could improve outcomes in the local area based on a similar station in Tebay. As an operating partner, GGT has a holding stake in the company, receiving a share of profits from

the business. This profit is distributed by GGT, which is a registered charity governed by a board of Trustees, into the wider community through its partnership model. GGT currently partners with 12 community organisations in Gloucester, distributing funding to them at regular intervals. The trust also offers one-off grants, benefitting local schools and individuals.

The projects invested into by GGT are chosen following extensive community consultation. Community surveys are carried out through door knocking, town-halls, and using online engagement methods to uncover where local residents feel investment is needed. This has led to significant investment in youth services and food resilience projects. This investment model benefits community partners by steering them away from over-reliance on grant-based funding that often requires significant time and expertise due to competitive bidding models. GGT champions a 'whole neighbourhood approach', which is strengthened by the partnership, enabling community organisations to work together rather than competing for funding.



This may appear to be merely jargon or the subject of academic debate, but strategy matters.

We are concerned that at present the government risks developing policies which do not work coherently. For example, Neighbourhood Health Centres are being developed in places where there is not supportive improvements in social infrastructure. Neighbourhood policing funding is currently being deployed without reference to investments being made in social infrastructure, which we have noted is critical to effective policing, or improvements in neighbourhood health services. In practical terms this means that the government may spend billions of pounds on programmes that may fail to have impact because they are dependent on other interventions for success. The government risks not learning from the success of the NDC which took a more holistic approach to neighbourhood regeneration. A lack of a holistic strategy for neighbourhood recovery also sees enabling institutions, particularly community-led social infrastructure, charities, faith groups and local government, undervalued.

It is essential that all these policies are brought together within a coherent theory of change so that we ensure that every neighbourhood that we seek to change has all the support it needs and the best possible conditions for success. Communities and professionals on the ground also need to be confident that their work is not being undertaken in isolation and that there is a realistic prospect of long term improvement.

The next challenge is taking the strategy that we have outlined and executing it in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods identified through the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline.



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# The System: Building the pillars for neighbourhood recovery

## Summary

- We have identified eight pillars that we think are necessary to enable neighbourhoods to successfully recover. We call these the 'Essential Eight'.
- We have developed nine policies that would help to address these challenges.
- Together, they create a systemic approach to neighbourhood recovery focused on financial resources, new institutions and an expanded workforce.

## The 'Essential Eight'

Over the course of our visits and through the evidence that we have gathered, we have identified several interventions that are necessary at a neighbourhood, local, regional and national level to help neighbourhood recovery. We call these the 'Essential Eight'.

Diagram 2 below shows these eight pillars, as well as grouping them into three categories: foundational, transformational and sustainable.

**Foundational** pillars should be the priority for interventions to enable neighbourhood recovery. We consider these pillars as the preconditions for success. Public order is the clearest example of a foundational pillar. It is hard for families to recolonise parks and social spaces that have become sites for drug-dealing or motorbike riding. Similarly, communities have sometimes become so disillusioned and withdrawn, that even the best community organisers or determined neighbour will struggle to mobilise the community. Though it will vary between areas, the first step towards renewal may often involve a mobilisation of local services to ensure that there is a basic level of safety and confidence for citizens. Even the toughest

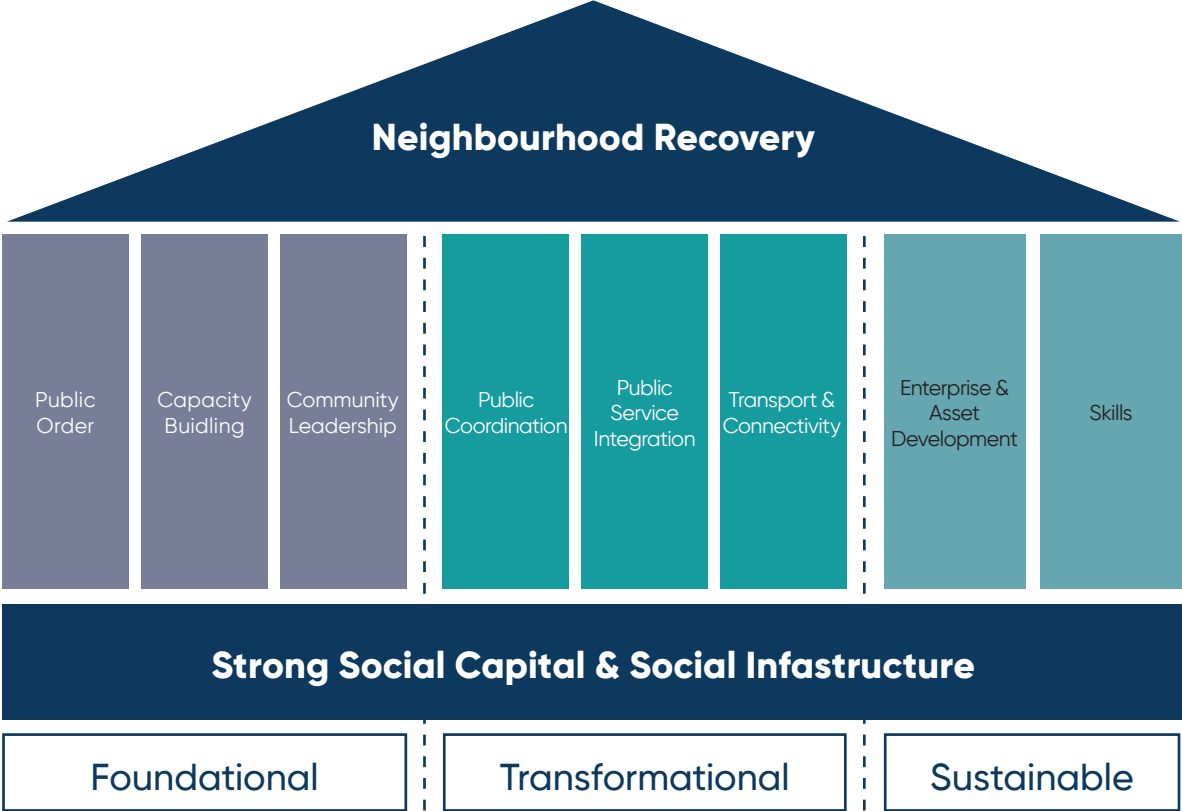
plant needs soil to grow. Both of these interventions require public and philanthropic investment to succeed.

In Sunderland we visited Hetton Aspirations Linking Opportunities (HALO), a project between the community, council and local police. The local police spent time getting to know residents, and formed a permanent team based within the local community centre, in collaboration with local community leaders. This identified the specific forms of crime and anti-social behaviour that left residents afraid to utilise public spaces, and wary of each other. For example, this included the high profile and aggressive use of mini motorbikes by a small minority of residents. A clamp down on this behaviour, ultimately including one or two residents from the neighbourhood, rebuilt confidence in public spaces, in neighbours, and even in the police. It created the conditions under which other social infrastructure and connection could be built.

**Transformational** pillars seek to bend other public services, interventions and assets towards serving the needs of the local community. Public service integration is essential to achieving this, building new institutions which are rooted in the local neighbourhood and bring community-led institutions and public services together to identity, triage, support and provide wrap-around support to local residents that need support. Transport and connectivity help to provide bridging social capital which encourages social mixing that leads to positive outcomes. Policy coordination can help to leverage resources across local, regional and national government to build on the investments in social infrastructure and public safety.



Diagram 2 – Eight pillars for neighbourhood recovery



**Sustainable** pillars are focused on providing the conditions for financial sustainability and legacy. In particular, the development of revenue streams to maintain social infrastructure and local civic assets as well as providing the skills to enable local residents to find sustainable employment.

These pillars need to be developed holistically and intentionally sequenced so that they have maximum opportunity to succeed, as in our Staircase Model. Skills can be created, for example, through the development of community leadership (as we outline below), however, rushing to deliver a comprehensive work programme for local residents before social capital has been strengthened and core public service outcomes have been improved is unlikely to succeed. The Staircase Model and these pillars are provided as helpful ways of framing the development of neighbourhood interventions both at a national and local level.

### Investing in neighbourhood recovery

Despite the welcome investment provided through Pride in Place, if we wish to create the conditions for sustainable neighbourhood recovery, we will need to layer other interventions into these areas to maximise the rebuilding of social infrastructure and social capital. This will require additional investment.

In terms of size of funding required at a neighbourhood level, it is impossible to say exactly how much funding any individual neighbourhood will need. However, we know that given the current fiscal environment, there is unlikely to be significant levels of investment available. The New Deal for Communities provided direct funding of £85.6m in each area in 2005–06 prices.<sup>33</sup> An additional £37m per area (2005/2006 prices) was leveraged in these projects from other government sources, the private sector and philanthropy.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Calculated via HM Treasury GDP deflator

<sup>34</sup> E. Batty et al, The New Deal for Communities Experience: A final assessment, March 2010 p.6

Given the significant impact of austerity which has seen services in many of these places significantly reduced and physical infrastructure sold off or lost, we believe that the combined investment of government, private and philanthropic sources saw during the NDC will be necessary to kick-start the process. This would indicate that a minimum of £125m per neighbourhood will be required in each neighbourhood if we want to create sustainable changes. Some of this funding can be found through other programmes and does not need to be “new” money. For example, Neighbourhood Policing or Health Centre spending could be better directed. All departments seeking to deliver neighbourhood level interventions should be encouraged to collaborate and work within the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline to bring the full fiscal firepower of the government to bare in a holistic way. We also need to recognise that a new Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline does not need to spend money in the same way as the NDC, with less emphasis on physical infrastructure. In general, our view is that we should learn the lessons from community-based urban planners such as Herbert Gans and focus on people, not buildings.

Pride in Place has provided a considerable downpayment of this level of investment and is currently projected to provide £20m per neighbourhood in funding, which would mean that an additional £100m would be required to provide the basis of a transformational neighbourhood recovery programme.

**Overall, therefore, we estimate that developing an effective Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline (NRP) would require £2bn in additional funding per year over the next ten years, rising to £2.5bn over the remain ten years.**

This would provide an additional £10m per neighbourhood per year over the next ten years for each neighbourhood in the pipeline, on top of the £2m provided through Pride in Place. The distribution between the different pillar investments we have outlined below would be determined through governance at a neighbourhood level, including the community-led Neighbourhood Boards that

have already been created through the Pride in Place programme.

## Value for money

As we have identified previously, value for money is not the issue. We know that this spending within neighbourhoods will deliver results if it is channelled through an effective strategy. Both the NDC and Big Local have generated significant positive impact and have saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of pounds over the long term.<sup>35</sup> Individual programmes within this (e.g. asset development, hotspot policing etc.) can be shown to be value for money. Taking the NDC as a benchmark, our proposed pipeline of investment in disadvantaged neighbourhoods could generate between £391m–£635m per neighbourhood if NDC-level impact was achieved.<sup>36</sup> Although the NDC included housing regeneration as part of its work, only 4% of the monetised gains were related to housing, with the majority coming through health and public order outcomes. We think that these latter two interventions should be at the core of any neighbourhood recovery funding.

