

# RSA

Projects

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## **RSA ChangeMakers**

Identifying the key people  
driving positive change in  
local areas

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## About the RSA

The RSA has been a source of ideas, innovation and civic enterprise for over 250 years. In the light of new challenges and opportunities for the human race our purpose is to encourage the development of a principled, prosperous society by identifying and releasing human potential. This is reflected in the organisation's recent commitment to the pursuit of what it calls 21st century enlightenment.

Through lectures, events, pamphlets and commissions, the RSA provides a flow of rich ideas and inspiration for what might be realised in a more enlightened world; essential to progress but insufficient without action. RSA Projects aim to bridge this gap between thinking and action. We put our ideas to work for the common good. By researching, designing and testing new ways of living, we hope to foster a more inventive, resourceful and fulfilled society. Through our Fellowship of 27,000 people the RSA aims to be a source of capacity, commitment and innovation in communities from the global to the local. Fellows are actively encouraged to engage and to develop local and issue-based initiatives.

## About the Citizen Power project

In 2009, Peterborough City Council and the Arts Council England approached the RSA to develop a programme of interventions that would strengthen civic pride in Peterborough by looking at how participation, attachment and innovation in the city's public services and among its citizens might be enhanced. ChangeMakers – one of the Citizen Power projects – seeks to tap into, connect together and further nurture the capacity of individuals who are already driving positive change in the city. This paper details the findings from our pilot research in Peterborough and introduces the concept of a 'ChangeMakers' Network', something that we will be developing as part of the second phase of the project.

## Acknowledgements

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# Executive summary

The results of our surveying indicate that such individuals are adept at driving positive change in their local areas. They appear rooted in their communities, have an impressive repertoire of capabilities, and are instilled with an appetite to apply their skills and experience to address local issues.

A combination of financial imperatives, continuing demands for improvements in public services and emerging ideals of a more active citizenry have led to calls for local areas to be more ‘socially productive’, where greater numbers of people are involved in defining, identifying and overcoming local problems using all available means.<sup>1</sup> Despite notable efforts under the current Government to instigate this transformation and encourage more people to participate in improving their local areas – the Big Society and Localism agendas being the two foremost examples – it is clear that the number of people currently doing so is unlikely to be sufficient to fill the gap left by a retrenched state.<sup>2</sup>

As another recent RSA report has argued, nurturing the kind of muscular citizenry we aspire towards will be a long-term project which requires a radical change in the nation’s mindset and the gradual development of new

competencies.<sup>3</sup> This report argues that in the short to medium term, if we wish to create more vibrant and successful local areas we should pay more attention to supporting and better channelling the energy and assets of those key individuals who are already making positive change happen.

What follows in this report is a detailed account of how a local network of ‘ChangeMakers’ was identified and mapped in Peterborough using an experimental new approach. ChangeMakers are those key individuals who are spearheading positive change in their own fields of interest or work, and who are highly effective in tackling the social, economic and environmental challenges facing society. This could be a Job Centre Plus staff member who is instrumental in supporting the long-term unemployed back into work, a senior GP who is instigating improvements in local health provision, or a prominent

businessman who is helping to coordinate a successful enterprise strategy for the benefit of the local economy. As well-connected and knowledgeable individuals, ChangeMakers are a potentially highly valuable asset that local authorities and public services could draw upon to realise their ambitions, for example by using them as sources of expertise on local issues or as conduits for spreading information and behaviours.

Through piloting our innovative ‘social network analysis’ research method, we have been able to map a diverse local network of ChangeMakers in Peterborough. Among those we identified were members of the clergy, artists, head teachers, social entrepreneurs, housing officers, charity workers, police officers, members of the local chamber of commerce, representatives from the local primary care trust, businessmen and everyday council officers. The results of our surveying indicate that such individuals are adept at driving positive change in their local areas. They appear rooted in their communities, have an impressive repertoire of capabilities, and are instilled with an appetite to apply their skills and experience to address local issues.

While our findings indicate that Peterborough’s network of ChangeMakers harbours a wealth of expertise, ideas and connections that can be drawn upon for the benefit of the local area, we also found that in many cases this potential is not being used to best effect. In particular, our research points to four problems that are dampening the network’s impact:

- **Missed opportunities with third and private sector ChangeMakers** – ChangeMakers from the third and private sectors appear to have less influence in the city and have more challenging relationships with key institutions than their public sector counterparts. For instance, 4 in 10 from the third sector disagree that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) offers them adequate opportunities to engage in improving the city, compared to 1 in 20 from the public sector.
- **ChangeMakers’ expertise in many local issues left untapped** – In some

cases, there is a large difference between the numbers of ChangeMakers who have expertise in local challenges and the number who feel they actually have an influence in them. For instance, when we consider the LSP’s strategic goal of promoting active citizenship, only half of ChangeMakers with a high level of expertise in this area have a high level of influence.

- **Fragility of ChangeMakers working on the frontline** – ChangeMakers who work on the frontline of their organisation appear more fragile than their counterparts occupying different roles. Only 15 per cent of frontline ChangeMakers feel they can strongly influence decisions in the city compared to nearly half of all senior managers. It is also concerning that nearly 25 per cent say they will play less of a role as a ChangeMaker in the future, compared to only 5 per cent of ChangeMakers across the board.
- **An absent generation** – Despite our research showing that ChangeMakers are predominantly older, experienced individuals (half are aged 45-64), in our network we found very few over 65s and retirees. This suggests that the cohort of ChangeMakers that we identified suffer from poor connections to the older generation of experts in the city. This is a loss both for ChangeMakers and for the local authority and public services that could benefit from their knowledge and experience.

### **Revitalising how change is made in local areas**

While these specific findings relate to the network of ChangeMakers currently operating in Peterborough, it is not difficult to imagine that ChangeMakers present in other local areas are facing similar obstacles. The task for government and public services in the years ahead will be to find new ways of overcoming these difficulties and channelling the energy and assets of their ChangeMakers to best effect.

If they can, it may be possible to spark the beginnings of a new culture of collaborative working, where individuals of all sectors and of all positions work

together to overcome local challenges. Indeed, as ChangeMakers connect in a non-hierarchical, individual capacity, they should be able to craft a powerful new route to achieving positive change that can bypass the partisanship that is so often said to paralyse our conventional democratic processes.

In this report, we put forward the concept of a formal ‘ChangeMakers’ Network’ as one means of enabling ChangeMakers to work together. Networks would be geared towards surfacing, connecting together and further nurturing the capacity of ChangeMakers to drive positive change in their local area, and would benefit both the ChangeMakers themselves as well as the local authority, public services and other local agencies who could draw upon their expertise, ideas and connections. In practice, the function of a Network would be to bring members together through structured events where they can share ideas and advice, and to provide them with resources, training and other forms of financial assistance.

To support the widespread development of these Networks and to ensure that they are able to achieve their greatest impact, we present a number of recommendations for central and local government:

#### **Identifying ChangeMakers and developing Networks:**

- Allocate a proportion of Big Society Bank funding to pay for a 10-year initiative to establish ChangeMakers’ Networks across the country
- Align the ChangeMaker identification process with local council elections in order to change the dynamics of local politics

#### **Creating new opportunities for ChangeMakers:**

- Integrate ChangeMakers into the Community Organising Scheme and the National Citizens Service
- Establish a national mentoring scheme linking civil servants in Whitehall with ChangeMakers working on the ground
- Support and actively encourage ChangeMakers to sign-up to the Pathfinders Mutual scheme and bid for public service contracts

## **Recalibrating the practices of local government and public services:**

- Provide ChangeMakers' Networks with a voice in local decision-making and offer them voting rights on scrutiny committees
- Include the quality of interactions with ChangeMakers' Networks as part of the performance reviews of public sector employees
- Fashion the strategic objectives of local areas to go with the grain of ChangeMakers' strengths
- Support ChangeMakers' Networks through training and grant funding

This report marks the end of the **first phase** of the project in which we were able to trial an innovative approach to identifying, mapping and exploring a network of ChangeMakers in a local area. The **second phase** of our work, commencing in the Spring of 2012, will be to build on our pilot by nurturing the first formal ChangeMakers' Network in Peterborough to a position where it is largely self-sufficient. As part of the second phase of the project we will also begin to identify and map a network of ChangeMakers more comprehensively in another local area, improving our method based on what we have learned through the Peterborough pilot. Once the second ChangeMakers' Network has been created, we plan to establish a connection between the two and invite them to form the start of a wider learning consortium, something that we hope will grow through further mapping initiatives.

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1. 2020 Public Services Trust. *2020 Welfare: Life, Work, Locality* (London: 2020 PST, 2010).

2. Page, B. [Presentation to the Cabinet Office] *Building the Big Society* (November 2010).

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# A new dawn for local areas

“The era of big government has run its course”

– David Cameron, 2009 Hugo Young Lecture\*

## The challenge for local areas

Portraying our current era as the ‘lost decade’ can seem overstated and premature. Yet all signs suggest that a sense of stagnation is something many of us are increasingly likely to feel over the coming years. The scale of the austerity measures detailed in last year’s Budget prompted the Institute for Fiscal Studies to report that the five years from April 2011 will be the tightest for public spending since the Second World War, with the severity of cuts only being matched among leading industrial nations by Ireland and Iceland.<sup>5</sup> Since then, a combination of high inflation, a crisis taking hold in the eurozone and lower than expected growth rates mean that this austerity package will in fact be a great deal tougher than previously thought.<sup>6</sup>

Among those most affected by this fiscal retraction will be local authorities and the public services dependent on

their support, the majority of whom are having to shoulder cuts in the region of 10 per cent over the next 4 years.<sup>7</sup> In a sign that the easy-pickings of efficiency savings may have already run dry, PwC recently reported that local authorities have yet to earmark more than 40 per cent of their cuts.<sup>8</sup> This comes at a time when many local areas are facing their biggest challenges to date. A quarter of adults in the UK are obese; one in ten of the working-age population have no qualifications; half of all people aged 75 and over live alone; and some one in ten households report crime to be a serious problem in their area.<sup>9</sup>

What makes these challenges more daunting is that they have persisted and even grown during a time of significant government expansion in public spending, stretching back to the late 1970s. A recent report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies argues that we have underestimated the extent to which the state has

gradually expanded to accommodate greater spending in public services, particularly in the areas of health, long-term care and social security.<sup>10</sup> Whereas in 1978-79 these forms of welfare accounted for a third of all spending, at the expense of the housing and defence sectors they now account for half. Given that the overall share of GDP spent on the public sector has grown from 38 to 48 per cent since 1997, this indicates a vast expansion in welfare costs.<sup>11</sup>

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Local authorities have yet to earmark more than

**40%**  
of their cuts

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The inability to use this extra finance to address entrenched social problems can be traced back to declining levels of public sector productivity, with rates falling by approximately 0.3 per cent a year between 1997 and 2008.<sup>12</sup> Despite being equipped with an ever increasing armoury of technological innovations, such low levels of efficiency will mean that meeting the costs of our ageing society and abolishing child poverty would alone require an extra 4 to 6 per cent of GDP to be spent on public services over the next two decades; a figure that for government is financially out of reach and politically out of bounds.<sup>13</sup> For local areas to be able to achieve their aspirations over the coming years will therefore require radical changes in their ways of working.

