

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 1 DECEMBER 2011

Present:

Councillors Barnes-Andrews (Chair), Vinson, Fitzgerald, B Harris, Kolker, Mead, Morrell, Stevens and Dr R Williams

Apologies

Councillors Walker, Mr J Bettridge, Mrs U Topp and Mr T Blackshaw

42. **THE BIG SOCIETY - LOCAL UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Economic Development providing the Committee with an overview of local projects in Southampton and case studies that link to the Big Society agenda.

The Committee received a number of presentations from representatives of the organisations set out in the report.

Iane Ames, Co-ordinator for Training for Work in Communities (TWICS) detailed for the Committee:

- the background and aims of the organisation;
- who the organisation trains, supports and advises local volunteers across the City including the most deprived areas;
- how the provision of training enables those with biggest need and highest skills gap with the confidence to provoke change;
- the similarity between TWICS and the big society aims of community empowerment;
- a number of projects where TWICS has enabled change and detailed the range of support given to organisations in similar project types in areas of contrasting social mobility e.g. the Mansel Park and St James Park projects; and
- the potential difficulties raised by the increasing commissioning of services and projects.

Pete White from the Life Church, Southampton detailed for the Committee:

- the background to the Church;
- how the Church had been approached to take over the running of the Ebenezer Gospel Hall in Weston;
- the current use of the Hall and how the Church aimed to continue and expand on the provision of Youth Services in the area. It was further explained that provision of services to the young in the area was provided by the church with no restrictions on faith; and
- the sites potential to be redeveloped as purpose built centre that incorporated community based functions like a library or a café.

Rick Harwood, Chief Executive of the West Itchen Community Trust detailed for the Committee:

- the Trust's background and history detailing how it was set up through SRB2 programme and how it supports community development as set out in the aims and vision of the trust;
- that the sale of the Trust's previous headquarters had provided a substantial investment fund which has enabled the trust to secure a portfolio of property that can support the aims of the trust;
- that the Trust had looked to securing the skills it needed in house to continue the work of the trust by the provision of a cost effective property portfolio;
- that the trust was working with Re-generate to train community organisers; and
- detailed a number of projects that the trust had taken part in.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the presentations and report and that the information provided be entered into the Inquiry's file of evidence.