## Sources of investment

We are confident that money can certainly be found without breaking the fiscal rules if the government wishes to do so.

According to the Office for Budget Responsibility, departmental revenue expenditure is predicted to increase by £27bn per year by 2030–31.<sup>37</sup> Departmental capital expenditure will also be £27bn higher by the end of the forecast. A neighbourhood recovery programme would, therefore, represent 2–3% of the total net real term increase in capital and revenue expenditure per year over that period. Moreover, the same OBR analysis indicates that departmental revenue and capital expenditure underspend is estimated to be £34bn over that same period. This could fund a neighbourhood recovery programme four times over. There would be no additional need to raise taxation nor to defund any other programme to enable this to happen.

<sup>35</sup> Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, Think Neighbourhoods, March 2025

<sup>36</sup> C. Beatty et al, The New Deal for Communities Programme: Assessing impact and value for money The New Deal for Communities National Evaluation: Final report – Volume 6, March 2010

<sup>37</sup> Office for Budget Responsibility, November 2025 Economic and fiscal outlook – detailed forecast tables: expenditure, Tables 4.3 & 4.6, November 2025

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**There is no clear fiscal barrier to developing a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Recovery. If government chooses not to invest in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, this is a choice.**

Neighbourhood Boards should be free to determine what is effective for their neighbourhood and should be given maximum flexibility between revenue and capital requirements. The second phase of Pride in Place is effectively a 60/40 split between revenue and capital, an improvement on the first phase of the programme which was a 70/30 split between revenue and capital. Changing future funding to be more heavily weighted towards revenue over capital is, based on our visits and engagement with community organisations, essential. The evidence of the NDC and Big Local programmes is that community-led bodies can be trusted to make value for money judgements and be custodians of public money.

### Impact investment, philanthropy and faith groups

Additional funding could be sourced through the new Office for the Impact Economy, where philanthropists and social investors have already started to rally around the Pride in Place programme. Cooperative development should also be encouraged through the Cooperative Development Unit that has been set up under MHCLG. We have noted in many of the neighbourhoods that we have visited the important role that faith-based institutions have played in maintaining social infrastructure in neighbourhoods that would otherwise have lost infrastructure.

Setting a target for levels for additional investment across all neighbourhoods would be unwise given the scale of funding required is far larger than impact investors, philanthropists or faith-based institutions will be able to provide on their own. Foundations, for example, spent a total of £7bn overall (excluding the Wellcome Trust) in 2023-24. Given foundations will have existing funding commitments that are aligned to other government objectives, this means at best, tens of millions of pounds can be leveraged for

supportive neighbourhood level investments.<sup>38</sup> However, there should be an aspiration to maximise private and philanthropic investment in disadvantaged neighbourhoods through encouraging partnership working.

We also need to be creative about accessing private sector finance. For example, we can learn from countries such as the United States that have used instruments such as the Community Reinvestment Act and Opportunity Zones to leverage private capital into disadvantaged places.

We recommend the government should take an 'orchestral' approach to these additional sources of revenue, channelling them into *enabling* investments where institutions require independent sources of funding and where data or evidence is best pooled across sectors.

### The role of local authority funding

Neighbourhood level investment cannot be a replacement for properly funded local services, particularly through local authorities. We will not be able to help neighbourhoods to sustainably recover if basic local services are underfunded and councils lack the capacity to engage with local residents, convene all parts of the state at a local level and provide long term place-shaping investments.

We also cannot expect local authorities to overturn decades of decline from within their own resources. Many local authorities have high densities of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Councils such as Blackpool, Bradford, Durham, Knowsley, Liverpool, Stoke and Wakefield (to name a few) have multiple Mission Critical neighbourhoods within their areas. They are simply not going to be able to generate the additional resources required for neighbourhoods within day-to-day expenditure.

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<sup>38</sup> Association of Charitable Foundations, *Foundations in Focus*, October 2025

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**We need both local authority funding to be increased and neighbourhood level programmes to provide additional support.**

At the time of writing this report, the government concluded its Fair Funding Review and announced the initial allocations of funding for local government. Overall, we are pleased that the new system is more progressive in terms of allocating funding based on need than the previous system. However, it is heavily dependent on the Recovery Grant, a temporary funding stream for councils with high levels of deprivation, to maintain that level of progressiveness. The Recovery Grant should be made permanent, rather than dependent on review every three years, to take into account the additional demands that will be placed on some councils for the foreseeable due to significant levels of neighbourhood disadvantage and weaker social infrastructure. Moreover, the Recovery Grant should not obscure the need for fundamental adjustments in the Core Spending Power of local authorities which in many of the most disadvantaged areas is still significantly lower than would be expected.

It is also clear from the allocations made so far that despite efforts to base funding on the updated Index of Multiple Deprivation, we have still not succeeded in rebalancing funding effectively towards those places that need it most. Councils, particularly in the urban North East and coastal communities, are facing real term cuts in funding. It would be short-sighted to provide additional neighbourhood level investment in disadvantaged areas whilst at the same time cutting funding to the councils that they rely upon. A more sophisticated method of identifying need, using measures such as the Community Needs Index, would help to balance resources more fairly. For example, a blend of IMD and Community Needs Index would see councils in every region bar London and the South East receive increases in funding compared to the present formula, with the North East of England (which has the highest concentration of mission critical neighbourhoods on a per capita basis) seeing

the biggest increase. The current Fair Funding Review must be seen as the start of a process to rebalance local government finances, rather than an end goal.

We now look at each of these pillars in turn and make recommendations for what can be done to address them at a neighbourhood level.

These recommendations build on the feedback and consultation on our *Green Paper* published in Summer 2025 and policy roundtables we undertook as part of that consultation and subsequently. A paper providing analysis of the feedback that we received is published alongside this report and we are grateful to all those that participated through their consultation submissions, attending our workshops and one-to-one meetings.

## **1. Public Order**

As noted above, public safety is a basic precondition for the building of social capital and community. Though communities can play a crucial role in reducing crime – we cannot expect an already frayed community to take on organised criminal activity or potentially violent individuals.

In our Interim Report we showed how concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour featured prominently in people's experience of their neighbourhoods. Crime, and fear of crime, is highly uneven. People living in deprived neighbourhoods are more than three-times more likely to describe their area as not being safe compared with more affluent neighbourhoods.<sup>39</sup> Rates of crime are also considerably higher in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Crime is also where neighbourhood effects are strongest felt.<sup>40</sup> We have heard repeatedly on our visits that concerns about order and safety could undermine investments in social infrastructure and public services as people do not feel able to access them or to allow their children to participate in local programmes. We know from the NDC that places focused on reducing recorded crime to change the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> D. Freedman & G.W. Woods, Neighbourhood Effects, Mental Illness and Criminal Behaviour: A Review. *J Politics Law*. 1;6(3), 2013

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culture of areas.<sup>41</sup> Across the NDC, around 10% of expenditure focused on reducing crime – nearly as much as was spent on health and worklessness.<sup>42</sup> Big Local areas also invested over £1m on community safety initiatives, although many other social infrastructure programmes had indirect elements of public order objectives within their overall strategy.<sup>43</sup> On our visits we have seen a number of examples of Big Local programmes that have sought to use much smaller sums of money to restore a sense of community safety including on the Newington Estate, Thanet, where families came together through cultural projects to beautify the area and reduce the prevalence of anti-social behaviour and drug-dealing.

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<sup>41</sup> E. Batty et al, *The New Deal for Communities Experience: A final assessment*, March 2010 p.15

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p.14

<sup>43</sup> L. Fisher, *How did Big Local areas spend their funding*, Local Trust, October 2024

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# Case Study: Newington Estate, Thanet

The Newington estate in Ramsgate, within Thanet District in Kent, is one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the South East. Once a tight-knit social housing estate, Newington has faced persistently high levels of unemployment, crime and poor health outcomes. According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation, over 71% of residents live in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally, and the area has struggled with limited local amenities, fragmented public services and a distinct lack of accessible, shared community spaces, contributing to long-term social isolation and weakened neighbourhood ties.

Regeneration programmes and community initiatives have played a role in stabilising the estate, yet systemic challenges remain. Public transport is infrequent, especially in the evenings, restricting access to employment and services. Residents also report difficulty accessing healthcare, with inconsistent GP provision and limited early-intervention mental health support. Newington lacks a clear civic centre, and decades of disinvestment have left few places for young people or families to gather safely. However, recent years have seen a modest but noticeable shift in confidence, led not by traditional top-down services, but by locally driven activity rooted in the community itself.

Newington Big Local has become a central force for change since 2012, supporting a wide range of resident-led activities designed to rebuild social connection, improve wellbeing and create positive opportunities, especially for young people. The once-neglected community centre has been transformed into a thriving hub, offering daily activities, informal support and a warm, stigma-free space where people can simply drop in for conversation, food and company. Youth engagement has expanded through a regular youth club, while food-focused programmes including cooking clubs, lunch clubs and intergenerational sessions have helped tackle food insecurity and loneliness at the same time.

Investment has also supported green spaces such as The Coppice community woodland, new murals and public art through Creative Civic Change, and popular community events that bring families together and connect residents with local services. Residents have even voted to remove buildings linked to crime, improving safety on the estate. With £500,000 of Levelling Up funding now committed to expanding the community centre and adding a training kitchen, Newington has a more hopeful trajectory. Challenges remain particularly around transport, healthcare and long-term funding, but the estate now has a stronger foundation of local leadership, pride and collective energy to build on.



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A sense of order and security is essential to enable the success of other investments within places.

## Neighbourhood Task Forces

We believe that the government should consider creating **'Neighbourhood Task Forces' in every neighbourhood that is part of the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline.**

This would fund the delivery of hotspot policing and provide engagement between police and community-led social infrastructure redevelopment, something that we have found lacking in many of our visits to neighbourhoods. It would also build on the government's commitment to hire more neighbourhood police officers.

We know that funding for policing has been significantly reduced in recent years and in the short-term it is highly unlikely that policing budgets will return to anything near their pre-2010 levels. In the first five years of the Coalition Government, funding on policing fell by 25% in real terms and although it has increased in recent years, is still £4-5bn lower than it would have been if 2010 levels of expenditure had been maintained in real terms.

We also know that despite limited funding, we have not prioritised resources at the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. ICON analysis of policing spending has found that the most disadvantaged 10% of areas receive just £204 spent per head on policing, versus £221 in the 10% least disadvantaged areas. This is despite the most disadvantaged areas having far higher levels of crime and concerns about public safety. In part, this is because cities tended to have higher levels of spending than towns and coastal communities which still have considerably higher levels of crime. It is also because we have simply not linked up spending on policing with other policy interventions.