### **Localism and the Big Society**

The Coalition Government has been vocal in what they think this should look like. In economically straitened times, they have argued that citizens need to do more in directly improving their communities and in designing and delivering better public services. The experience of the past has shown them that placing the state as the default agent of change is no longer a viable option. This is seen as an economic imperative that would enable the paring back of costly state-led service provision, but is also borne out

of a moral vision of the ‘good society’ where people are fulfilling their duty of responsibility to the wider community.<sup>14</sup>

This vision is embodied most clearly in the Big Society and Localism agendas, which are geared towards both promoting and providing greater opportunities for people to get more involved in shaping their local areas and public services.<sup>15</sup> Included among the raft of initiatives tied to these agendas are the Community Right to Challenge, a new right for community groups to take over the running of a local authority service; and Community Right to Build, reducing bureaucratic procedures for community and voluntary groups who wish to take forward development plans for their local area. This ‘supply’ of opportunities is complemented by attendant plans to drive the ‘demand’ to participate, among them a new community organising training scheme and a National Citizen Service for young people.<sup>16</sup>

But it is not just residents who are being enticed into place-shaping and public service delivery. The Coalition’s recent Open Public Services White Paper puts forward a number of key principles for modernising public services, most notably opening them up to a range of new providers.<sup>17</sup> The purpose of these reforms is to galvanise a wide spectrum of citizens, public sector employees, charities and businesses to get more involved in shaping, if not entirely running, public services. Through reforms such as Right to Provide, payment by results and the new ‘open commissioning’ policy, a diverse range of actors from the public, private and third sectors will now be encouraged to tender for public sector contracts. This shift is founded on the belief that a wider choice of providers will lead to public services that are more innovative, more cost-effective and better tailored to the needs of service users. Echoing these sentiments, David Cameron earlier this year called for services that are:

“...more local, more accountable and more personal, where people are the drivers, not passengers, and which call on every part of society – from churches to charities, businesses to community organisations – to come in and make a difference. It really is a complete change in the way our public services are run.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Towards a more socially productive place**

Through a combination of financial imperatives, the prospect of better quality services and emerging ideals of a more active citizenry, what is fundamentally being called for through these reforms is a shift from social security to ‘social productivity’. In practice this means galvanising people from all sectors to engage in what the 2020 Public Services Trust at the RSA describes as, ‘identifying, understanding and solving public problems dynamically using all appropriate means.’<sup>19</sup>

Here, ‘solving public problems’ refers not only to improving public services per se but also to achieving the wider aspirations of a place by whatever means appropriate, whether that is reducing levels of anti-social behaviour through a neighbourhood watch scheme, stimulating job creation and growth through a new Local Enterprise Partnership, or building more cohesive community relationships via inter-faith groups. What is important for a socially productive place is that the notion of ‘public services’ becomes far more fluid, the actors involved more diverse and the role of provider and recipient increasingly blurred and multidirectional.

There is now a well-established view that realising such a socially productive model will demand a greater reliance on enlisting the cross-sector social assets of a place, over the purely economic ones. To take founder of the global TimeBanking movement Edgar Cahn’s metaphor of the ‘social Prius’, achieving positive change will mean running on two kinds of fuel: a thin stream of money to build our social institutions, and a bigger stream of social interactions that can keep them going, whether that is people’s skills, entrepreneurial know-how, networks, labour or physical assets.<sup>20</sup> David Halpern, for instance, has articulated the importance of tapping into what he describes as society’s ‘hidden wealth’; those care-based exchanges of time and effort that form the foundations of our communities.<sup>21</sup> Southwark Circle, a membership scheme which is run on ‘credits of care’, is just one promising example of how social assets might be identified and traded with relative ease.<sup>22</sup>



## Recognising the immediacy of the task

Research suggests that there may be a great deal of enthusiasm among people to get involved and to contribute their skills and knowledge in making their communities better places in which to live. A joint ippr and PwC report indicates that as many as 46 per cent of people are willing to keep an eye on an elderly neighbour and nearly 20 per cent to mentor a child struggling through the education system.<sup>23</sup> Yet in spite of these promising signs, the concern is that few of these assertions are reflected in actual behaviour. Despite two thirds of people saying that individuals should be taking more responsibility for their own lives, only 4 per cent are involved in actively shaping their local services.<sup>24</sup> A telling statistic from the same ippr and PwC research is that over 90 per cent of people believe that the state should remain primarily responsible for delivering most key public services.<sup>25</sup>

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It is the RSA's belief that people, given the space, the right circumstances and the necessary skills, would be far more willing and able to close their social aspiration gap; that gap between the kind of society we wish to live in and the one in which we find ourselves based on our current behaviour.<sup>26</sup> But we also believe that we should be realistic about the existing numbers of people actively contributing to better their communities, and the time it will take to grow these numbers and our pool of social assets to a significant level. As a recent RSA report has argued, initiatives like that of the Big Society are in effect 20 year projects, not 2 year ones, and demand greater competencies than the vast majority of the population currently hold.<sup>27</sup> In order to realise socially productive places, our attention in the short to

medium term must therefore naturally turn to surfacing, connecting together and further developing the assets of those key individuals already driving positive change in local areas.

In the next section we will consider these individuals, who we term ChangeMakers, in more detail.

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5. The Institute for Fiscal Studies. *The IFS Green Budget: February 2011* (London: IFS, 2011).

6. HM Treasury. *Autumn Statement 2011* (London: HM Treasury, 2011).

7. See Department for Communities and Local Government. *Local Government Finance Settlement 2011/12*. Available: <http://www.localcommunities.gov.uk/finance/1112/grant.htm>

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9. Cabinet Office. *State of the Nation: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK* (London: Cabinet Office, 2010).

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11. Cabinet Office. *Open Public Services White Paper* (London: Cabinet Office, 2011).

12. 2020 Public Services Trust at the RSA. *From social security to social productivity: a vision for 2020 public services* (London: 2020PST, 2010).

13. Ibid.

14. See for instance, Blond, P. *Red Tory: How the left and right broke Britain and how we can fix it* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).

15. For more information on the Big Society see Wei, N. [Slides]. *Building the Big Society* (Cabinet Office, June 2010). Available: [http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/pdfs/Building\\_the\\_big\\_society\\_lord\\_wei.pdf](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/pdfs/Building_the_big_society_lord_wei.pdf). For more information about the Localism agenda see Cabinet Office. *Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide* (London, Cabinet Office, 2010).

16. For more information on these schemes, see The Conservative Party. *Building a Big Society* (London: The Conservative Party, 2010). Available: [http://www.conservatives.com/news/news\\_stories/2010/03/~/\\_media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/Building-a-Big-Society.ashx](http://www.conservatives.com/news/news_stories/2010/03/~/_media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/Building-a-Big-Society.ashx)

17. Cabinet Office. *Open Public Services White Paper* (London: Cabinet Office, 2011).

18. Cameron, D. [Speech]. *Prime Minister's Speech on Modern Public Service*. Available: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/prime-ministers-speech-on-modern-public-service/>

19. 2020 Public Services Trust. (2010) Op cit.

20. See Edgar Cahn's talk at the RSA, May 2011. Available: <http://www.thersa.org/events/video/vision-videos/edgar-cahn>

21. Halpern, D. *The Hidden Wealth of Nations* (Polity Press, 2009).

22. For more information see <http://www.southwarkcircle.org.uk/>

23. ippr and PwC. *Capable Communities: Towards Citizen-Powered Public Services* (London: ippr and PwC, 2010).

24. Page, B. (2010) Op cit.

25. ippr and PwC. (2010) Op cit.

26. See Taylor, M. [Lecture] *Pro-Social Behaviour: the Future – it's up to us*. (2007).

27. Rowson, J., Mezey, M. K. and Dellot, B. (2012) Op cit.

# A wealth of potential

“We recognise that the sum of knowledge held by individuals, communities, local authorities, public sector staff and the voluntary, charitable and private sectors can be the real driving force for change.”

- 2011 Open Public Services White Paper

## **ChangeMakers: leaders or experts?**

Mark Twain described an expert as a “man from another town”, while Dwight Eisenhower is reported to have said that leaders are people who have “the ability to decide what is to be done, and then to get others to want to do it”.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to Twain’s isolated expert or Eisenhower’s detached leader, ChangeMakers are those individuals who are directly engaged in improving the places in which they live. They are not solely leaders or experts, but are a combination of both, with each having their own assortment of different roles to play. They have more in common with the Jewish notion of a ‘macher’<sup>29</sup> than with Saul Alinsky’s community organiser.<sup>30</sup> That is, they are what Henry Hemming describes as “a doer, a social operator, somebody who inspires action” through collaborative work at a grass-roots level, as opposed to somebody who predominantly calls

on the state to effect change.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, ChangeMakers can be defined as:

**Individuals who are, or who could be given better connections and resources, highly effective in tackling the social, economic and environmental challenges facing society, and who are driving and achieving positive change within their own fields of interest and work.**

Many of these individuals occupy professional positions within public, private and third sector organisations, while others take up more informal roles as active community members who are well-known among their peers and neighbours, yet who may lie hidden under the radar to the local authority and public services. In practice, a ChangeMaker could be a particular frontline police officer instrumental in tackling anti-social behaviour, an active

local resident bringing estranged communities together, or a leading light in the business sector driving private investment into a local area.

