



a Big Discussion on the Big Society

14th September 2010

This Big Discussion is about.....

- Sharing knowledge
- Identifying threats and opportunities
- Developing ideas
- Deciding on what is needed to manage the threats and capitalise on opportunity.

The Big Society is.....

- The coalition government's programme for civil society.
- A policy area being embedded across all government departments.
- Emphasis on localism, social responsibility and people-led initiatives.

The new environment for the Big Society

- Transparency and accountability.
- Direct democracy?
- Removal of ring fences on (what's left of) government budgets.

Continued.....

- Abolition of: Regional Development Agencies and strategies; the Audit Commission and Comprehensive Area Assessment; Primary Care Trusts.....
- Changes to delivering education.
- Overhaul of the planning system.

Direct impacts on communities

- Cuts to benefits.
- VAT increase to 20%.
- Cuts to public services.
- Diminishing resources – housing, jobs.

Opportunities for the voluntary and community sector

- Seen by government as central to building the Big Society.
- Enabler and supporter of community action.
- Delivery of public services with 'added value'.
- Supporting millions of volunteers?

Any support available?

- Big Society Bank loans (April 2011).
- Asset transfer.
- Contracts and commissioning.
- 'Listening' civil servants who can cut the red tape.
- 5,000 Community Organizers.
- Communities First Fund (Dec 2010).
- More philanthropy.

