

BIG SOCIETY INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE:

To clarify what the 'Big Society' is and what it means to Southampton, considering what work is already underway by the Council, its partners and nationally, to establish the Council's future role, functions and resourcing for the development of the Big Society across the City.

BACKGROUND

The Prime Minister, at the 2010 Conservative party conference, stated:

" [The] goal of the Big Society is to transfer power from the state to individuals, neighbourhoods or the lowest possible tier of government, in that priority. What remains of state power will be used galvanising, catalysing, prompting, encouraging and agitating for community engagement and social renewal."

The Big Society is what happens whenever people work together for the common good. It is about achieving our collective goals in ways that are more diverse, more local and more personal. There are already many examples of this happening across Southampton.

Officers within the Communities Team are working with communities every day. They have started to develop a Big Society Charter and are working on building the council's guidance and an information resource on Big Society, including 'Placebook' which maps community facilities and groups.

Southampton Volunteering Task Force have developed the Southampton Volunteering Action Plan to progress volunteering schemes in the city, in consultation with Southampton Connect.

The aim of the Big Society is to devolve power, money and knowledge to those best placed to find the best solutions to local needs including Councillors, frontline staff in agencies like the council, police and health service, charities, co-ops, social enterprises, community groups, neighbourhoods and individuals.

A number of key policies underpinning the development of the Big Society within the Localism Bill, published on 13th December 2010, and the Cabinet Office draft Structural Reform Plan have been used to progress this plan.

The Bill calls for a radical shift of power from the centralised state to local communities, and describes six essential actions required to deliver decentralisation down through every layer of government to every citizen.

THE SIX ELEMENTS OF THE **BIG SOCIETY** will:

1. Lift the burden of bureaucracy
2. Empower communities to do things their way
3. Increase local control of public finance
4. Diversify the supply of public services
5. Open up government to public scrutiny
6. Strengthen accountability to local people

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the legislative framework for promoting the Big Society
- To understand the potential of the Big Society for Southampton
- To clarify the City Council's role in the Big Society
- To identify how the City Council is currently undertaking its role in the Big Society
- To ensure that the Council's declining resources optimise the delivery of the Big Society
- To identify how the City Council will work with partners and communities to enable the development of the Big Society in the future

METHODOLOGY

Outline of current national policy and local activity through:

- Outline of current legislation
- Government representation
- Analysis of potential future impact of the Big Society on the city

Engaging partners through:

- Feedback from key partners
- Feedback from Southampton Connect

Engaging with residents and communities through

- Questionnaire to residents and community leaders and partners through SNAP
- Invitation to residents to comment on current success stories in their community through social media e.g. Facebook
- Outline to key community projects in the City

Consideration of best practice and options for future delivery

- National best practice examples
- Local success stories and activity
- Links to council strategies and plans
- Outline of current resourcing and budgets
- Future options for delivery and resourcing

INQUIRY PLAN*

MEETING 1 22 SEPTEMBER 2011

What is the Big Society?

To understand and interpret the legislation on the Big Society and the potential impact on the council and the city.

Neil Smith, Cabinet Office	Government Civil Society	Government legislative framework
Vanessa Shahani	Communities Manager	- Analysis and potential impact of legislation
Dawn Baxendale	Economic Development Director Cabinet Member responsible for the Big Society	- Best practice examples
TBC	Bath NE Somerset Portsmouth	National best practice model
Background papers	Localism Bill Open Public Services White Paper	

MEETING 2 20 OCTOBER 2011

SCC delivery of the Big Society

To outline the current strategy, delivery and resourcing of the Big Society at Southampton City Council and Southampton Connect

Suki Sitaram	Corporate Policy and Performance	Context of the Big Society in the Council and City strategic planning framework
Vanessa Shahani	Communities Manager	Current delivery led through Communities team SCC Resourcing the Big Society – grants, budgets and contracts/commissioning Volunteering and the BIG lottery
Background papers	Draft Big Society Strategy Council Plan City Plan Big Society activity / expenditure across SCC Sustainable procurement strategy	

MEETING 3 17 NOVEMBER 2011

Southampton City's Big Society

What does the Southampton Big Society look like now and what is the council's role in supporting it in the future?

Vanessa Shahani	Communities Manager	Outline of Social media activity and questionnaire
Rosanna Coppen	Communications	Outline of partnership activity towards Big Society
OSMC members	Feedback from external delivery partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where it is already working• What are the barriers• What changes are needed
Background papers	SNAP Questionnaire	

MEETING 4 15 DECEMBER 2011**Future delivery of Southampton's Big Society**

Vanessa Shahani Kat Watters	Communities Manager Communications	Feedback from residents and community questionnaire and face book comments
OSMC members	Feedback from external delivery partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where it is already working • What are the barriers • What changes are needed
Rosanna Copen	Communications	Future branding options for Big Society
Vanella Mead	Research and Information Officer	Linking worst IMD areas, mosaic profiles likely to engage in the Big Society and active community mapping
Dennis Gamblin Vanessa Shahani Vanessa Shahani	Corporate Research Manager Communities Manager Economic Development Manager Responsible cabinet member	Alternative delivery options Measures of success and links to improved outcomes for KPIs

MEETING 5 12 JANUARY 2012**Developing Draft recommendations**

OSMC Members	<p>SCC's Big Society role and vision</p> <p>How this is delivered?</p> <p>What is delivered?</p> <p>Resourcing the Big Society of the future</p>
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MEETING 6 FEBRUARY 2012**Finalising recommendations and report**

*Subject to the availability of speakers