Whilst the government cannot restore policing budgets to where they were, we can do something to bring targeted policing support to areas in the short-term. Every neighbourhood in the Neighbourhood

Recovery Pipeline should be eligible for £1.5m per year for ten years for local police forces to fund Neighbourhood Task Forces that would operate hotspot policing and community safety initiatives targeted at areas where we are seeking to rebuild neighbourhoods. We estimate the cost of this proposal would be around £219m per year over the next ten years for the 146 neighbourhoods in England in Tranche One.

This would pay for extra patrols from police officers, engagement with local communities, events and activities with residents and police as well as providing physical infrastructure (where necessary).

The evidence for targeted policing programmes is strong. A review of hotspot policing interventions in 78 areas found that 62 areas (79%) had "noteworthy crime and disorder reductions."<sup>44</sup> In April 2021, the Home Office (HO) announced that 18 police forces with the highest levels of serious violence would receive funding to deliver enhanced hot spot policing. The aim of this programme, called Grip, was to deter serious violence through visible patrol activity in hot spots whilst also adopting strategic problem-oriented policing to address the root causes of violence within those locations.

Grip resulted in an average 7% reduction in violence against the person and robbery offences in hot spot areas, when comparing days that received patrols versus days that were not patrolled. This means an estimated 1,100 acts of violence against the person and robberies were prevented, delivering an estimated £36 million in societal benefits and a return on investment of roughly £2.20 for every £1 spent<sup>45</sup>.

Police are operationally independent, but Neighbourhood Task Forces should engage with the newly created local Neighbourhood Boards and community leaders, so that police work with local community leaders, local authorities and other stakeholders to develop integrated strategies. This builds on the evidence we have gathered so far, with Crest's independent evidence review for ICON found that high levels of community input

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<sup>44</sup> A. Braga et al, Hot spots policing of small geographic areas effects on crime, Campbell System Review, 8;15(3), 2019

<sup>45</sup> O. Jeffrey et al, Evaluation report on Grip and bespoke-funded hot spot policing, 15 February 2024

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and engagement was essential for successful policing at a neighbourhood level.<sup>46</sup>

## 2. Capacity building

Central to the case made by ICON has been the critical importance of capacity building. If social capital is key that can start the engine for neighbourhood recovery, it can only be turned by local residents having their hand on it. The whole theory of change depends on the idea that local residents will utilise their passion, knowledge and expertise to bring people together to effect change. This is based on evidence both from the UK<sup>47</sup> as well as from Europe and the United States.<sup>48</sup> If government simply tries to do “good work” in places over the top of local residents, we will not effectively build social capital and the theory of change will not be delivered. This is why we have urged investment in neighbourhood capacity building as an early priority for Pride in Place – so that residents can be active partners and shape the future of their areas. It is also why we welcome the transition of Neighbourhood Boards to being community-led and outside local authority control over the next three years.

However, whilst we need to invest in locally-rooted community-led institutions and groups, we need to take active steps to support capacity building at a local level through providing a supportive ecosystem so that neighbourhoods can get access to the support that they need.

We have heard repeatedly from stakeholders from central and local government, as well as those with experience delivering previous neighbourhood regeneration programmes that we need to develop a bespoke institutional framework to enable the effective implementation of Pride in Place. Neighbourhood recovery is a relational project, not something that can be mandated from the centre, and a relational resource is required to help make it a success. This means developing a partnership that can wrap around residents and community groups to give them the tools to execute their plans.

We need to bring together public, private and civil society as well as foundations and philanthropists to make this work. In supporting Pride in Place and creating the resources for neighbourhoods to develop their own skills and sense of agency, we can create learning that will be useful for other areas, developing a ‘What Works’ approach to neighbourhood investment.

**We recommend that a Pride in Places Partnership (PPP) is developed to become a hub to coordinate and deliver support to neighbourhoods that are part of the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline.**

The Partnership would be hosted outside government, either within an existing organisation or be a standalone organisation but would bring together civil servants, secondees from local government, experts from charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and civil society to oversee the implementation of neighbourhood recovery programmes. Alongside a central resource for all neighbourhoods, combined authorities or local councils with high densities of mission critical neighbourhoods that will require intensive support at a local level could host bespoke partnership hubs to develop particular local expertise (e.g. Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Bradford, Blackpool). The governance of the partnership would need to reside with a central body to avoid individual members of the partnership working in silos and achieving less the sum of their parts.

The Partnership would work with Neighbourhood Boards to develop their Neighbourhood Plans and would seek to identify barriers to their implementation within government and beyond and developing solutions with local places. These could be related to the need to gain planning permission for a particular project, developing a new cooperative to manage a local asset, a governance challenge that requires external arbitration or identifying an opportunity within a new government funding programme. The Partnership would have boots on the ground in every region to develop strong relationships

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<sup>46</sup> S. Davies et al, Why place matters: neighbourhood effects on crime and anti-social behaviour, July 2025 p.22

<sup>47</sup> C. Signori, Mapping the Landscape of Place-Based Initiatives in England, 2019–2025, July 2025

<sup>48</sup> Frontier Economics, The evidence for neighbourhood-focused regeneration, February 2025



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with local places and would provide funding to accredited consultants and experts to support the delivery of neighbourhood level interventions. This would avoid individual neighbourhoods being pressured from external consultants to give up limited funding within their places. The Partnership would also work with any locally trusted organisations given responsibility for delivering Neighbourhood Plans.

The Partnership would also work with areas to monitor and evaluate the work being undertaken and feedback learnings across the Pride in Place Partnership to embed a 'What Works' model. This could be done through collaboration with the new Centre for Community Connectedness at Sheffield Hallam University as well as bodies such as 3ni which have already been working with local authorities to improve understanding and knowledge of neighbourhood working.

Our hypothesis is that it should be possible to reduce the burden of evaluation on neighbourhoods through central collection of data and using statistical models to test the overall direction of change within places, as we did in Summer 2025 with our own analysis of the Big Local programme. This would be a win-win for government and funders as well as local communities which regularly cite concerns about paperwork and bureaucracy in hampering their ability to carry out their work within local neighbourhoods. Evaluation is critically important and if we are going to embark upon a multi-generational plan to reconstruct our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and to enable communities to learn what does (and doesn't) work from each other. We must put strong data gathering and analysis at the core of what we do.

It would also commission research on the national and thematic challenges that are identified through the delivery of the programme to develop solutions to challenges. It would also disseminate best practice guidance to neighbourhoods on common issues (e.g. governance, asset development, financial planning etc.) building on the experience of previous programmes and strong performers. The Partnership

would merge and expand the Network for Neighbourhoods and Community Delivery Units that are currently overseeing Pride in Place, reducing administration and bureaucracy related to Pride in Place.

Given the size of the Pride in Place programme, this partnership is going to need a significant level of investment over the next decade and beyond. Drawing on the cost to deliver the Big Local programme (circa £60-70m<sup>49</sup>), we estimate that this Partnership will require £100m over the next decade, approximately £10m a year. To ensure the longevity and flexibility of the Partnership, we recommend that the government works with the National Lottery Community Fund to set up such a partnership through lottery funding. Given the shared interest in community development, this seems like a natural partnership. NLCF and MHCLG should provide top-up funding to the Partnership as the number of neighbourhoods it works with expands. At the height of an expanded Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline, we estimate the Partnership funding will peak around £25-30m per year.

### 3. Community leadership

Throughout ICON's visits we have been inspired by the community leaders we have met alongside those that have been part of our Experts by Experience Advisory Group that have helped us to test our emerging thinking with the reality on the ground. Neighbourhood recovery requires the participation of every resident, but some residents will inevitably need to take on a greater level of responsibility to coordinate, mobilise and transform local areas. We need to identify and back these community leaders wherever we can find them.

The scale of community leaders and mobilisers we need in individual neighbourhoods is vast. Neighbourhood Boards across the 146 neighbourhoods in England receiving Pride in Place, assuming that there are a minimum of 11 on each Neighbourhood Board and that half are residents as is required in government governance, will see nearly 1,750 people involved in neighbourhood governance. Moreover, another 1,500 Youth

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49 Big Local Trust, Annual report and financial statements: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 2024

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and Community Workers will also be required to support residents in this work (assuming 4–5 workers per neighbourhoods at the higher end compared to Big Local but likely given the increased scale of the projects<sup>50</sup>).

Given the total number of community and youth workers in local government stands at around 7,000<sup>51</sup> and 21,000 paid youth workers<sup>52</sup> in England, we need to increase the workforce of community and youth workers by around 5–10%. This comes at a time when community workers and youth workers have been declining.<sup>53</sup> We also need to consider the rise of digital technology and the need for the next generation of community workers having to operate in a new way to mobilise local residents.<sup>54</sup>

On our visits, we have seen the importance of having trusted people on the ground, in a mix of paid and voluntary role, to knit the community together. Worryingly, we have heard from and met many experienced professionals, who have worked on programmes such as the New Deal for Communities, but who are on the verge of retirement. There is genuine concern about whether there are enough workers coming through to be able to meet demand and how knowledge will be passed on down so that we do not unnecessarily reinvent the wheel.

Whilst there are a number of providers that offer degree and post-graduate degree qualifications for community work, we are concerned that there is not a pathway for foundational level qualifications to ensure that people *within* disadvantaged neighbourhoods are able to acquire the skills that they need. Moreover, there is an opportunity to both improve the impact of neighbourhood investments through the provision of skills and increase the employability of local residents through developing the right system. Furthermore, as we have noted in our economic research, a significant problem is the distance between learning centres

and disadvantaged neighbourhoods. For example, there are only two places north of the Tyne that offer professional youth worker qualifications, two in Yorkshire and four in the North West, despite the significant need for these professionals there. For lower-level skills, there are only ten providers for youth support worker apprenticeships in the whole of England. Whilst the provision of level three apprenticeships for community workers is slightly higher (thirty three in England), we cannot be confident that we have the capacity at present to expand the number of skilled professionals and train up the volunteers that we need.

Neighbourhoods need an institutional framework that can blend formal and informal training, bringing together professionals and volunteers, fund and support professional qualifications alongside peer-to-peer learning and information sharing on community development.

Building on the success of Local Trust's Community Leadership Academy, **we recommend the development of a College of Community Leadership.**

This should be housed in an organisation with a history of community and youth worker qualifications, such as Ruskin College, Groundwork or one of the national academies. The college would have several 'regional' hubs to coordinate activity as close to neighbourhoods as possible. It could also be delivered at a regional level, through 'Colleges of Community Leadership' depending on the preference of government, civil society and private sponsors.