The table to the right presents the character traits of ChangeMakers based on our analysis of the capabilities that citizens need to effect positive change,<sup>32</sup> and the extensive experience that RSA Projects has had in working with such individuals. Few ChangeMakers are likely to have every characteristic, but nearly all would reflect the majority of these key traits.

### A wealth of potential?

These qualities suggest that ChangeMakers have the capability to act as powerful agents of change in their local areas. In particular, we have identified three means by which the capacity of these individuals might be harnessed for achieving positive change:

- First, because of their expert status, ChangeMakers could be valuable conduits for **transferring local information and news of opportunities**. The Institute for Government’s MINDSPACE report notes how the weight we give to information is heavily dependent on our view of the messenger, particularly whether or not we see them as an expert.<sup>33</sup> One study, for instance, showed that young people were much more receptive to health messages delivered by health educators than their teachers.<sup>34</sup>
- Second, ChangeMakers are likely to occupy central or key positions in the structures of community networks and are therefore well placed to **‘transmit’ positive behaviours and attitudes**. As the RSA’s Connected Communities report highlights, certain behaviours spread through social networks contagiously, even to the extent that a person’s friend of a friend of a friend can have an impact on them.<sup>35</sup> Sitting at the centre of a network and being highly connected could enable ChangeMakers to pass on behaviours and attitudes through multiple avenues.<sup>36</sup>
- Third, ChangeMakers are likely to store an **easily accessible pool of information and expertise** relating

## Box 1: ChangeMaker Character Traits

Characteristic	Impact
<b>Highly knowledgeable (experts and generalists)</b>	They have expertise (enough to advise others) on specific issues, and/or they have sufficient knowledge of a variety of relevant fields, and/or are able to bring knowledge and analysis to bear on a particular situation in ways that add value to a specific issue. They can connect their knowledge to the local area.
<b>Well-connected</b>	They have multiple links in their areas of interest and work, both in terms of the number and diversity of contacts they have and the depth of those relationships.
<b>Generous and open</b>	They impart their knowledge and share their insights. They have an open approach to collaboration and work well with others.
<b>Reliable and trustworthy</b>	They are honest in their dealings with other people, mean what they say, are consistent in how they value and work with different groups, and can be relied upon. They have integrity and are respected.
<b>Impactful</b>	They apply their abilities to achieve positive change and are well-known for their persistence in making a tangible impact. They get things done.
<b>Communicators</b>	They are good communicators, are able to inspire and persuade, can explain clearly, and can connect to different people. They can be strong advocates for issues and/or people.
<b>Visionary and creative</b>	They are forward-thinking, view problems strategically and through a long-term lens, and are willing to consider using new techniques.
<b>Facilitators</b>	They bring and link groups of people together, particularly from different organisations, areas, issues or viewpoints. They share and pass on information and opportunities.

to their fields of work and their local area, and have their finger on the pulse regarding what matters most to local people. Research by Ipsos MORI suggests that ‘socio-political influencers’ – key individuals sharing some similar characteristics to ChangeMakers – were able to predict strong public concern over immigration long before it became obvious to policymakers and the media.<sup>37</sup> Whether it is a Jobcentre Plus staff member who can pinpoint the true barriers preventing young people from gaining employment, or a businessman who knows where money should be invested in up-skilling a local area’s workforce, by tapping into the skills and insights of ChangeMakers, policymakers and public services would be better placed to fashion policies more attuned to local needs.

## ChangeMakers in the current context

While all of these capabilities would be beneficial to any place and at any point in time, the demands of pursuing a new socially productive model of place-shaping mean that marshalling the capabilities of ChangeMakers for the benefit of local areas will be essential in the years ahead.

Emerging from a combination of financial pressures, shifts in government policy and increasing demands for higher quality services, we have identified three emergent voids in the capacity of local areas to realise their aspirations. Enlisting the leadership, independent nature and collaborative capacity of ChangeMakers and their associated networks could be one potential way of helping to bridge these gaps:

- **A gap in leadership** – Many of the existing structures that once provided strategic oversight for local areas have now been removed to open up fertile space for innovative new services to emerge. While there are clear arguments for scrapping the likes of local area agreements,<sup>38</sup> these changes have left a dearth of strategic leadership which many places are now scrambling to address. ChangeMakers, with their rounded expertise, experience and vision in the public, private and third sectors, may be well placed to

assist with any new strategic leadership efforts.

- **A gap in legitimacy** – The Government has appeared sceptical about the capacity of the state to create stronger and more vibrant communities. The patchy experience of the ‘virtual’ and ‘easy’ council models of Suffolk and Barnet, however, indicate that heavy outsourcing to the private sector is not necessarily a suitable alternative to state-led provision.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the numbers of people who believe public services should be run by the state rather than by the private sector rose sharply from 66 per cent in 2000 to 79 per cent in 2008.<sup>40</sup> Mobilising ChangeMakers could present something of a third way between the state and the market, bringing together key individuals from the third, private and public sectors for a more inclusive and legitimate cross-sector approach to place-shaping.
- **A gap in collaboration** – Central to the success of any socially productive place will be the ability of people who sit within different organisations, sectors and geographical areas to collaborate with one another in the design, development and delivery of public services. The evaluation of the Total Place pilot schemes in 13 areas suggests that effective collaboration and budget-pooling are dependent upon the existence of a common culture and mind-set, and the ability of staff to think outside of the box.<sup>41</sup> Given their prominence in local areas, their generosity in sharing information and their ability to see the wider picture, if used wisely ChangeMakers could present an ideal starting point for forging constructive partnerships between the different organisations operating within a place.

If local areas are to rise to the challenge of the current context and navigate their way through a rocky transition to a more socially productive place, they will need to begin recognising and mobilising the latent capacity of their local ChangeMakers. Being able to accurately pinpoint these ChangeMakers, many of whom are lying under the radar,<sup>42</sup> will be critical to this objective. But to

draw upon and be able to amplify the full power of ChangeMakers also means recognising that together they are more than the sum of their parts. Therefore special attention should be paid to better understanding how ChangeMakers are connected to one another, what flows through these connections and how these links might be strengthened.

In the next section we will explain how we have piloted an innovative new approach to identifying and mapping a local network of ChangeMakers in Peterborough.

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32. See for example McLean, S. and Dellot, B. *Civic Pulse: Measuring active citizenship in a cold climate* (London: RSA, 2011).

33. Dolan, P. et al. *MINDSPACE: Influencing behaviour through public policy* (Institute for Government, 2010).

34. Ibid.

35. Rowson, J., Broome, S. and Jones, A. *Connected Communities: How social networks power and sustain the Big Society* (London: RSA, 2010).

36. See also Brook Lyndhurst study. *The diffusion of environmental behaviours: the role of influential individuals in social networks* (Brook Lyndhurst, 2008).

37. Duffy, B. and Pierce, A. *Socio-Political Influencers: Who are they and why do they matter?* (London: Ipsos MORI, 2007).

38. Cabinet Office. (2011) Op cit.

39. See for example Butler, P. *Is it all over for local government reform?* (The Guardian, 10th May 2011).

40. Ipsos MORI. *Cutting spending on public services or making them more efficient – Trends*. Available: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemId=2567&view=wide>

41. Communities and Local Government. *Total Place: a whole area approach to public services* (London: CLG, 2010).

42. See for example the Third Sector Research Centre’s work on identifying community activity lying ‘under the radar’. In just 11 streets of England they identified 58 community groups, none of whom were registered organisations. For more information see Soteri-Proctor, A. *Little Big Societies: micro-mapping of organisations operating Below the Radar* (London: TSRC, 2011).

# Mapping ChangeMakers in Peterborough

“We could provide limited services, become inward looking and risk losing confidence in our ideals while we wait for business to ‘return to normal’ again. Or, we could try to do things very differently; bring new thinking and sources of funding to the city as we look to work more closely with our communities and the individuals living within them.”

– Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive, and Marco Cereste, Leader of the Council, Peterborough City Council<sup>43</sup>

## **Piloting a new approach using social network analysis**

‘Social network analysis’ is often used to identify individuals and to map the numbers, types and strength of their connections with other people and organisations. The value of this method is based on the premise that a better understanding of how networks function can begin to shed light on why we behave in the way that we do.<sup>44</sup> Having used this methodology already to map the connections between recovering drug users and supportive ‘recovery champions’ in Peterborough,<sup>45</sup> and the strength of ties between residents in New Cross Gate,<sup>46</sup> our objective was to pilot a similar approach in order to identify and map a network of Changemakers operating in a local area. That is, to find out who is driving positive change and how they might be connected to others in similar positions.

We sought to find out more about the

background of ChangeMakers, what kind of skills and knowledge they have, how they interact with key institutions, and which local issues (e.g. environmental sustainability, job creation or vulnerable families) they hold the greatest level of interest, expertise and influence in. Through mapping their connections, we also aimed to shed light on how ChangeMakers interact with one another, for instance the extent to which they collaborate and share information.

## **Why Peterborough?**

Like the majority of local areas, Peterborough is facing something of a mountain to climb when it comes to meeting its share of public sector cuts. Yet unlike many others, the city is doing so at a time of considerable social flux. According to the Council’s own projections, Peterborough’s population is set to rise by over 20 per cent from 2007 to 2021, with an 81.2 per cent increase in

### 1. Forming the initial cohort of ChangeMakers

We began by asking representatives from the Local Strategic Partnership and those involved in the Citizen Power project to put forward suggestions of people in Peterborough who they considered to be a ChangeMaker.

