

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	THE BIG SOCIETY - INTRODUCTION TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND VOLUNTEERING IN SOUTHAMPTON
DATE OF DECISION:	15 DECEMBER 2011
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	

BRIEF SUMMARY

The Government has recognised that corporate responsibility plays an important role in empowering the communities that a business operates in and the people that live there. Liane Sheppard, Capita Business Director, Regions South, will outline Capita's approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and highlight their local pledges for the City.

The success and support of the voluntary sector is recognised as pivotal to the Big Society and a better Southampton. Jo Ash, Chief Executive of Southampton Voluntary Services, will talk to the committee about volunteering in Southampton, the opportunities that the Big Society agenda brings alongside the barriers and enablers to success that they, and the organisations they support, are experiencing and anticipate in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Committee considers the presentations and discussions with Liane Sheppard from Capita, and Jo Ash from SVS, to highlight any matters that should be taken forward in the development of the Big Society Inquiry report or recommendations.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To enable OSMC members to identify any matters which they feel should be taken into account in the Big Society Inquiry report or recommendations.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. None

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

Corporate Social Responsibility

3. Corporate social responsibility is where a business accounts for their social and environmental impact as well as their financial performance, and makes a positive contribution to the communities they work in.
4. Government supports the role of businesses to empower people and support them to take responsibility for the world around them through corporate social responsibility (CSR), although the Commission for the Big Society in a recent report stated that 'business's potential to contribute to the big society agenda remains untapped'. Their report, May 2011, 'Powerful People, Responsible Society', outlines the role of business in the Big Society.

5. Chapter 4, executive summary 'Harnessing the power of the private sector' states:

'It is clear to us that it is not just from individuals and communities that we should be asking for greater social responsibility, but from businesses too.'

We see enormous potential for businesses to empower people and support them to take responsibility for the world around them, and we see some examples of excellent practice. But we also see too much 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) which is tokenistic, more about marketing than making a difference. Much of business's potential to contribute to the big society agenda remains untapped. We make a series of recommendations to the Government, the CBI, IoD and Business in the Community to work together to catalyse a sea change in business leadership.

We also fear that changing patterns of working hours risk depriving a significant proportion of the population of the time and opportunity to have a 'community life' – i.e. time and opportunities to engage with and contribute to the communities they live in.'

6. The report recommends that:

'Rather than launching a 'national day to celebrate and encourage social action, the Government amend the Employment Rights Act 1996 to extend employees' existing right to take reasonable time off for certain public duties (e.g. to serve as magistrates, councillors or on the governing bodies of schools) to enable them to take reasonable time off, with the permission of their employers, to serve a voluntary organisation. We also recommend that brokerage between business and voluntary organisations be scaled-up, and that Government incentivise employers to encourage and facilitate employee engagement with charitable giving.'

For a copy of the report go to <http://www.acevo.org.uk/document.doc?id=1515>

7. Although Southampton City Council has a strong focus on its own and the city's sustainability and environmental impacts, it does not have an overarching policy for its own corporate social responsibility.
8. Capita are recognised for having developed a strong sense of corporate social responsibility and Liane Sheppard, Capita, Business Director Regions South, has been invited to outline their CSR approach to the Committee. Information on their approach can be found at:
<http://www.capita.co.uk/corporate-responsibility/Pages/Corporate-responsibility.aspx>
9. At the recent 'Big Society, Bigger Southampton' event Capita made a number of local pledges for the city for 2011/12. A copy of these is attached at Appendix 1.

Volunteering in Southampton and SVS

10. Volunteering in Southampton has a strong history of partnership and joint working in the voluntary sector with nearly 500 volunteer organisations registered with Southampton Voluntary Services (SVS), which both supports and acts as their voice in Southampton. They have seen a significant increase in new registrations of volunteers from 242 to 1,837 over four years.
11. The Southampton City Survey 2010 revealed that 14% of the 1,171 respondents had undertaken some form of volunteering in Southampton in the last 12 months.
12. The Southampton Volunteering Action Plan, which provides a framework to work together to enhance volunteering in the city, was adopted by the Southampton Partnership in October 2009, which has since been superseded by Southampton Connect. A copy is attached at Appendix 2.
13. 2011 is the international year of volunteering, and in their recent annual report, SVS recognises the opportunity that Big Society presents to 'restate and value the essential principles of voluntary action and spirit of volunteering which underpins that we are about.' A summary of their Annual Report 2010/11 is attached in Appendix 3, with the full report available at:
<http://www.southamptonvs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Southampton-Voluntary-Services-Annual-Report-2010-2011.pdf>
14. Alongside their annual report, SVS provide regular updates, support and services to members. A copy of their latest newsletter for December is attached at Appendix 4.
15. Jo Ash, Chief Executive of Southampton Voluntary Services, will talk to the committee about:
 - Trends in volunteering and VS income strands
 - Barriers and enablers for volunteering
 - Measures of success for volunteering
 - The future outlook for SVS and volunteering.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

16. None

Property/Other

17. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

18. None

Other Legal Implications:

19. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

20. None

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KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices

1.	Capita Pledges - Big Society, Bigger Southampton
2.	Southampton Volunteering Action Plan
3.	SVS Annual Report 2010/11 Summary
4.	SVS December 2011 newsletter

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Integrated Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents

Integrated Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

None	
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