Neighbourhoods receiving funding as part of the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline would be required to develop a training plan for local residents and professionals in the area, demonstrating that they have identified the skills that they need and ensuring inclusivity within the local community. A preference should be in identifying training needs from

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50 Local Trust, the role of paid workers in supporting a community-led programme, October 2022

51 <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/education-and-young-people/youth-and-community-workers>

52 National Youth Agency, Youth Sector Workforce Survey Report 2024, June 2024

53 Ibid.

54 S. Knight, Hyperlocal Digital Inclusion, September 2025

within the local residents (or local authority area). Every neighbourhood should have clearly identified community leaders who can organise the knit the neighbourhood together.

The College would then provide funding via bursaries to enable people to gain access to the skills that they need for existing providers and using the data provided from neighbourhoods to fund the developments of new courses that can be delivered both online and in person. Nightingale Skill Centres (see below) could also be venues for training.

The College would also provide funding for neighbourhoods to go on study trips and facilitate regular peer-to-peer learning between neighbourhoods, and there is a case that it might host the 'What works' centre that supports the PPP (above), like the what works centre embedded in the College of Policing. The College would focus on providing professionally accredited qualifications from Levels 3 to Level 6 to help improve the employability of those within local neighbourhoods. The College would also seek to provide funded "fellowships" to retiring or retired professionals with experience of successful regeneration programmes to help pass down experience from the past to future generation of community and youth workers.

Taking into account the number of people to be trained and supported, funding new courses, peer learning, fellowships and wider support, we estimate that around £50m will be needed to operate this College over the next ten years. Half of the total cost should be funded from government, as it has a direct interest in developing these leaders, but civil society organisations and private businesses should be asked to 'sponsor' the College to provide it the additional funding it requires. Based on the considerable interest already from philanthropic supporters of the Pride in Place programme, it should be reasonable to achieve a steady funding stream of £2-3m a year from foundations and wider civil society to maintain the College alongside government. Moreover, funding beyond the state will ensure that the College remains independent and evidence-based in its approach to skills development.

#### 4. Policy Coordination

As can be seen from this paper, there is considerable investment from government to support neighbourhood-level interventions.

ICON analysis is that across sixteen neighbourhood level interventions by central government departments at least £10bn has been allocated on everything from the Neighbourhood Policy Guarantee to Community Energy Projects.

This drive to "think neighbourhoods" in policy development is welcome, but it is not currently coordinated and concentrated. Different programmes are selecting various difference places for piecemeal interventions and using wildly different scales of neighbourhood which means that potential for collaboration is significantly diminished. It also makes it incredibly confusing for local communities that have to collaborate with various government departments and councils all claiming that they are delivering neighbourhood policies but speaking in very different terms.

It is typical for people to call on government to work more effectively, but there is a difference between endless meetings between government departments and ensuring that there is some sort of central oversight and coordination, ensuring that policies conform to an overall plan. Silos are inevitable within government, but enabling departments to specialise in their areas of expertise requires a central team that is joining the dots.

**We recommend that the government creates a Neighbourhood Unit to coordinate policy development at a neighbourhood level, working within a unified National Strategy for Neighbourhood Recovery bringing together all parts of government.**

The Unit would ensure consistent placement of investment, prioritising those neighbourhoods in the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline where significant bets have already been placed. It would seek to ensure that new funding or policies *build* on other interventions that are already in place and that conform to a wider strategy for neighbourhood improvement. In particular, the Unit would work to ensure that community-led approaches are embedded into neighbourhood level programmes so that opportunities to create social capital are not missed. This Unit could sit in MHCLG (as the department for neighbourhoods) or Cabinet Office (as the coordinating department for Whitehall) but should be a multi-disciplinary team bringing together civil servants, researchers and practitioners to ensure that it

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is able to speak on policy with authority. Those combined authorities that have high density of disadvantaged neighbourhoods within them, such as the North East Combined Authority and Liverpool City Region should also be funded to develop their own 'satellite' Neighbourhood Units that can share learning from regions with particularly embedded challenges with the rest of the country.

Another central problem we have seen is the lack of coordination of data and evaluation across government and civil society on disadvantaged neighbourhoods which has enabled decline to go under the radar. Throughout our time as an independent commission, we have been approached by various government departments for information on neighbourhoods which they could collect themselves but seem to lack the capacity or knowledge to do. Moreover, the lack of information about neighbourhoods means there is little understanding across government about the scale of the problems facing the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods which can be hidden by regional or national data. ICON is time-limited and cannot be a sustainable source of this information, moreover, the research that we have provided has been made more effective due to our independence and our ability to go where the data goes. We have also found it easier to engage with experts and communities in our work because we are not associated with any particular government. Our conclusion is that some sort of permanent data observatory for neighbourhoods would be useful to ensure that there is a continuing pressure on government, philanthropic institutions and the private sector to work in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

We recommend that the government works with charitable foundations to **create a Neighbourhood Data Observatory**. The Observatory would be housed independently from government but work with it, academic institutions, civil society institutions and foundations to collect, distribute and commission research on neighbourhood-level interventions and disseminate its findings widely. Unlike academic institutions, the Observatory would focus on practical 'real-time' impact on policy

and programme development. We have found that Combined Authorities, local authorities and charitable foundations have found ICON's data useful and have used this to target their own funding and programmes at those places that most need it. Naturally, the Observatory would work with the Neighbourhoods Unit to inform its policy work but would also face wider to neighbourhood practitioners and would be independent from the particular focus on the government at any one time.

The Observatory should also work with government, academics and other experts on beginning the work of measuring long term transformation within neighbourhoods and creating benchmarks for success. We have seen in areas such as child poverty and climate change the power of measuring change effectively and creating mechanisms for accountability for government, foundations and other stakeholders. Developing regular 'Neighbourhood Trackers' that are publicly accessible and measure what is going on in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is one way that the Observatory can help mobilise continuing investment in the areas that need it most.

An Observatory of this kind would not be cost-free but based on the operating costs of ICON and the cost of research we have commissioned, a small, dedicated funding stream of between £1-2m per year would support a small team, alongside academic experts and others, to carry out this work and provide resources for the dissemination of findings.

## 5. Public service integration

Our research on the progress made by disadvantaged areas identified the positive impact of public service investments made during the years 1997–2010.<sup>55</sup> In particular, we have heard repeatedly on local visits the positive impact that programmes such as Sure Start made for families, particularly in providing a wrap-around support for young parents. The evaluation of the Supported Families Programme also demonstrated the impact that link workers can have in connecting disadvantaged families with the services and support that they needed.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> R. Mudie, E. Farrar & C. Signori, *Progress and Pressure: Understanding economic and social change in England's neighbourhoods*, June 2025

<sup>56</sup> MHCLG, *National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015–2020*, March 2019

# Case Study: Wigan Council

ICON visited Wigan to understand the Council's pioneering approach to public service reform and community empowerment. Its renowned Wigan Deal marked a decisive shift away from a traditional, top-down and transactional model of service delivery towards a relational partnership between citizens, communities, and local institutions. Developed in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the Deal redefined the relationship between state and community by placing trust, shared responsibility, and collaboration at its core. Citizens were given greater influence over decisions that affect their lives, while the council focused on enabling communities to shape solutions and contribute to collective well-being.

Building on this foundation, the council has recently launched Progress with Unity, a borough-wide movement co-created with partners, residents, and local organisations. This approach recognises the strength of social capital and civic assets in every neighbourhood, including those facing deep structural disadvantage. Its emphasis on flexibility and place-specific responses acknowledges that each community requires solutions rooted in local context.

At the neighbourhood level, community organisations are putting these principles

into practice through hyperlocal models of participation and mutual support. CommUnity Corner exemplifies this approach, focusing on neighbourhoods as the primary unit of change, rebuilding social solidarity and strengthening civic life from the ground up. Their work centres on asset-based community development, mutual aid, and participatory democracy, helping residents reconnect with one another, identify shared strengths, and mobilise around local priorities.

This combination of strategic reform at borough level and deep relationship-building at the neighbourhood level is reshaping how power, resources, and responsibility are shared in Wigan today.



As we have identified above, any sustainable theory of change rests on converting increases in social capital into positive engagement with public services to improve health, education and wellbeing – building on 'bonding' to create 'linking'. If this can be achieved, we are more likely to see further improvements in lives that can in turn help to improve outcomes in terms of employment and wider life chances.

In our visits to Wigan and Sunderland, we saw in action positive examples of effective public service integration. In both cases, the council was working to build multi-disciplinary, neighbourhood-based hubs for service

provision. In Platt Bridge, Wigan was able to build a multi-agency team bringing together police, social workers, housing and health to contact residents to improve outcomes in health and reduce crime. On the Easington Lane Estate in Sunderland, we visited the HALO project which has a dedicated police officer embedded with community workers to tackle anti-social behaviour with positive results. In both cases, the local council was playing a pivotal role in integration because of its ability to work across silos and having oversight of overall the whole population.



# Case Study: Love Barrow Families

ICON visited Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria. As part of our trip, we visited Love Barrow Families, a Community Interest Company that works with families that face multiple and severe disadvantage.

Founded in 2014 by two local public service workers, Love Barrow Families seeks to shift the type of public services that the families they work with receive, from 'doing to' towards 'doing with'. Funding was provided by the Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Cumbria County Council and the Lankelly Chase Foundation.

At the initiative's core is a co-located, multi-disciplinary team of staff and volunteers who work with a small number of families, providing wraparound services. These has a number of core elements. These include the reorganisation of mainstream services to co-locate health and social care workers, and adult's and children's social care, into one wraparound service for families. Allocating one main 'key worker' for each family, who



can coordinate all services for the family. And undertaking only one assessment, meaning families do not have to repeatedly retell their story to multiple different agencies.

The positive impact made by Love Barrow Families was clear to the Commission on our visit. A 2017 independent evaluation of the initiative found a number of positive outcomes linked to the work of Love Barrow Families. These included reduced numbers of children going into care or returning to care, significant reductions in the number of required child protection plans, improved mental and physical health, and reduced crime and anti-social behaviour.

Unfortunately, the approach in Sunderland not universally the case. In many areas, we heard from local residents who rarely saw their local police and had minimal contact with health services which were delivered too distant from them. Much of this can be attributed to cuts in funding which have seen the 'softer' engagement with local residents fall by the wayside to focus on the 'core' delivery of services. However, this has significantly reduced the efficacy of public spending in these areas, as we fail to reach the people that most need it and provide the wraparound support that enables people to change their lives for the better. Ironically, such distant service models are almost certainly less cost effective too, focusing on down-stream results rather than upstream causes.

The most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are highly complex, and they require a bespoke response to improve public service outcomes. We cannot take a 'they'll come to

us' approach, but we need to be proactive, creating footprints directly in places – as we have seen in Wigan and Sunderland.

The development of Neighbourhood Health Centres is welcome and marks a change in the way that we have delivered one of our most important public services in recent years. More fundamentally, much of the NHS has become a 'national sickness service', that fails to address or prevent primary causes. This is especially striking in poorer neighbourhoods that suffer from dramatically lower life expectancy, driven primarily by so-called 'lifestyle' (or non-communicable) illnesses such as diabetes, CVD and depression, in turn driven by poor diet, smoking, lack of exercise, and stress. Taking a preventative approach, in partnership with communities, offers the prospect of both improving lives and lowering costs.