### 2. Conducting first waves of surveying to generate master list of ChangeMakers

Once the starting list of names had been collected, we then used a 'snowball sampling method' to crowdsource further names of ChangeMakers. This involved asking each survey respondent to look at the ChangeMaker criteria we had formed (see page 11) and to nominate individuals who they thought fit those characteristics. Those named were then in turn asked to suggest further names of ChangeMakers. This continued for several iterations until a large list of ChangeMakers was amassed.

### 3. Condensing the master list and undertaking a more detailed survey

To ensure that we had a credible cohort of ChangeMakers, we distilled our master list into a final set of the most prominent. These were chosen according to a set of specific criteria, for instance whether they were selected by local people as a 'priority' in our first wave of surveying. The final list of ChangeMakers were then sent a second, more detailed survey which assessed their background; their capabilities for making change; their interest, expertise and influence in different policy areas; and the type and strength of their connections to the other ChangeMakers in the final list.

### 4. Analysing the results

The final stage was to explore the data collected. By using traditional statistical techniques and analysing the network maps created by the data, we were able to look more closely at the character of ChangeMakers and the wider structure of the network.

the number of people aged 85 and over.<sup>47</sup> These and other changes can only serve to amplify the city's existing challenges, among them an acute issue of drug and alcohol dependency and a number of resource-draining problem families. But Peterborough also faces more general challenges that affect the wider population. Levels of community cohesion are 8 per cent below the national average, while the sense of belonging felt among residents trails by an equally concerning 7 percentage points.<sup>48</sup>

In the face of these significant challenges and in such straitened times, the local authority has taken radical steps towards greater partnership working with both local and national bodies. One such collaboration is that of Citizen Power Peterborough, a two year programme of work developed in partnership between Peterborough City Council, the RSA and the Arts Council England.<sup>49</sup> With its emphasis on galvanising social action, nurturing attachment

and stimulating social innovation, the Citizen Power programme seeks to draw upon the hidden wealth of citizens to drive long-lasting positive change in the City.<sup>50</sup> Central to this approach is the ability to tap into and 'weave' together the assets of key individuals already making headway in Peterborough, something that the ChangeMakers project has directly sought to achieve.

### The method

Beginning in the summer of 2011, we identified and mapped a network of ChangeMakers in Peterborough through a number of stages, outlined above.

Some ChangeMakers are by their very nature hard to identify. Many lie under the radar and have few interactions with those in positions of senior authority, for instance community activists who do not participate in formal council consultation exercises. Using the social network analysis 'snowball' method was key in enabling us to pinpoint many of these

individuals, and its crowdsourcing approach was critical in ensuring that the identification process was independent and open.

43. O'Brien, R. *Citizen Power in Peterborough: one year on* (London: RSA, 2011).

44. Rowson, J., Broome, S. and Jones, A. (2010) Op cit.

45. For more information see <http://www.thersa.org/projects/citizen-power/recovery-capital/the-potential-of-recovery-capital>

46. Rowson, J., Broome, S. and Jones, A. (2010) Op cit.

47. Peterborough City Council. [Briefing paper] *Peterborough Facts and Figures: Population and Dwelling Forecasts* (PCC, October 2008).

48. For more detail see McLean, S. *Citizen Power in Peterborough: A scoping study* (London: RSA, 2010).

49. See <http://www.thersa.org/projects/citizen-power>

50. McLean, S. (2010) Op cit.

# Exploring the network

“Ever since [I moved to Peterborough] I have loved this city. It has a great atmosphere about it and I’m passionate to see things change in the city for the better.”

- ChangeMaker

In analysing the data collected through our research, we sought to paint a more detailed picture of the network of ChangeMakers operating in a local area; who they are, what kind of relationships they have with one another and whether they feel as though they have the same level of ChangeMaking capabilities that others perceive them to have. What follows is an explanation of the findings that have emerged from this analysis. It is important to note that as a piece of pilot research, this is not intended to be a comprehensive account of all the ChangeMakers operating in Peterborough, but rather a useful snapshot of one part of what is expected to be a much more extensive network.

## **A network at its optimum?**

In analysing the results, we begin by considering the network as a whole. The first diagram in Figure 1 illustrates

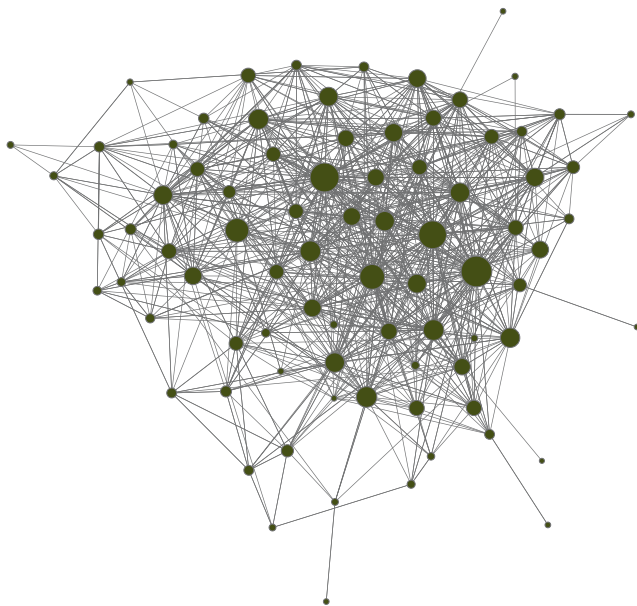
the web of connections between the ChangeMakers who completed our final survey, with each red dot representing one of more than 85 unique respondents.<sup>51</sup>

Interpreting this network map shows two principal findings. The first, and most clearly visible, is that it is particularly dense, by which we mean there are a high number of ‘inter-connections’ between the various people in the network. This stands in contrast to the example diagram shown on the right in Figure 1, which shows a network broken up into small clusters of tight-knit but isolated groups. This appears to confirm our hypothesis that ChangeMakers are highly connected individuals with a capacity for networking.

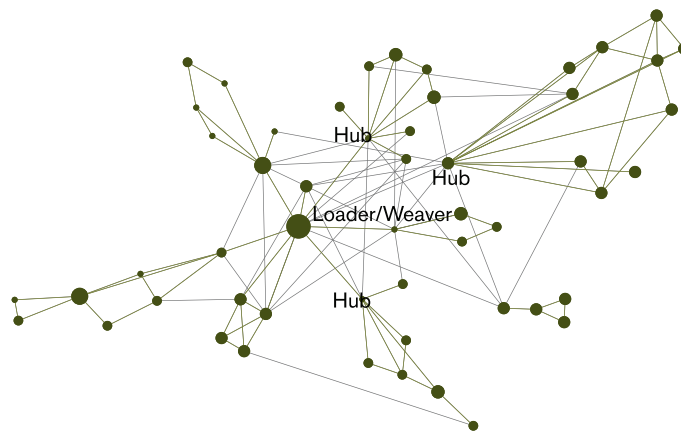
The second finding that can be elicited from the map is that the network is built upon a ‘core-periphery’ structure. In their influential work on ‘network weaving’, Valdis Krebs and June Holley

**Figure 1: The ChangeMakers network vs. a ‘hub and spoke’ network**<sup>52</sup>

The network of ChangeMakers



Example of a ‘hub and spoke’ network



suggest that this is the most effective network shape for generating productivity and innovation.<sup>53</sup> It is said to be optimum in that the tightly knit ‘core’ in the centre and the loosely tied ‘periphery’ on the outskirts complement each other; the periphery – often made up of individuals new to the community – come into contact with ideas and information beyond the network, while the core is able to translate those ideas into something practical. As Krebs and Holley note, “The periphery monitors the environment, while the core implements what is discovered and deemed useful”.<sup>54</sup>

With a relatively dense core-periphery structure, this network could be said to be close to an optimum shape for the effective dissemination and implementation of information, ideas and new opportunities among ChangeMakers. That said, Krebs and Holley hasten to add that there is a danger of the core becoming overloaded with pressure and demands should this inner network become too dense. Indeed, this may already be the case in Peterborough. As one ChangeMaker put it, “There is not enough of a ‘team approach’ to solving problems. People feel the weight of accountability on their shoulders, and

responsibility is not shared as widely as it might be”.

### What does a ChangeMaker look like?

Examining the shape and structure of the network can only tell us so much about ChangeMakers and the way in which they operate. Also important to consider is the nature of the ChangeMakers themselves, who they are, what they know and how they relate to the city and interact with its core institutions. We know from our research that the network is a diverse one with individuals from a range of backgrounds. This includes head teachers, housing officers, social entrepreneurs, charity workers, police officers, members of the local chambers of commerce, influential businessmen, members of the clergy, artists, representatives from the local primary care trust and everyday council officers (see Box 2 for a handful of ChangeMaker profiles).

