



Evidence Session 1: Speakers

What makes a neighbourhood 'left behind' and how has COVID-19 affected these neighbourhoods?

Matt Leach, Chief Executive, Local Trust

Matt Leach is the CEO of Local Trust. He was formerly CEO of HACT, the social housing sector's ideas and innovation agency. Prior to joining HACT in 2011, Matt's roles included CEO of civil society funding agency Capacitybuilders, associate director of the ResPublica think tank and director at the Housing Corporation. Matt has also led start up work on the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and held a range of senior roles at DCLG and the Cabinet Office.

Patrick Melia, Chief Executive, City of Sunderland Council

Driven by a desire to ensure the delivery of high-quality services that enable residents to live healthy and independently economic lives, safely in their communities. His priorities for the city include major physical regeneration of the City Centre to create a vibrant place for people to live, work and visit and to create more jobs for people in the local community.

Patrick was previously Chief Executive with North Tyneside Council, where he utilised his extensive record on delivering major projects, involving multiple partnerships, by providing leadership for the transformation of the 13 hectares of prime Enterprise Zone land at Swans into a hub for the offshore, renewable energy and advanced engineering sectors. To provide around 1,000 new jobs for the North East and the delivery of the North Tyneside Seafront Master Plan, including investment of £36m into the coastal area, ultimately bringing the much-loved iconic Spanish City back to life.

Shana Roberts, Community Activist, Brookside Big Local

Shana Roberts has been a member of Brookside Big Local since 2017 and was Chair of the group from 2018 to 2020. Shana is also a Parish councillor, passionately representing her community and helping residents gain access to the same opportunities and services as everyone else. Shana believes that everyone deserves a fair chance at a good life regardless of where their journey may begin, and that no one should be left behind by virtue of their postcode.