Relatedly there is a risk that the proposed Neighbourhood Health centres will work on too large a scale for most neighbourhoods.

We are not appropriately learning the lessons of the Marmot Review and similar studies which have found that the social determinants of health have a powerful impact of overall wellbeing and lifestyle.<sup>57</sup> Treating health problems in isolation is a missed opportunity, particularly when neighbourhood working provides an opportunity to create multi-disciplinary working. This is the challenge of trying to deliver neighbourhood outcomes without the appropriate institutional infrastructure.

**We recommend that the government provide funding for local authorities to deliver Neighbourhood Service Hubs** as part of the Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline funding bringing together health, policing, housing, welfare and children's services including Best Start Family Hubs where these are operating. These 'one-stop-shops' would help to connect disadvantaged families and residents with the services that they need with public service professionals working alongside community groups to ensure that there is appropriate identification, aftercare and support for those that receive services from the Centre. Based on the cost of Neighbourhood Health Centres, we assume a cost of between £40-50m per centre.

Where a Neighbourhood Health Centre has already been assigned, the resources should be transferred to the local authority to enable them to begin work on a multi-disciplinary way. We should also ensure that there is appropriate investment for digital inclusion and methods that can help transition disadvantaged to using more digital methods of support that can tailor services more effectively to their need.<sup>58</sup>

These centres do not necessarily need to have a dedicated physical presence although we have identified that in many cases, there remain empty Sure Start centres, Police Stations and other local assets that could be repurposed.

In some cases, the Centres could co-locate with other community services or rent their space from local community infrastructure further recycling resources within the local area. Crucially, building on the work of Wigan

and Sunderland, these need to be built around neighbourhood need and working with residents rather than simply providing services 'closer' to them. It is about seeking to create institutions that address the foundational challenges within these areas rather than treating the symptoms. This requires taking the time to understand the particular problems facing local residents and learning to operate in low trust environments where there is scepticism of government.

## 6. Transport

Throughout ICON's work we have heard repeatedly from residents about the challenges they face in getting access to employment. The lack of affordable transport, such as buses, hampers the ability of people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to be able to hold down employment and makes childcare more challenging. In Knottingley (see case study above), we were particularly distressed to hear from local residents how they cannot secure a bus on the Warwick Estate after 5pm. This not only severely reduces employment but also reduces the social capital of areas reducing their ability to participate fully in cultural and civic life. Transport is also crucial to the building of 'bridging' social capital, particularly economic connectedness. Recent analysis has shown just how crucial this is not only to adults, but to the opportunities of younger generations: kids growing up with low economic connectedness, other factors having been taken into account, face on average £5,000 year lower earnings in their lives.<sup>59</sup>

Bus Service Operators have not been able to maintain routes to many disadvantaged neighbourhoods and local authorities have lacked the ability to provide grant funding to support them. According to research by IPPR North, the most deprived areas have seen ten times the levels of cuts to bus provision as the least deprived areas.<sup>60</sup> The Department for Transport should do more to ensure that operators are regulated to maintain routes, particularly in areas which lack other means of affordable transport. If a specific subsidy

<sup>57</sup> D. Jefferies et al, What are health inequalities, September 2025

<sup>58</sup> S. Knight, Hyperlocal Digital Inclusion, September 2025

<sup>59</sup> Behavioural Insight Team, How to connect communities to create opportunities, 3rd December 2025

<sup>60</sup> Community Transport Association, Mapping England: State of the Sector Report 2024, September 2024



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regime is required, the Department should seek to develop that in collaboration with bus service operators.

However, we cannot just rely on the private sector to plug the transport gaps in these areas.

One low-cost way of achieving this through is Community Transport Organisations (CTOs), which are based in and run by the local community. Since 2010, grant funding and support for community transport has been significantly reduced with three-fifths of providers citing concerns over their funding in the most recent survey of CTOs.<sup>61</sup> It will be difficult to reverse all these cuts in the short-term but targeted investment into work-based shuttle transport to key employment nodes should be possible.

The government should consider targeted grants for CTOs to provide transport services, particularly for work-related transport including shuttles to key employment areas and ensuring late night or early morning transport where existing bus services are not currently operating. This could be wrapped into the overall financial envelope for disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

A **'Neighbourhood Transport Grant'** (NTG) would provide funding for community transport organisations or community transport projects delivered by locally trusted organisations. Grants would be distributed by the strategic authorities or local authorities which have responsibility for transport. Funding would be allocated to strategic authorities (with responsibility for transport) on the basis of the number of Pride in Place neighbourhoods they have within their localities. Funding would be restricted to helping these neighbourhoods so that the investment is appropriately targeted and not used to subsidise cuts in other geographies. Based on the size and scale of CTOs, with the vast majority under £100,000 turnover a year, we estimate that grants of between £25,000 to £50,000 a year should be sufficient to support these neighbourhoods.

The projects would need to be employment

focused to meet the most urgent needs of the most disadvantaged areas, but there should be opportunities for cultural and social trips as well particularly for younger residents to encourage vital bridging social capital. The grants should be distributed over a ten-year period to provide certainty to local organisations about the programme and to ensure that neighbourhoods are given consistent access to employment. A ring-fenced grant is necessary because historically these services have been the first to be cut when allocation resources. Yet connectivity remains of vital importance to neighbourhood recovery.

## 7. Skills

Researching the characteristics of Mission Critical neighbourhoods, we have found very low levels of qualifications, with one-third of working age adults having no formal qualifications, compared with 18% across all other neighbourhoods.<sup>62</sup> Only 31% of adults in Mission Critical Neighbourhoods have qualifications above Level 3, equivalent to A-Levels, compared to half of all adults in all other neighbourhoods.<sup>63</sup> We have heard from our visits and engaging with stakeholders how hard people, particularly young people, find it to get access to the foundational skills they need in the most disadvantaged places.

Our ambition for these neighbourhoods cannot just be that they become more pleasant places to be poor. Nor is that what people who live there want. Skills are crucial in the lifting of both communities and those within them to sustainable and satisfying lives. The social mix of our educational institutions is also important, with schools and colleges playing a key role in the creation of bridging social capital. Relatedly, schools and educational institutions that improve their average attainment scores by selecting out young people from the most disadvantaged areas need to be challenged.

We need to bring skills directly to disadvantaged places rather than relying on people to travel miles, potentially tens of miles, to get access to basic qualifications and

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<sup>61</sup> Community Transport Association, Mapping England: State of the Sector Report 2024, September 2024

<sup>62</sup> Farrar et al, Anatomy of Mission Critical Neighbourhoods, May 2025

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

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support. This is particularly true with young people, where distance to post-compulsory education can have a significant impact on the likelihood of entering or sustaining training.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, we have seen the number of further education colleges fall significantly from 348 in 2010 to 218 today.<sup>65</sup> The Social Mobility Commission's latest State of the Nation report specifically highlighted the challenge that young people living in rural and coastal areas may have in getting access to the skills and training that they need.<sup>66</sup>

We cannot restore all our further education facilities and given the changing nature of skills, particularly the growing use of online and digital resources, we should be flexible about the delivery of skills in these areas. However, some sort of physical presence will be required to reach out and connect people with the skills they need, particularly if they have historically found it difficult to access and sustain training opportunities.

We recommend that the government should consider piloting 'Nightingale Skills Centres' for disadvantaged communities, providing funding directly to Further Education and Higher Education providers to create 'satellite' centres for provision directly in the most disadvantaged locations. In our work, we have often found community centres and spaces that could be used for these activities, but they lack the revenue and relationships to be able to provide qualifications and education support. Each centre should come with £25m in funding over the next ten years and with a full independent evaluation carried out mid-way through and at the end of the programme to learn lessons and identify whether such centres should be rolled out more broadly.

Partnerships between local community groups to identify, recruit and support those that need training alongside qualified professionals and institutions with the appropriate awarding powers could help to close this gap. These centres would be run by qualified providers but would work with local residents to identify the key skills challenges in these areas, with

a particular focus on foundational skills, given the high levels of residents with no qualifications. These would not be traditional further education colleges but would be flexible to meet the needs of local residents whilst maintaining high standards.

Where possible, the centres should work with private businesses to help them to upskill local workers to take on new opportunities or to create career pathways for those already in work.

The government should initially pilot twenty centres across the country to identify effective ways of working and share lessons across broader areas. These twenty pilots should take place in neighbourhoods that are part of Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline, so that skills are building social infrastructure development. This will ensure that investments are building on changes elsewhere and are not run in isolation.

## 8. Asset and enterprise development

Across our visits, the most successful examples of neighbourhood regeneration have tended to be through asset and enterprise development. New Deal for Communities neighbourhoods that have had a positive legacy, such as Braunstone in Leicester, as well as organisations such as the Coalfield Regeneration Trust have shown the power of asset-based development. These assets help to reconstruct neighbourhoods through providing a physical sign of change, a stable base to mobilise residents and host community activities as well as providing a funding stream.

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<sup>64</sup> A. Dickerson & S. McIntosh, The Impact of Distance to Nearest Education Institution on the Post-Compulsory Education Participation Decision, March 2010

<sup>65</sup> B. Moura & I. Tahir, The state of college finances in England, October 2024

<sup>66</sup> Social Mobility Commission, State of the Nation 2025, December 2025 p.51

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## Case Study: B-Inspired, Braunstone, Leicester

B-Inspired, then the Braunstone Community Association, formed in 2000 as the management and leadership body locally for the UK government's New Deal for Communities programme. Braunstone, a large council estate in Leicester, was selected to be one of the 39 NDC locations.

During the ten-year NDC programme there were some 125 people projects (revenue), delivered by a raft of public and VCSE partners and a huge programme of capital spend. The capital programme invested in: a flagship Library & Adult Learning Centre, Health & Social Care Centre, enhanced Sure Start facilities, enhanced BSF projects for local Schools, Sports and Football facilities, 52 Unit Managed Workspace, Social Housing (stock transfer from LA to Housing Association and refurb programme on the "6 Streets"), purchase and refurbishments of local Social Services Centre and Post Office (to create employment and drop-in advice centres), Vocational Skills Centre at local secondary school for post-14's and some small investments in local community facilities e.g. Church Halls and Scout Huts etc. to improve kitchens, heating, security and so on.