While we can be sure that each of these individuals is idiosyncratic in their abilities, interests and opinions, we can nonetheless begin to piece together a better overall picture of ChangeMakers and consider the extent to which they differ from others in the city (see Figure 3 for a demographic

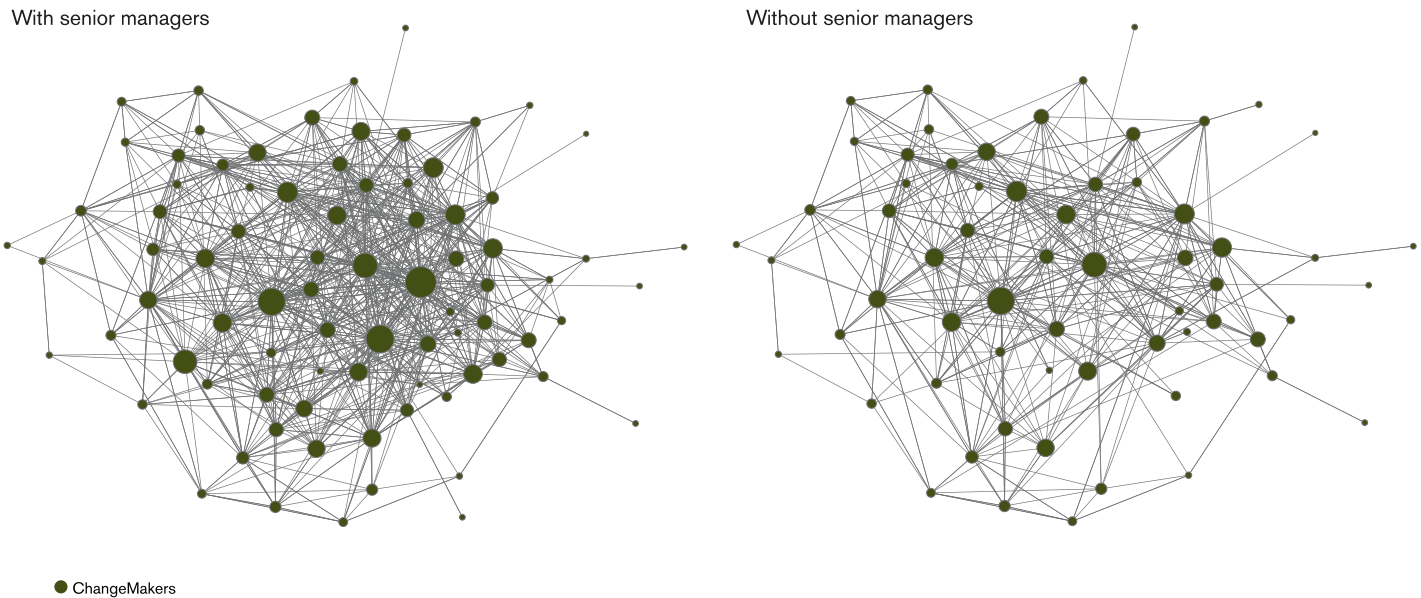
overview of ChangeMakers). In certain areas, the network of ChangeMakers closely mirrors the Peterborough population, while in others the differences are clearly visible. Looking at gender and ethnic background, for instance, we found that the profile of ChangeMakers is similar to that of the wider Peterborough population. However, when we look at the age and employment status of ChangeMakers, this varies much more considerably. Half of all ChangeMakers are of middle age (45-64), compared to just 14 per cent of the wider population, and only 6 per cent are under the age of 25.

Another interesting finding is that of the importance of senior managers to the network. While there is a good representation of ChangeMakers from all positions and sectors, it is clear that senior managers are particularly central to the dissemination of information through the network (see Figure 2). These and other distortions can be partly explained by the pilot method, which ‘seeded’ the ChangeMaker identification process among senior managers (see Box 5 at the end of the report for further reflections on the research method). What is certainly promising to see is that the ChangeMakers cohort so closely mirrors the ethnic make-up of Peterborough, and



## Figure 2: Networks showing information sharing ties with and without senior managers

These two diagrams depict the information sharing ties between ChangeMakers. Removing the senior managers diminishes the thick mesh of ties in the centre of the network, illustrating their importance as sources of information for other ChangeMakers.



### Box 2: ChangeMakers in Peterborough

#### Rod Allerton, Charities and Community Relations Manager, Thomas Cook

Rod has spent over eight years working in a number of business management roles and a year ago took on the position of Charities and Community Relations Manager at Thomas Cook. He is now working to bring businesses in Peterborough together to discuss how they can best align their individual CSR programmes with the needs of the wider community. As part of this role, Rod is coordinating a collaborative programme which will see the establishment of a CSR Forum in Peterborough, enabling businesses to support one another's CSR efforts and to work together on collective projects.

#### Brian Pearce, volunteer and community activist

Brian has been a volunteer and community activist in Peterborough for over 40 years and is currently supporting habitat creation at the Peterborough Environmental Project. They are in the process of creating a community managed environmental facility with meeting rooms, 'hot' desks and co-working spaces for local charities. He is part of a team that has won seven UK awards and secured monetary grants approaching a quarter of a million pounds.

#### Alice Kershaw, Heritage Regeneration Officer

As Heritage Regeneration Officer, Alice works to ensure that Peterborough's heritage is fully recognised and that it plays a significant part in the city's regeneration. Since starting this role, Alice has had a major impact in raising the profile of heritage in Peterborough, attracted significant funds for key projects, and delivered groundbreaking training and capacity-building programmes for local heritage groups.

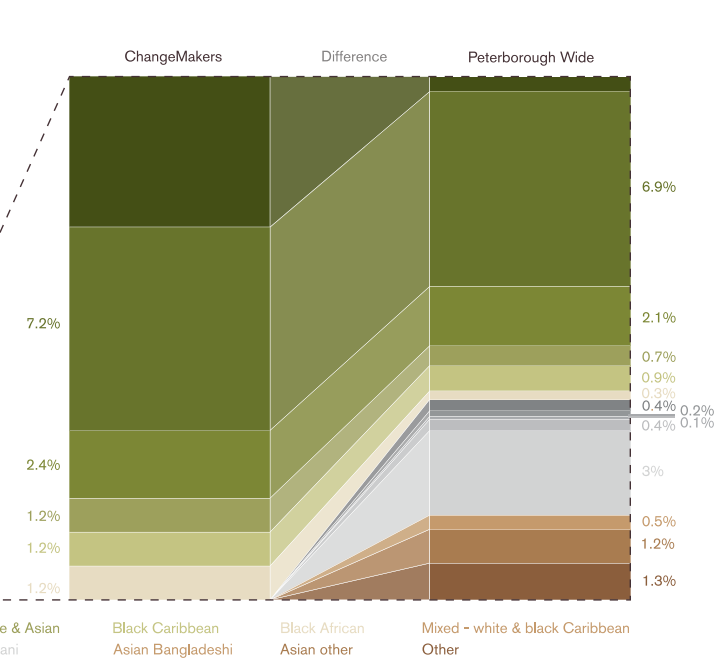
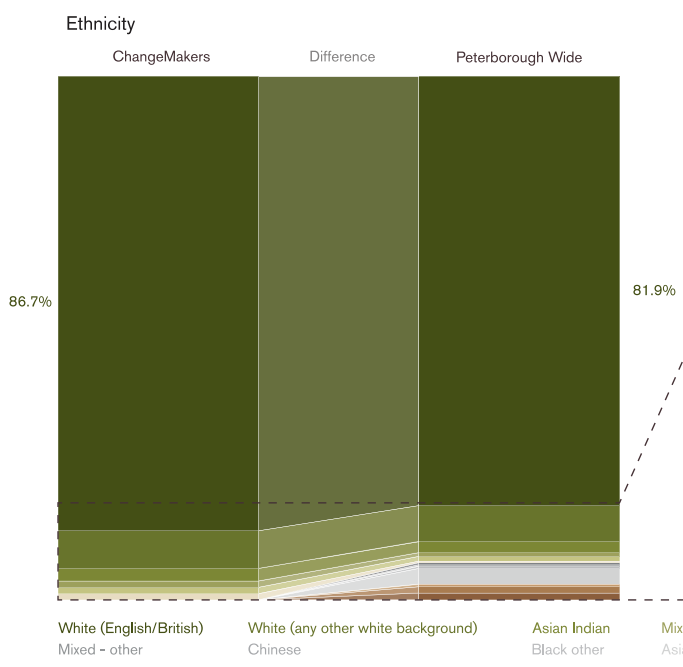
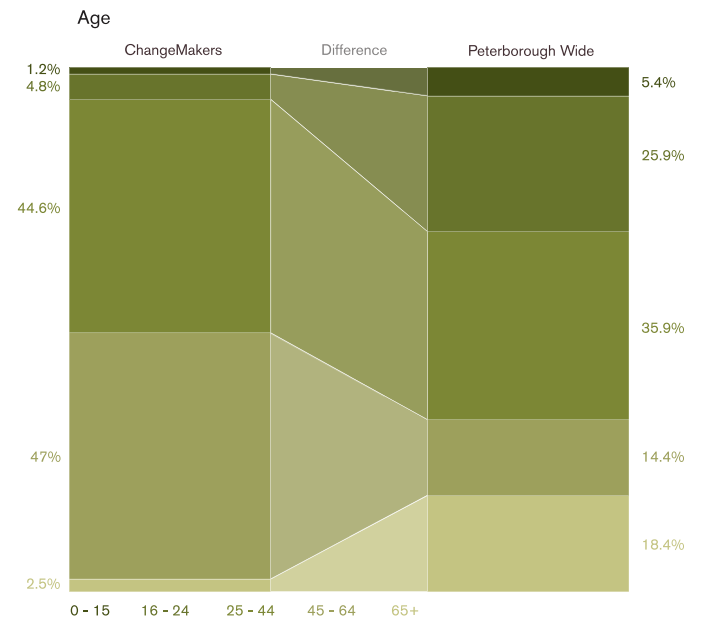
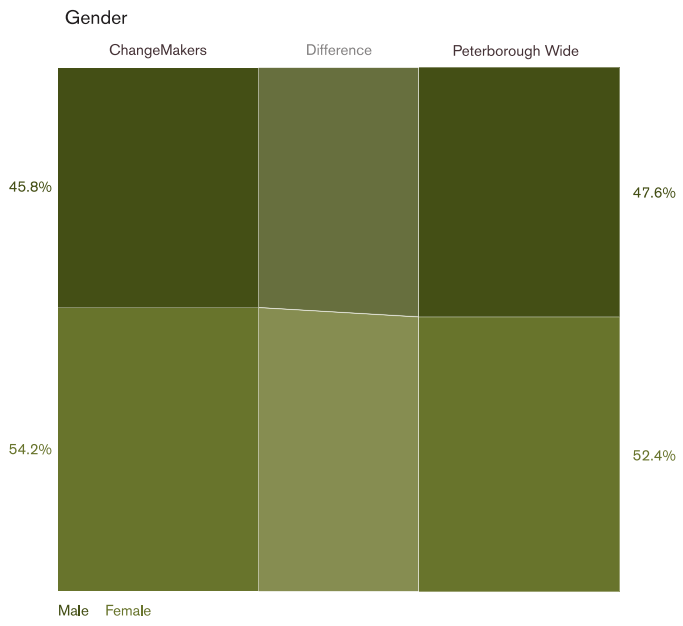
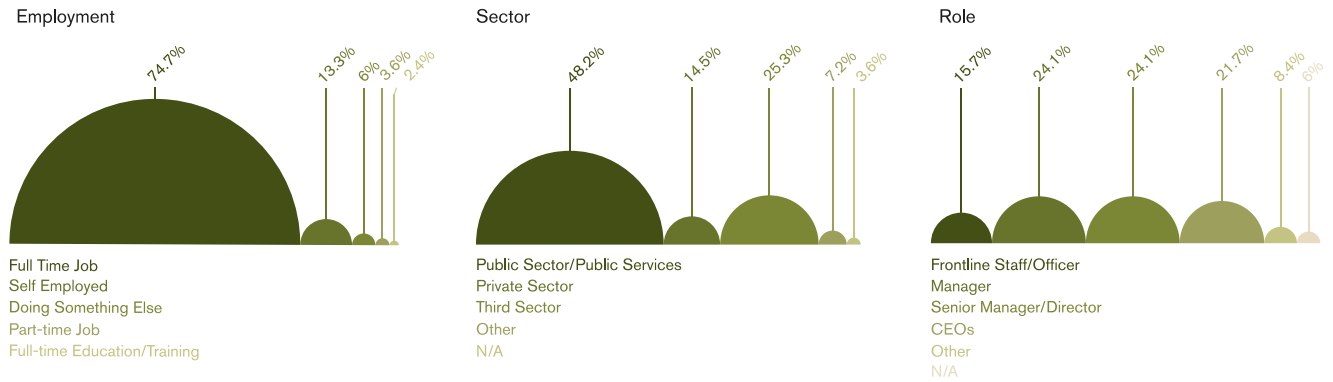
#### Lorena Hodgson, Social Entrepreneur