Crucially, B-Inspired has endured waves of policy change and remains thriving today. This is no small part due to important decisions made with respect to financial sustainability. The NDC successor organisation was able to inherit the buildings which were created during

the high level of capital spending of the NDC.<sup>3</sup> These included local community buildings and some commercial premises, including a health centre, commercial office buildings and sports facilities, including football pitches. This meant that not only did the successor to the NDC have assets, but it was also able to generate a tradeable income from them. This proved crucial to B-Inspired being able to weather the tough financial years of austerity that began in 2010. The organisation's financial model is noteworthy, with 70% of its funding self-generated through rental income from its assets. This sustainable model allows B-Inspired to reinvest in the community while leveraging external grants to scale its impact. The organization's legacy is evident not only in the transformed physical landscape of Braunstone but also in the strong social fabric it has nurtured over decades.

B-Inspired has also successfully received funding from post-NDC schemes, spanning both government and non-government initiatives. These include as a Sports Action Zone (2001-08), Power to Change's Empowering Places project (2017-22), DCMS's Youth Investment Fund (2022-present). In addition, it has recently been selected as one of the government's Pride in Place Phase 2 locations, receiving £20 million over ten years.

For this reason, we think that it is unfortunate that the Community Ownership Fund was wound down under this government rather than being reformed and targeted at the most disadvantaged areas. However, we welcome the new Co-operative Development Unit which provides an opportunity to develop a new generation of co-operatively owned community assets through investments such as Pride in Place.

We anticipate that many Pride in Place neighbourhoods will seek to use asset-based regeneration approaches to deliver

sustainable outcomes for their areas. In particular, we have been struck on our visits by examples such as the Gloucester Gateway Trust (see above) and Ambition Lawrence Weston (see below) that have been able to use assets innovatively to create local jobs and investment. In many cases, this has come through collaboration with local and central government to secure land or encourage partnership with the private sector to generate new revenue streams.

## Case Study: Lawrence Weston, Bristol

ICON visited Lawrence Weston in to see how community owned infrastructure can help drive neighbourhood transformation. In 2012 Lawrence Weston was selected to receive £1 million as part of the Big Local funding programme. Ambition Lawrence Weston (ALW) was established as the Locally Trusted Organisation, a resident led organisation responsible for allocating the funding.

ALW established a Neighbourhood Planning Group, that responds to development proposals in the local area and establishes resident priorities for development and investment. The weekly meetings are open to everyone in the community. After consulting with the local community, ALW found residents were concerned about lack of investment in the area and rising energy bills affecting their cost of living. Using the investment from Big Local, ALW leveraged over £16 million in external funding. Following consultations with energy experts and private investors, ALW delivered England's largest community owned wind turbine in the South West of England.

The turbine is expected to reduce local carbon emissions by 35%, and due to the community ownership model, is expected to generate up to £100,000 per year for community reinvestment. As well as creating jobs in the local community, the turbine has generated significant local interest in the energy sector. Following research into the skills and employment deprivation in Lawrence



Weston, funding from the turbine is now being reinvested into a Net Zero Skills Academy. This will give people in the area the opportunity for further education they were lacking following the closure of the local college.

The turbine has also generated the funding to build and sustain a local community centre, which provides a space for community groups, youth groups, and hosts a food bank to tackle local food poverty. The organisation partners with Bristol City Council to deliver local regeneration projects. Residents expressed the need for a low-cost supermarket in the area, working with Local Authorities and opening bids to national supermarkets, ALW signed a contract with Lidl, who have since opened a supermarket in the centre of Lawrence Weston.

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We were pleased to see that the UK Government's 10-year infrastructure strategy included a specific reference to social infrastructure for the first time.<sup>67</sup> However, with a record £725bn allocated for infrastructure investments over the next decade, we think that there is a significant opportunity to leverage that record investment into creating a new generation of community-led assets that can generate income and employment for disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

**We recommend that the government creates a Neighbourhood Enterprise Gateway** as part of infrastructure development plans.

This Gateway would create a process in developing infrastructure projects for the government or private sector developers to consider whether some portion of the infrastructure could be given in trust to the local community for the purpose of neighbourhood development. This could be providing a building, providing a portion of the land free to the neighbourhood to leverage investment with private partners or ownership of a portion of energy generation projects. In our visits we have seen numerous creative uses of assets, there will be useful options in every neighbourhood.

This Gateway would apply to those projects taking place within or within 20 miles of an eligible disadvantaged neighbourhood (a list to be provided by the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) and based, initially, on Pride in Place neighbourhoods). Local residents would be made aware if this Gateway was being passed through and would be given some time to develop their own proposals. NISTA, working alongside the Pride in Place Partnership or appropriate body, would then work with the developers to facilitate the development of neighbourhood level regeneration infrastructure.

The Gateway would aim to create the next generation of Gloucester Gateway Trusts and Ambition Lawrence Westons and provide some revenue, and independence, for local communities to maintain their own social infrastructure, local services and create employment opportunities in disadvantaged communities.

## A system for neighbourhood recovery

Supporting hundreds of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods on the road to recovery needs to be considered systemically. Individual programmes, interventions or institutions on their own will not be able to meet the scale of the challenge.

Disadvantaged neighbourhoods need resources, people and community-led institutions with long term stability, so that they can carry out the patient work creating the social capital and public service outcomes that are key to success. All this should be built around the key ingredient for mobilising success, the leadership and passion of local residents to transform their areas.

Diagram 3 seeks to conceptualise how all these policies can work in partnership. It also provides a framework that can be progressively added to in the future (e.g. housing, digital inclusion, mental health, children services) as resources expand or evidence changes.

Primarily we have focused on government which needs to act as a catalytic first mover to leverage support to disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, not all of this can be done by government alone. Charities, businesses, faith groups, academic institutions and philanthropists must step up and play their role in making this happen.

We need to build on the assets and resources already in neighbourhoods as much as possible, we cannot possibly put in a diagram the many local leaders, community groups, religious institutions, sports clubs, cafes, pubs and community centres that make up neighbourhoods and give them their vitality. Anything outlined above should be seen as additive to the assets and strengths of local communities, with additional support adapting to need.

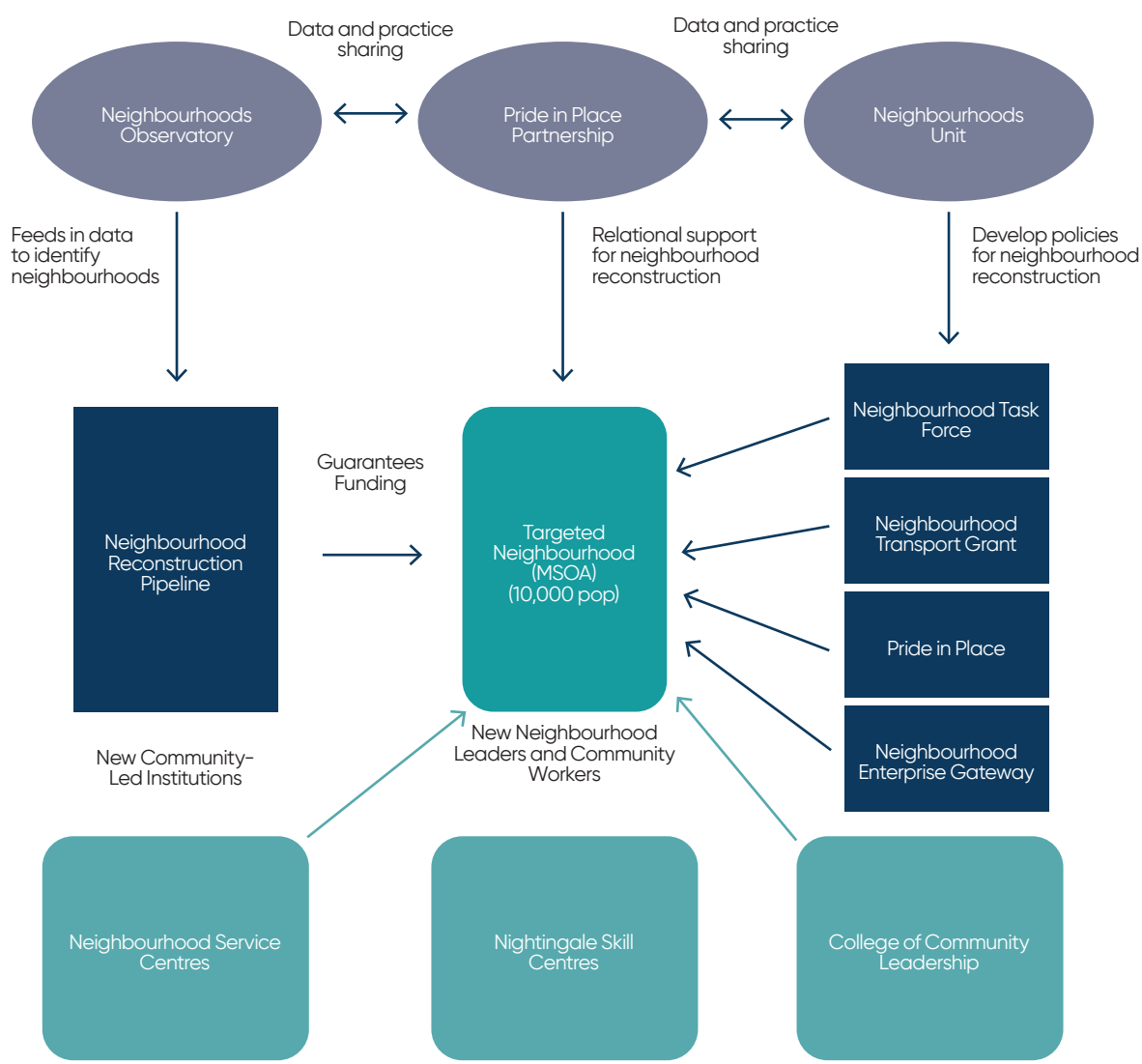
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<sup>67</sup> HM Treasury & National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority, UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy, June 2025

Crucially, we must build a system that is not dependent on one policy at one particular time which creates a new spirit of recovery that can last for decades. This must be cross-

party and multi-generational if we are to build a future where everyone is able to make the fullest contribution to society and realise their potential.

Diagram 3 – A systemic approach to neighbourhood recovery





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# Conclusion

There is more that needs to be done to understand how we can improve outcomes within the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, particularly through economic development. However, ICON's work has found plenty of resources and information about how we can build the work of neighbourhood recovery particularly through rebuilding social infrastructure and integrating public services.

Too often, as a society we have oscillated from seeking silver bullets to resolve the complex and wicked problems at a neighbourhood level to deciding that the problems are all too difficult and that we should simply seek to redistribute resources from richer areas to poorer areas to ameliorate the worse symptoms of disadvantage.

ICON argues that we have an alternative.

We can resolve to tackle disadvantaged neighbourhoods using the evidence, experience and insights that we have gathered over many years and put them to work through building a system of institutions and interventions that work within a clear theory of change. Neighbourhoods are complex and every place has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. However, in broad terms we are confident that fostering social capital, leveraging this to improve public service outcomes, can in turn provide the foundation for economic development.