Lorena runs workshops in internet skills and organises craft meets and markets around Peterborough and Wisbech to help Artists and Craftspeople share their skills and showcase their work. In addition to this, Lorena is helping to organise the local Wisbech Arts Festival and alongside another family produces a quarterly magazine for home-educating households.

#### Jeff Pusey, Deputy Youth MP

As Deputy Youth MP, Jeff works closely with the Council and its committees to ensure that their decisions reflect the views of young people in Peterborough. He also plays a lead role in organising key events for the benefit of young people, the most prominent of which is a major citywide employability and skills conference where businesses will showcase their work and talk to young people about the skills and qualifications necessary for employment.

**Figure 3: ChangeMakers' demographic background**



that both males and females are represented near equally.

### Rooted in the city and driven by a sense of fairness

Looking beyond demographics to the other questions we put to ChangeMakers, one of the most striking findings to emerge from the research is the extent to which ChangeMakers consider themselves to have a prominent role in the city. Our findings suggest that ChangeMakers are empowered, autonomous and responsible individuals, particularly when compared to the wider

population (see Figure 4). To take some of the most telling figures, 9 in 10 agree that they can influence decisions in Peterborough and 8 in 10 agree that they belong to the city, compared to 3 in 10 and 5 in 10 of the wider population respectively.

These results appear to indicate that ChangeMakers have a sense of ownership over the city's problems and are willing to be at the forefront of driving positive change. As one ChangeMaker told us, "People must be positive in their thinking and actions. They must take responsibility and get involved in their locality and

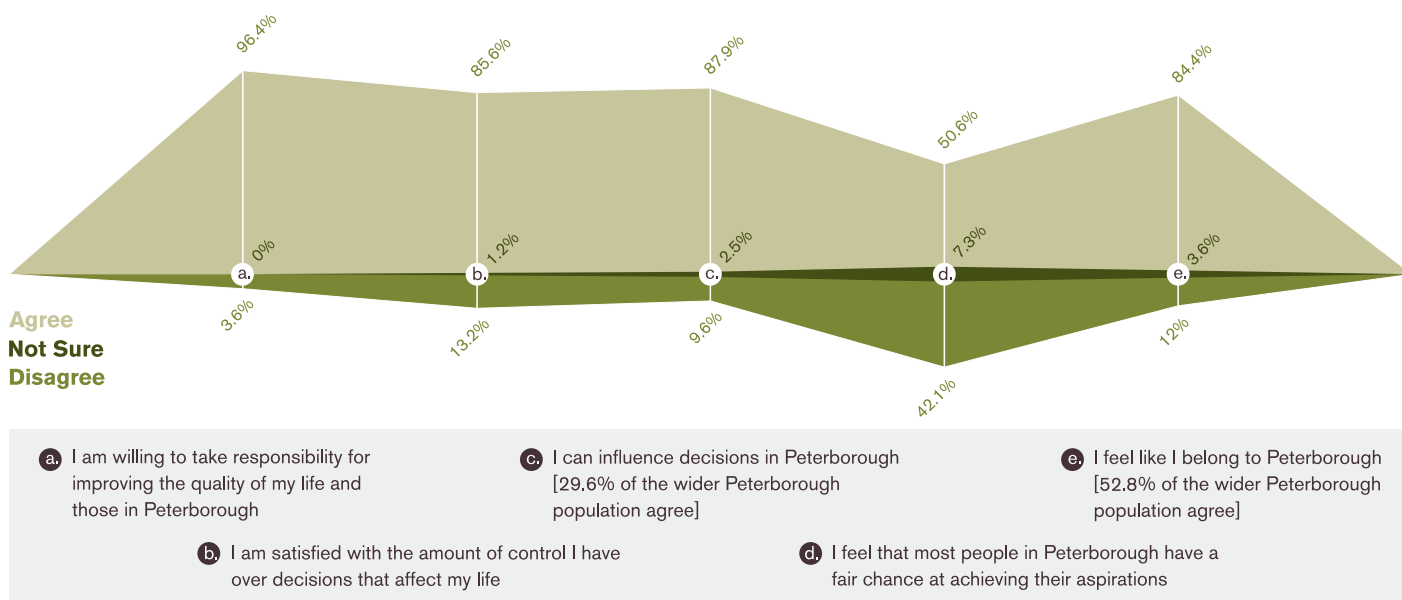
the city". That 4 in 10 ChangeMakers disagree that most people in Peterborough have a fair chance at achieving their aspirations is perhaps one factor in explaining why they choose to contribute to the city as much as they do.

### Highly skilled and knowledgeable catalysts for change

In addition to being relatively more empowered and responsible individuals, ChangeMakers also report themselves as having an extensive repertoire of skills

**Figure 4: Rooted in the city and driven by a sense of fairness**

Number of ChangeMakers who agree or disagree with the following statements...



**Figure 5: Highly skilled and knowledgeable catalysts for change**

Number of ChangeMakers who agree that they have the following skills and knowledge...



and knowledge at their disposal. Many of these are particularly relevant to their capacity to drive positive change in the city, enabling them to either design, develop and implement their own work, or to galvanise others into action (see Figure 5). Of the abilities that ChangeMakers were asked to assess themselves against, there were few where they did not score themselves highly.

Two of these findings are especially interesting. First, **7 in 10** ChangeMakers strongly agree that they can **persuade and convince other people** to do something, and second, **8 in 10** strongly agree that they can **come up with new ideas to overcome problems**. These findings indicate that ChangeMakers are especially persuasive and inspiring individuals who hold sway in their own fields. Indeed, the real power of ChangeMakers may lie in their capacity to pro-actively galvanise others into action, in effect acting as catalysts for wider social change. Their capacity to be creative in overcoming problems may only serve to strengthen such a role. As one ChangeMaker put it, “I believe that the voluntary and community sector have the capacity and ability to bring about change, and that I have the skills to enable these groups to become established”.

Our research also indicates that ChangeMakers have a certain willingness to wield these abilities in addressing the city’s most prominent

challenges (see Figure 6). On average, ChangeMakers have a high level of interest and a high level of expertise in 5 of these local issues. Most notable is the degree to which ChangeMakers have an interest in promoting active citizenship. Of those who completed the survey, 83 per cent consider themselves to have a high level of interest in this area, and nearly 60 per cent said it is something in which they have a high level of expertise. This appears to corroborate the view that ChangeMakers are both willing and able to be catalysts for spurring others into action, something that may have implications for Peterborough’s ‘theory of change’ in addressing local challenges.

**8 in 10**

strongly agree that they can come up with new ideas to overcome problems

### Barriers to progress

We finished our final survey by asking whether respondents feel as if they are likely to play more or less of a role as a ChangeMaker in the years ahead. Despite the all too real prospect of losing their jobs and the sense that austerity

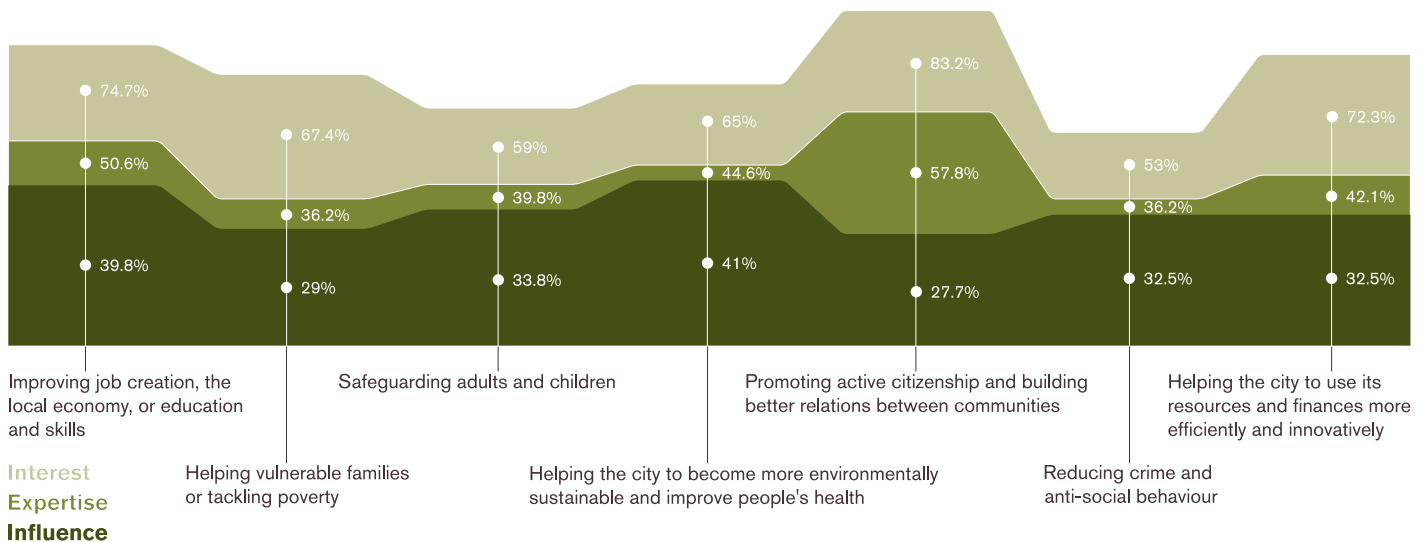
has created a greater workload with diminishing resources, more than half said they would play more of a role in the next 2-3 years, and only 1 in 20 said they would step back and play less of a role.