Despite everything that has happened, we have repeatedly found hope and determination to make things better within disadvantaged places. There are partners in neighbourhoods if we are prepared to work with them.

This report is not the end of ICON's journey, and we will be continuing to consult on our work, refine our analysis and develop practical policy recommendations.

We will also continue to work across the political spectrum, across central, regional and local government, across civil society, foundations, faith-based institutions, businesses and investors to build a coalition that will work together to improve the lives of people in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Sustainable neighbourhood recovery cannot be done overnight. We all have our role to play in this renewed national effort.

There are **No Short Cuts** and not a moment to lose.



# Annex A – The draft Neighbourhood Recovery Pipeline

This proposed pipeline is based on MSOAs in England, with every MSOA including having at least one 'Mission Critical Neighbourhood',

a neighbourhood with the highest levels of disadvantage.

## Tranche One – 146 (Pride in Place Tranche) – 2025-2035

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Hendon & Docks – Sunderland 016	Sunderland
Birkenhead Central – Wirral 016	Wirral
Thorntree – Middlesbrough 007	Middlesbrough
Little Layton & Little Carleton – Blackpool 007	Blackpool
Bentilee & Ubbertley – Stoke-on-Trent 017	Stoke-on-Trent
Everton East – Liverpool 024	Liverpool
Seacombe – Wirral 008	Wirral
Orchard Park – Kingston upon Hull 003	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Speke East – Liverpool 059	Liverpool
Walker North – Newcastle upon Tyne 028	Newcastle upon Tyne
Conisbrough North – Doncaster 032	Doncaster
Hartcliffe – Bristol 053	Bristol, City of
Peterlee East – County Durham 032	County Durham
Fleetwood Town – Wyre 001	Wyre
Mablethorpe – East Lindsey 005	East Lindsey
Hapurhey South & Monsall – Manchester 009	Manchester
Clayton Vale – Manchester 012	Manchester
Sheppey East – Swale 006	Swale
Fairfield West & Newsham Park – Liverpool 028	Liverpool

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Alt - Oldham 026	Oldham
Hurstead & Smallbridge - Rochdale 004	Rochdale
Holme Wood - Bradford 052	Bradford
New Rossington - Doncaster 037	Doncaster
Mexborough West - Doncaster 031	Doncaster
Druids Heath - Birmingham 121	Birmingham
Town Centre East & Fingerpost - St. Helens 014	St. Helens
Bootle South - Sefton 037	Sefton
Batemoor & Jordanthorpe - Sheffield 070	Sheffield
Middleton Park Avenue - Leeds 101	Leeds
Boulevard & St Andrew's Quay - Kingston upon Hull 030	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Bridlington West - East Riding of Yorkshire 003	East Riding of Yorkshire
Park End - Middlesbrough 010	Middlesbrough
Woodside - Telford and Wrekin 021	Telford and Wrekin
Greatfield - Kingston upon Hull 021	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Morecambe West End - Lancaster 009	Lancaster
Fratton West - Portsmouth 028	Portsmouth
Central Stockton & Portrack - Stockton-on-Tees 025	Stockton-on-Tees
Percy Main - North Tyneside 027	North Tyneside
Farnley East - Leeds 078	Leeds
Leigh Park - Havant 008	Havant
Withernsea East & Patrington - East Riding of Yorkshire 039	East Riding of Yorkshire
Maltby East - Rotherham 020	Rotherham
Parson Cross - Sheffield 009	Sheffield
Brinnington - Stockport 004	Stockport
Pendleton - Salford 024	Salford

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Page Moss & Fincham - Knowsley 008	Knowsley
Norris Green East - Liverpool 010	Liverpool
Laithwaite & Marsh Green - Wigan 010	Wigan
Ravenscliffe - Bradford 027	Bradford
Mixenden - Calderdale 002	Calderdale
Seacroft North & Monkwood - Leeds 035	Leeds
Featherstone - Wakefield 027	Wakefield
Armley & New Wortley - Leeds 071	Leeds
Eyres Monsell - Leicester 036	Leicester
Lowestoft Central - Waveney 004	East Suffolk
Chaddesden West - Derby 007	Derby
Weston Bournville - North Somerset 021	North Somerset
Paston - Peterborough 007	Peterborough
Paulsgrove East - Portsmouth 001	Portsmouth
Weston - Southampton 032	Southampton
Mirehouse, Kells & Woodhouse - Copeland 005	Copeland
Flimby, Ellenborough & Broughton Moor - Allerdale 005	Allerdale
Barrow Central - Barrow-in-Furness 008	Barrow-in-Furness
Cotmanhay - Erewash 001	Erewash
Stanley South - County Durham 008	County Durham
Buckland & St Radigunds - Dover 011	Dover
Warndon West - Worcester 002	Worcester
Gainsborough West - West Lindsey 004	West Lindsey
Birchwood West - Lincoln 007	Lincoln
Glascote Heath - Tamworth 007	Tamworth
Birchen Coppice - Wyre Forest 009	Wyre Forest

## Tranche Two – 70 Neighbourhoods – 2029–2039

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Workington West – Allerdale 009	Allerdale
North East Centre – Blackpool 008	Blackpool
Victoria – Blackpool 015	Blackpool
Undercliffe – Bradford 035	Bradford
Bowling Park – Bradford 053	Bradford
Allerton – Bradford 036	Bradford
Great Horton & Brackenhill – Bradford 050	Bradford
Holme Top – Bradford 048	Bradford
Barkerend West & Little Germany – Bradford 064	Bradford
Barclay Hills & Trinity – Burnley 010	Burnley
Stainforth – Doncaster 004	Doncaster
Adwick le Street & Woodlands – Doncaster 009	Doncaster
Bentley & Toll Bar – Doncaster 010	Doncaster
Ingoldmells & Chapel St Leonards – East Lindsey 010	East Lindsey
Wainfleet All Saints – East Lindsey 017	East Lindsey
Sutton-on-Sea – East Lindsey 006	East Lindsey
Skegness Town – East Lindsey 014	East Lindsey
Skegness South – East Lindsey 015	East Lindsey
Wisbech South & Peckover – Fenland 003	Fenland
Yarmouth Parade – Great Yarmouth 006	Great Yarmouth
Yarmouth Central & Northgate – Great Yarmouth 005	Great Yarmouth
Headland & West View – Hartlepool 002	Hartlepool
Broomgrove – Hastings 005	Hastings
Accrington West – Hyndburn 006	Hyndburn

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Church - Hyndburn 005	Hyndburn
Bransholme Central - Kingston upon Hull 002	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Bransholme East - Kingston upon Hull 004	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Kirkby South East - Knowsley 003	Knowsley
Longview & Knowsley Park - Knowsley 010	Knowsley
Stockbridge Village - Knowsley 006	Knowsley
Kirkby North East - Knowsley 001	Knowsley
Harehills South - Leeds 053	Leeds
Kirkdale North - Liverpool 014	Liverpool
Anfield East - Liverpool 019	Liverpool
Walton South - Liverpool 012	Liverpool
Anfield West - Liverpool 018	Liverpool
Kirkdale South & Vauxhall - Liverpool 022	Liverpool
Fazakerley South - Liverpool 005	Liverpool
Everton West - Liverpool 023	Liverpool
Croxteth West & Gillmoss - Liverpool 004	Liverpool
Toxteth Park - Liverpool 039	Liverpool
Oak Tree & Ransom Wood - Mansfield 012	Mansfield
Ayresome - Middlesbrough 003	Middlesbrough
North Ormesby & Brambles - Middlesbrough 002	Middlesbrough
Walker South - Newcastle upon Tyne 030	Newcastle upon Tyne
Byker East - Newcastle upon Tyne 035	Newcastle upon Tyne
Byker South & St Peters - Newcastle upon Tyne 040	Newcastle upon Tyne
Nunthorpe - North East Lincolnshire 019	North East Lincolnshire
Grimsby East Marsh & Port - North East Lincolnshire 002	North East Lincolnshire

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Ashington Hirst - Northumberland 010	Northumberland
Oldham Town North - Oldham 014	Oldham
Waterhead - Oldham 012	Oldham
Oldham Town South - Oldham 024	Oldham
Hathershaw - Oldham 029	Oldham
Landport - Portsmouth 013	Portsmouth
Grangetown - Redcar and Cleveland 009	Redcar and Cleveland
Central Rochdale & Mandale Park - Rochdale 010	Rochdale
East Herringthorpe - Rotherham 013	Rotherham
Tibbington - Sandwell 014	Sandwell
Seaforth South - Sefton 034	Sefton
Longport & Burslem Park - Stoke-on-Trent 009	Stoke-on-Trent
Meir South & Lightwood - Stoke-on-Trent 031	Stoke-on-Trent
Town End Farm - Sunderland 003	Sunderland
Clacton Central - Tendring 016	Tendring
Jaywick & St Osyth - Tendring 018	Tendring
Harwich Town & Dovercourt - Tendring 001	Tendring
Clacton Rush Green - Tendring 015	Tendring
Cliftonville West - Thanet 001	Thanet
Bidston Hill - Wirral 011	Wirral

## Tranche Three – 90 Neighbourhoods – 2032-2042

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Workington East – Allerdale 010	Allerdale
Sutton Central & Leamington – Ashfield 005	Ashfield
Central Blackburn – Blackburn with Darwen 006	Blackburn with Darwen
Hawes Side – Blackpool 016	Blackpool
Squires Gate – Blackpool 019	Blackpool
Central Blackpool – Blackpool 010	Blackpool
North Shore – Blackpool 006	Blackpool
South Promenade & Seaside Way – Blackpool 013	Blackpool
South Shore – Blackpool 017	Blackpool
Central Bolton – Bolton 016	Bolton
Keighley Central & East – Bradford 008	Bradford
Laisterdyke & Bowling – Bradford 046	Bradford
Canterbury – Bradford 051	Bradford
Keighley South – Bradford 011	Bradford
Keighley Oakworth Road & West Lane – Bradford 009	Bradford
Barkerend East – Bradford 042	Bradford
Scholemoor – Bradford 049	Bradford
Withywood – Bristol 051	Bristol, City of
Bank Hall & Fulledege – Burnley 007	Burnley
Brunshaw & Brownside – Burnley 008	Burnley
Fairfield & Jericho – Bury 007	Bury
Camborne West – Cornwall 053	Cornwall
Murton North & Parkside – County Durham 018	County Durham
Horden – County Durham 036	County Durham
Coundon North – County Durham 051	County Durham



Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Bishop Auckland South - County Durham 058	County Durham
Spennymoor East & Ferryhill West - County Durham 049	County Durham
Carcroft - Doncaster 005	Doncaster
Central Doncaster & Hyde Park - Doncaster 022	Doncaster
Skegness North - East Lindsey 012	East Lindsey
Bridlington Hilderthorpe - East Riding of Yorkshire 005	East Riding of Yorkshire
Gunton West - Waveney 002	East Suffolk
Lowestoft Harbour & Kirkley - Waveney 007	East Suffolk
Old Town & Grange - Hartlepool 007	Hartlepool
Hollington - Hastings 003	Hastings
Central Hastings - Hastings 009	Hastings
Central St Leonards - Hastings 011	Hastings
Stockheath Common - Havant 010	Havant
Southcoates East - Kingston upon Hull 017	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Hull City Centre - Kingston upon Hull 029	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Kirkby South West & Field Lane - Knowsley 004	Knowsley
Prescot - Knowsley 007	Knowsley
Walton North - Liverpool 006	Liverpool
Knotty Ash - Liverpool 025	Liverpool
Toxteth - Liverpool 044	Liverpool
Yewtree - Liverpool 017	Liverpool
Newton Heath - Manchester 011	Manchester
Beswick, Eastlands & Openshaw Park - Manchester 015	Manchester
Openshaw & Gorton North - Manchester 017	Manchester
Newgate & Carr Bank - Mansfield 009	Mansfield

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Berwick Hills – Middlesbrough 004	Middlesbrough
Beechwood & James Cook – Middlesbrough 011	Middlesbrough
Stainton & Hemlington – Middlesbrough 018	Middlesbrough
Elswick North – Newcastle upon Tyne 038	Newcastle upon Tyne
New Clee – North East Lincolnshire 006	North East Lincolnshire
Sidney Park – North East Lincolnshire 005	North East Lincolnshire
Ashington East – Northumberland 013	Northumberland
Beechdale – Nottingham 020	Nottingham
Lime Side & Garden Suburb – Oldham 030	Oldham
Alexandra Park – Oldham 022	Oldham
Derker – Oldham 011	Oldham
Nelson East – Pendle 010	Pendle
Somers Town – Portsmouth 018	Portsmouth
Bankfields – Redcar and Cleveland 015	Redcar and Cleveland
South Bank & Teesville – Redcar and Cleveland 022	Redcar and Cleveland
Heywood Town – Rochdale 018	Rochdale
Greasborough – Rotherham 009	Rotherham
Rotherham Central – Rotherham 017	Rotherham
Thrybergh & Hooton Roberts – Rotherham 010	Rotherham
Eastwood & East Dene – Rotherham 014	Rotherham
Little Hulton North – Salford 001	Salford
Cromwell Road & Broad Street – Salford 017	Salford
Ford – Sefton 024	Sefton
Bootle North – Sefton 036	Sefton
Crabtree & Fir Vale – Sheffield 020	Sheffield
Arbourthorne – Sheffield 048	Sheffield
Heeley & Newfield Green – Sheffield 051	Sheffield

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Southey Green West - Sheffield 012	Sheffield
Firth Park - Sheffield 013	Sheffield
Abbey Hulton - Stoke-on-Trent 012	Stoke-on-Trent
Northwood - Stoke-on-Trent 013	Stoke-on-Trent
Hanley & Etruria - Stoke-on-Trent 015	Stoke-on-Trent
Townsend & Eaton Park - Stoke-on-Trent 014	Stoke-on-Trent
Sheerness West - Swale 002	Swale
Brookside - Telford and Wrekin 020	Telford and Wrekin
Dane Valley & Northdown Hill - Thanet 006	Thanet
Torquay Central - Torbay 008	Torbay
Blakenall North - Walsall 012	Walsall
Gainsborough East - West Lindsey 006	West Lindsey
Egremont - Wirral 005	Wirral

## Tranche Four – 118 Neighbourhoods – 2035–2045

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Somercotes & Pye Bridge – Amber Valley 003	Amber Valley
East Kirkby – Ashfield 007	Ashfield
Athersley – Barnsley 007	Barnsley
Thurnscoe – Barnsley 014	Barnsley
Worsbrough Common – Barnsley 017	Barnsley
Worksop Cheapside – Bassetlaw 012	Bassetlaw
Summerfield – Birmingham 053	Birmingham
Witton, Mill Hill & Hollin Bank – Blackburn with Darwen 009	Blackburn with Darwen
Park Road – Blackpool 011	Blackpool
Little Marton & Marton Moss Side – Blackpool 014	Blackpool
Buttershaw – Bradford 059	Bradford
Clayton – Bradford 047	Bradford
Keighley Exley Head – Bradford 012	Bradford
Fairweather Green – Bradford 040	Bradford
Manningham & Lister Park – Bradford 034	Bradford
Broomfields & East Bowling – Bradford 045	Bradford
Knowle West – Bristol 045	Bristol, City of
Rose Hill & Burnley Wood – Burnley 014	Burnley
Pellon East – Calderdale 012	Calderdale
Botcherby & Harraby – Carlisle 011	Carlisle
Cheshire East 039, Crewe Central	Cheshire East
Whitehaven Harbour & Corkickle – Copeland 002	Copeland
Bodmin West – Cornwall 015	Cornwall
Easington & Hawthorn – County Durham 025	County Durham
Shotton & Haswell – County Durham 034	County Durham

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Blackhall - County Durham 039	County Durham
Shildon - County Durham 059	County Durham
Newton Aycliffe West - County Durham 061	County Durham
Central Darlington & Pierremont - Darlington 016	Darlington
New Normanton - Derby 016	Derby
Rose Hill & Castleward - Derby 018	Derby
Askern, Campsall & Norton - Doncaster 002	Doncaster
Hexthorpe & Balby North - Doncaster 023	Doncaster
Balby South - Doncaster 029	Doncaster
Mexborough East - Doncaster 030	Doncaster
Edlington - Doncaster 034	Doncaster
Dover West - Dover 013	Dover
County Durham 009, Annfield Plain South and South Moor	Durham
Folkestone Harbour - Shepway 014	Folkestone and Hythe
Yarmouth North - Great Yarmouth 004	Great Yarmouth
Gorleston North - Great Yarmouth 009	Great Yarmouth
Grange, Halton Brook & Hallwood Park - Halton 013	Halton
Jesmond - Hartlepool 003	Hartlepool
Foggy Furze - Hartlepool 008	Hartlepool
Owton Manor - Hartlepool 012	Hartlepool
Harbour, Victoria & Wooler Road - Hartlepool 015	Hartlepool
Barncroft & Warren Park - Havant 006	Havant
West Leigh - Havant 009	Havant
Accrington South East - Hyndburn 008	Hyndburn
Sculcoates - Kingston upon Hull 024	Kingston upon Hull, City of

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Gypsyville - Kingston upon Hull 031	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Bilton Grange - Kingston upon Hull 009	Kingston upon Hull, City of
North Bransholme - Kingston upon Hull 034	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Morecambe Town - Lancaster 006	Lancaster
Skerton & Vale - Lancaster 011	Lancaster
Belle Isle North - Leeds 092	Leeds
Hollin Park & Fearnville - Leeds 040	Leeds
Beeston Hill & Hunslet Moor - Leeds 085	Leeds
Stocking Farm & Mowmacre - Leicester 003	Leicester
New Parks & Stokeswood - Leicester 012	Leicester
Netherley - Liverpool 045	Liverpool
Walton East - Liverpool 008	Liverpool
Walton Hall - Liverpool 009	Liverpool
Norris Green West - Liverpool 011	Liverpool
Anfield North - Liverpool 015	Liverpool
Dingle - Liverpool 050	Liverpool
Charlestown - Manchester 003	Manchester
Middlesbrough Central - Middlesbrough 001	Middlesbrough
Heaton South - Newcastle upon Tyne 018	Newcastle upon Tyne
Benwell - Newcastle upon Tyne 027	Newcastle upon Tyne
Grimsby West Marsh - North East Lincolnshire 003	North East Lincolnshire
Holme Hill - North East Lincolnshire 011	North East Lincolnshire
Littlefield South & Grange - North East Lincolnshire 015	North East Lincolnshire
Scunthorpe Central Park - North Lincolnshire 012	North Lincolnshire
Weston Town - North Somerset 020	North Somerset

Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Atherstone - North Warwickshire 003	North Warwickshire
Widdrington, Lynemouth & Hadston - Northumberland 008	Northumberland
Newbiggin - Northumberland 009	Northumberland
Blyth Cowpen - Northumberland 022	Northumberland
Blyth Town - Northumberland 023	Northumberland
Bulwell West - Nottingham 005	Nottingham
Failsworth West - Oldham 032	Oldham
Redcar Lakes South - Redcar and Cleveland 005	Redcar and Cleveland
Redcar Town & Coatham - Redcar and Cleveland 001	Redcar and Cleveland
Heywood Heap Bridge & Darnhill - Rochdale 019	Rochdale
Kingsway - Rochdale 012	Rochdale
Rawmarsh South - Rotherham 008	Rotherham
Masbrough & Bradgate - Rotherham 016	Rotherham
Aston - Rotherham 030	Rotherham
Kersal Dale - Salford 011	Salford
Greengate & Blackfriars - Salford 033	Salford
Ocker Hill - Sandwell 009	Sandwell
Highbridge - Sedgemoor 005	Sedgemoor
Bridgwater North - Sedgemoor 008	Sedgemoor
Tinsley & Carbrook - Sheffield 018	Sheffield
Woodthorpe - Sheffield 039	Sheffield
Woodhouse West - Sheffield 049	Sheffield
Herdings & Gleadless Valley - Sheffield 060	Sheffield
Hightown - Southampton 027	Southampton
St Marys - Southampton 033	Southampton



Neighbourhood Name	Local Authority
Kursaal - Southend-on-Sea 014	Southend-on-Sea
Stafford 013, Highfields & Western Downs	Stafford
Broad Oak - St. Helens 011	St. Helens
Derbyshire Hill - St. Helens 017	St. Helens
Tunstall - Stoke-on-Trent 005	Stoke-on-Trent
Little Chell & Stanfield - Stoke-on-Trent 006	Stoke-on-Trent
Sheerness East - Swale 001	Swale
Malinslee - Telford and Wrekin 017	Telford and Wrekin
Sutton Hill - Telford and Wrekin 023	Telford and Wrekin
Brightlingsea & Point Clear - Tendring 011	Tendring
Newington - Thanet 013	Thanet
Margate Town - Thanet 003	Thanet
Ramsgate Harbour - Thanet 016	Thanet
Kinsley & Fitzwilliam - Wakefield 039	Wakefield
South Elmsall - Wakefield 044	Wakefield
Walsall Ryecroft - Walsall 018	Walsall
Atherton North - Wigan 017	Wigan
Wigan East - Wigan 009	Wigan
Wigan South - Wigan 015	Wigan
Tranmere - Wirral 027	Wirral
Bebington New Ferry - Wirral 031	Wirral

# Annex B – List of Advisory Group Members

We are grateful to all those that have helped ICON's work and contributed through consultation events, surveys, visits and our Advisory Groups. Given the repeated engagement of our advisory group members, we wish to thank and list those participants here. They are not in any way responsible for ICON's work.

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