Taken together, all of these findings appear to indicate that the network of ChangeMakers in Peterborough is a potentially powerful source of expertise, ideas and connections that could be drawn upon in any efforts to improve the city. While we believe that this is certainly the case, our research has identified a number of potential weak spots in the network, which we believe would need to be addressed before the full power of the network could be realised. We describe these in detail below.

- **Missed opportunities with third and private sector ChangeMakers** – While 4 in 10 ChangeMakers from the public and third sectors strongly agree that they can influence decisions in Peterborough, this applies to less than 2 in 10 from the private sector. This may be due to their relatively poor relationships with local institutions. For instance, 2 in 10 private sector ChangeMakers strongly disagree that the local authority and public services provide opportunities for them to engage and drive positive change in the city. Much of this may come down to working cultures which fall out of kilter with one another. As one private sector ChangeMaker put it, “the public sector moves at a frustratingly slow pace”.

## Figure 6: Addressing local challenges

Number of ChangeMakers with interest, expertise and influence in different local issues...



Although ChangeMakers from the third sector may feel relatively more secure about their ability to influence decisions, like private sector ChangeMakers they too have challenging relationships with certain institutions. For instance, 4 in 10 disagree that the Local Strategic Partnership offers them adequate opportunities to engage in improving the city, compared to 1 in 20 from the public sector. This suggests that partnerships between the different sectors in the city are not as strong as they could be.

- **ChangeMakers' expertise in many local issues left untapped** – When we consider the local strategic partnership's aim of promoting active citizenship, only half of ChangeMakers with a high level of expertise in this area have a high level of influence. Similarly, only 7 in 10 ChangeMakers with a high level of expertise in helping vulnerable families have a high level of influence in this area. This stands in stark contrast to other local issues. For example, 9 in 10 ChangeMakers with high levels of expertise in environmental sustainability and reducing anti-social behaviour have high levels of influence in these areas. This indicates that some public services and local agencies are far more able to channel the expertise of ChangeMakers than others (see Figure 6).
- **Fragility of ChangeMakers working on the frontline** – ChangeMakers working on the frontline are critical for translating ideas into action and for feeding back their experiences to other ChangeMakers in the network.<sup>55</sup> It is perhaps concerning then that our research shows these to be more fragile than their counterparts occupying other roles. While nearly half of all senior managers strongly agree that they can influence decisions in the city, this applies to only 15 per cent of those on the frontline.<sup>56</sup> Much of this fragility is reflected in the fact that nearly a quarter say they will play less of a role as a ChangeMaker in the future.
- **An absent generation** – Our research paints a picture of ChangeMakers

as predominantly older, more experienced individuals (see Figure 3). It is disappointing then to find that less than 3 per cent of the ChangeMakers who were named are over the age of 65 and that there are even fewer who are wholly retired. Rather than indicating that few over 65s are ChangeMakers, it is more likely that those we identified simply have poor connections to this older generation of experts. As a consequence, the vast reserves of knowledge and experience of many of these seasoned practitioners may lie beyond the reach of our central cohort of ChangeMakers.

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51. While we undertook a number of survey waves to increase the diversity of the ChangeMakers identified in our initial crowdsourcing phase, it is important to bear in mind that this network diagram does not reflect all of the ChangeMakers in Peterborough. With further time and resources, we may be able to return to the research and seek to identify further individuals driving positive change in the city.

52. Network diagram courtesy of Krebs, V. and Holley, J. *Building Smart Communities through Network Weaving*. Available: <http://www.orgnet.com/BuildingNetworks.pdf>

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. See for example Department for Communities and Local Government. *The role of frontline staff in service innovation and improvement* (London: CLG, 2007).

56. Research suggests this is not limited to ChangeMakers. According to a report undertaken by Ipsos Mori, certain frontline staff face numerous difficulties in getting their voices heard by those higher in the chain of command. Police officers, for instance, are said to experience a 'glass ceiling' for their ideas, which are not always translated into effective innovation by their superiors. See Ipsos MORI and the National Audit Office. *Innovation: the perspective of frontline staff* (London: Ipsos MORI and NAO, 2009).

# Harnessing the power of ChangeMakers

“It is my belief that all parties working for and with the community should be working together with common aims and objectives. This should include education, business and the local authority. It is only through common effort that change is made in the most efficient way.”

- ChangeMaker

Our research in Peterborough presents only a snapshot of one network of ChangeMakers among many currently operating across the country. Yet what we have seen from just a brief glimpse is that ChangeMakers are individuals with a strong sense of purpose, driven to improve the fabric of the places in which they live and willing to take ownership of local problems. Like any network, however, they also appear to be beset with their own challenges, particularly when it comes to being able to make full use of their expertise.

The challenge for government and public services in the years ahead will be to find new ways of overcoming these obstacles and channelling the energy and assets of these ChangeMakers to best effect. If they can, there are sizeable rewards to be had, both in cost savings and efficiency improvements, but also in terms of creating more vibrant places in which to live. Here we outline what

government and public services might do to better harness the latent assets of ChangeMakers. We begin by introducing the concept of a ‘ChangeMakers’ Network’, something we hope to unpack in more detail over the coming months.

## **Towards a ChangeMakers’ Network**

In using Edmund Burke’s notion of ‘little platoons’, David Cameron attempts to convey the kind of energy that can be released when individuals choose to associate and work together for common ends.<sup>57</sup> In the same vein, we propose the formation of ‘ChangeMakers’ Networks’ as a structure for bringing together groups of ChangeMakers in local areas and ensuring that they are more than the sum of their parts. The RSA recommends the widespread development of these Networks, all of which should be geared towards surfacing, connecting together and further nurturing the capacity of

## Figure 7: Opportunities for a ChangeMakers' Network

The diagram below spells out the possible functions of a ChangeMakers' Network. The circles shaded with the lighter colour outline different ways in which local agencies and public services can work with a Network, while the circles shaded in the darker colour explain how ChangeMakers can use the Network for their own purposes.



ChangeMakers to drive positive change. In practice, this means identifying ChangeMakers through a social network analysis method, regularly bringing them together through structured events, and providing them with resources, training and other forms of financial assistance which ensure that the group is more than the sum of its parts.

ChangeMakers' Networks would be designed to have a variety of benefits, both for the ChangeMakers themselves as well as for the public services and local authorities in the areas where they are present (see Figure 7). For instance, local policymakers could draw upon their Network in order to access ChangeMakers' expertise, consult with them on ideas for new initiatives,

work with them on joint ventures and use their connections to spread information about new opportunities. For the ChangeMakers themselves, their Network would offer an opportunity to make or strengthen connections with other ChangeMakers in their local area. Judging from our research findings, this could be critical to nurturing better links between local institutions and ChangeMakers from the third and private sectors, and for forging a common culture necessary for cross-sector partnership working. On a practical level, regular Network events would enable ChangeMakers to share ideas, ask for advice from likeminded individuals, and potentially begin to work together on joint initiatives.

As is the case with most other associations, we envisage that these Networks would ultimately be self-sustaining bodies with one or two of the most prominent ChangeMakers taking a lead, for instance in coordinating the Network or convening meetings.<sup>58</sup> Decisions concerning the recruitment of new ChangeMakers and whether events should be open to non-ChangeMakers should be left to the members themselves and taken on the basis of their own circumstances. Given the cost-effective nature of the method, it is feasible for local areas to undertake further research and map ChangeMakers on a regular basis.

Our plan over the coming months is to put into practice the idea of a ChangeMakers' Network and to unpack

in more detail how it would function. Building on our pilot research, the first ChangeMakers' Network will be established within Peterborough as part of the second phase of the project (for more detail see the Next steps section at the end of the report).

## Recommendations

### Identifying ChangeMakers and developing Networks

As the predominant force setting the parameters of change across the country, we offer a number of recommendations that central government could implement to support the development of ChangeMakers' Networks:

- **Allocate a proportion of Big Society Bank funding to pay for a 10-year initiative to establish ChangeMakers' Networks across the country**  
Like Peterborough, other local areas could benefit strongly from having their own ChangeMakers' Network. To finance the cost of such a large-scale mapping initiative, we recommend that the Government use Big Society Bank funds to finance a new medium to long term initiative for identifying, mapping and forming ChangeMakers' Networks across the country. Given the cost-effective and rapid nature of the identification process, we envisage that this could be achieved within 10 years and would require a fraction of the £60 - £100m available to the Bank. As the Networks become established, a national 'learning consortium' could be created which brings together groups from different areas to share learning and best practice.<sup>59</sup>
- **Align the ChangeMakers identification process with local council elections**  
Holding the ChangeMakers identification process immediately prior to council elections could help change the dynamics of local politics. We believe that doing so would add a critically important backdrop to local elections and prompt voters to consider whether the candidates seeking election are spearheading positive change themselves. It may even provide recently identified

ChangeMakers with the necessary confidence and backing to run for office themselves.

### Creating new opportunities

In a bid to make best use of the Networks that emerge through this identification process, we suggest that central government create new opportunities – via existing or new initiatives – that enable ChangeMakers to apply their talents and expertise:

- **Integrate ChangeMakers into the Community Organising programme and the National Citizen Service**  
Many of the Big Society initiatives outlined by the Government rely on a select number of individuals with the capacity and existing connections to wield change in their communities. Although not all of the ChangeMakers we identify would be suitable for such roles, we believe that the Networks would offer an existing pool of committed individuals that could be drawn upon to support the likes of the Community Organising programme and the National Citizen Service. For the former, they could be readily selected as a community organiser with little additional training required, while for the latter, they could be recruited as an inspirational mentor to the young people involved in the Service.
- **Establish a national mentoring scheme linking civil servants in Whitehall with ChangeMakers working on the ground**  
The Government should consider establishing a scheme linking civil servants with ChangeMakers' Networks, enabling learning to pass from a central to a local level, and vice versa. This could be similar to the Outreach programme launched by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, where staff spend a number of days helping different businesses around the country.<sup>60</sup> The Government should also consider supporting the dissemination of learning and best practice between ChangeMakers by forming a national mentoring scheme where individuals with similar interests could work together.

- **Support and actively encourage ChangeMakers to sign-up to the Pathfinders Mutual scheme and bid for public service contracts**

The Government and its intermediary partner organisations should focus their attention on encouraging well-established ChangeMakers' Networks to access the £10m Pathfinder support programme, which provides business support to those wishing to run their own public services. This would be invaluable to the numerous ChangeMakers who are likely to hold aspirations to take over and run services themselves. Likewise, we would encourage the Government and relevant bodies to support ChangeMakers to apply for public service contracts, for instance through the Work Programme scheme.

### Recalibrating the practices of local government

ChangeMakers' Networks would be a valuable source of assets for local authorities and public services, the vast majority of which are grappling with the difficult task of improving both the quality and cost-effectiveness of their operations in the years ahead. But in drawing upon the Networks, these local bodies would have an obligation and a stake in ensuring that they are as effective as they could be. To equip them in this effort, we suggest they implement the following recommendations:

- **Provide ChangeMakers' Networks with a voice in local decision-making and offer them a seat and voting rights on scrutiny committees**  
Local authorities and public services should wherever possible attempt to bring ChangeMakers into the decision-making process and set aside time for their input on proposals. This might involve asking ChangeMakers to act as a sounding board for ideas emerging from the local strategic partnership, actively involving them in the coordination of neighbourhood councils, or providing the Network with a seat and voting rights on council scrutiny committees. Which ChangeMakers will be involved in these activities will be partly dependent upon who has expertise in the area in question. Particular effort



## Box 4: How others are attempting to harness the energy of instrumental individuals

### Senior Corps<sup>61</sup>

Senior Corps is an organisation based in California that connects experienced over 55s with non-profit initiatives that could benefit from their talents and expertise. Senior Corps helps these older volunteers to become mentors, coaches and companions, and directs them to the opportunities that best suit their skill sets, from building houses to helping to immunise children. They have so far linked more than 500,000 Americans to various projects taking place across the country.

### Civic Commons<sup>62</sup>

Another strand of the Citizen Power programme, Civic Commons was formed in 2010 to provide a meeting space for ‘community leaders’ to discuss topical issues and ideas, from housing to health to anti-social behaviour. The core aims of the local network are to help build members’ knowledge and confidence in a range of issues and to inspire local civic innovation by bringing leading thinkers to the city to discuss their work. To date, members have participated in various capacity-building events, including an advocacy training workshop and a visit to the House of Commons, and are currently working to develop initiatives to combat anti-social behaviour in their own neighbourhoods.

### ExpertNET<sup>63</sup>

In 2010, the US federal government announced its plan to create ‘ExpertNET’, an online platform that would enable experts from across the country to share their knowledge with government officials. Federal agencies will post public notices about opportunities on a variety of subjects and knowledgeable individuals will then be able to comment, present their ideas and suggest where initiatives could be improved. The platform is to include a peer review process where experts can voice their support or otherwise for the solutions that have been posted.

should be made to include private and third sector ChangeMakers, given their lower levels of stated influence in key local institutions.

- **Include the quality of interactions with ChangeMakers’ Networks as part of the performance reviews of public sector employees**  
Our research suggests that public bodies could offer more opportunities to engage with private and third sector ChangeMakers. This is something that cannot be achieved by the senior staff of local agencies alone. Instead, they will need to find ways of incentivising their wider base of staff to engage more closely with the local ChangeMakers’ Network. One solution is to include this as a target within their performance reviews. It is envisaged that this would be a useful means of engraining a stronger habit of cross-sector collaboration.
- **Fashion strategic objectives to go with the grain of ChangeMakers’ strengths**  
We would encourage local authorities and local strategic partnerships to shape an element of their strategic plans to go with the grain of their ChangeMakers’ interests and expertise. For instance, if a ChangeMakers’ Network happens to have a high level of

expertise in the manufacturing industry or in culture and heritage, it would be advisable to integrate these issues into the strategic plan for the area.

- **Support ChangeMakers’ Networks through training and grant funding**  
Where funding is available, local agencies should consider using this to support ChangeMakers, particularly in light of their potential catalytic effect in galvanising others into action. ChangeMakers could, for instance, be provided with training in how to set up their own social enterprise, or offered grant or seed funding to get their ideas off the ground.<sup>64</sup> The Local Government Information Unit suggests that such a fund could be key to prompting much-needed innovation among frontline staff.<sup>64</sup>

between community groups across the country can be an effective means of spreading innovative approaches to different areas. See Lynn, J. *Community leadership approaches to tackling street crime* (London: JRF, 2008).

59. For more details see <http://www.bis.gov.uk/outreach>

60. Cited in Savage, V. et al. *Public Services and Civil Society Working Together* (London: Young Foundation, 2009). For information, see <http://www.getinvolved.gov/>

61. Norris, E. *The Civic Commons: A model for social action* (London: RSA, 2011).

62. For more information see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/01/06/expertnet-two-more-weeks-weigh>

63. For more information on the RSA Catalyst fund see <http://www.thersa.org/fellowship/catalyst>

64. Gaskarth, G. *Small is Beautiful: Innovation from the frontline of local government* (London: LGIU and NESTA, 2010).

56. Barker, R. ‘Big Societies, Little Platoons and the Problems with Pluralism’ in *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1. 2011.

57. It is envisaged that the day-to-day support that ChangeMakers’ Networks would need from the local authority would be nominal, for example they may require a council room where they could hold events or they may benefit from a small amount of funding to finance the development of a website.

58. Research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggests that shared learning

# Next steps

“Peterborough has massive potential, all the ingredients are there for it to be truly great, but it needs courage to take the necessary steps and accept that mistakes may be made in the process.”

- ChangeMaker

Within this paper we have detailed our efforts to pilot an innovative new approach to identifying and mapping a local network of ChangeMakers. Through our research in Peterborough we have established that these individuals are adept at driving positive change in their local areas. They are rooted in their communities, have an impressive repertoire of capabilities, and are imbued with an appetite to apply these abilities to address local issues. But we also sense that the capacity of ChangeMakers is currently being underemployed, particularly among ChangeMakers working on the frontline and those in the private and third sectors. These findings specifically relate to Peterborough, but it is not difficult to imagine similar obstacles being present in other local areas.

In a bid to identify and better harness the assets of ChangeMakers, we have introduced the concept of a ChangeMakers’ Network – a loose

assortment of ChangeMakers in local areas that will channel the energy of the group so that it can achieve more than the sum of its parts – and have outlined a number of ways in which local government, public services and central government can support the emergence of these Networks across the country.

## **Towards Phase 2**

Building on the work of our pilot initiative in Peterborough, we intend to put into practice our recommendations and establish a self-sufficient ChangeMakers’ Network in the city, made up of all those individuals identified through our research. Our task going forward will be to ensure that this Network has the right foundations and a stimulating, supportive environment in which to flourish. Central to this will be unpacking in more detail how the Network will function, and in particular how it will interact with key institutions.

### **Box 5: Reflections on the pilot research method**

The method that we employed during this pilot initiative allowed us to identify and map ChangeMakers in a highly cost-effective, independent and rapid manner, and we would urge local authorities to consider the level of return that such a small investment could have in terms of generating positive change in their communities.

There are, however, a number of areas where we would make adjustments when mapping networks of ChangeMakers in the future. For instance, as we started our identification process by first asking those in the local strategic partnership for their suggestions of ChangeMakers, our final cohort inevitably reflects a bias towards individuals from senior management and the public sector, particularly the Council. In order to overcome this problem, in future we will seed the identification process in different areas, for instance by advertising the survey in a local newspaper, on the radio or through the newsletter of the local Community and Voluntary Service. A more comprehensive mapping initiative would also include further 'waves' in the first survey, allowing us to reach deeper into the community and to identify more individuals who are 'under the radar' and unbeknownst to the local authority.

In this vein, we began by feeding back the research findings and co-creating ideas for how the Network might operate at an initial ChangeMakers workshop in Peterborough, which took place in November 2011. A variety of ideas emerged during the workshop, including using the group to hold regular 'blue-sky' thinking sessions around local challenges, and positioning it as a platform for ChangeMakers to present and receive constructive feedback on their own initiatives. RSA Fellowship will be supporting the Network to hold further events in the future, ensuring that it continues to build momentum

and secure its place as an effective agent of change in the city.

The second task of phase 2 will involve taking what we have learned from the Peterborough pilot and honing our identification and mapping approach (see Box 5). Following this we will seek to undertake a more comprehensive mapping initiative and develop a second ChangeMakers' Network in another local area. Linking the two Networks together will mark the beginning of a learning consortium (see recommendations), which we hope will grow as more local areas undertake their own mapping initiatives.

**If you are interested in hearing more about this project or forming a Network in your own local area, please contact Benedict Dellot at [benedict.dellot@rsa.org.uk](mailto:benedict.dellot@rsa.org.uk)**

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