

The Big Society

Churches, Housing and Rural Communities

13 September 2010

Dr Bert Provan
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Department of Communities and Local Government

1. Background and aims
2. What might the Big Society look like?
3. What changes will bring this about? (because this is very different)
4. What might this mean for rural communities?

Note: I am not here to tell you what to do.

I am here to find out what you want Government to do for you

1. Background and aims

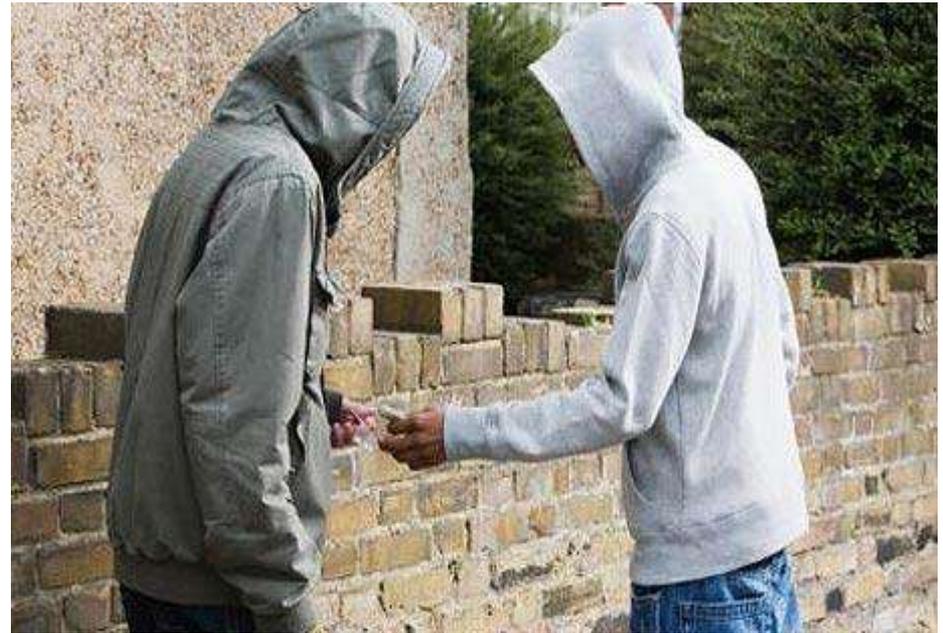
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State support has discouraged personal and social responsibility

“I am certain that government is a big part of the problem – its size has now reached a point where it is actually making our social problems worse. That’s because by trying to do too much, it has drained the lifeblood of a strong society – personal and social responsibility.”²



“.... We know that the best ideas come from the ground up, not the top down. We know that when you give people and communities more power over their lives, more power to come together and work together to make life better – great things happen.”

David Cameron
Prime Minister

“What we are grappling with, and what we are aiming for, is nothing less than a huge cultural shift, where people, in their everyday lives, in their communities, in their homes, on their street, don’t always turn to answers from officialdom, from local authorities, from government, but that they feel both free and empowered to help themselves and help their own communities.”

Nick Clegg
Deputy Prime Minister

Big Society is what we're trying to achieve – A society where people, neighbourhoods and communities have more power and responsibility and use it to create better services and outcomes

Localism is the ethos – doing everything at the lowest possible level and only involving government if absolutely necessary

Decentralisation is what we do – giving away power over funds and institutions after years of central government doing too much

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Where we want to be

I am proud of the local school. Its really improving and fewer kids are skiving off

People are healthier, the health service feels like part of the local community again and we know what to do if things go wrong

Crime and ASB have come down round here thanks to the way we all work together with the local police



People are healthier, the health service feels like part of the local community again and we know what to do and where to go if things go wrong



I **take more responsibility for my own health**, help others when I can, volunteer for the local hospital and take opportunities to have my say on spending decisions

We do a lot more as a community, such as **run self help groups**, care for the vulnerable and run local public health campaigns



We have been able to **raise funds from the local community** and secure support from local businesses and Football clubs



We have **exercised our new rights to bid and to buy** to avoid closures and keep health services local

Thanks to the information available and knowing how decisions are made, we are able to compare the performance of different providers, influence spending and hold them to account

Neighbourhoods as the building blocks

We understand that we have responsibilities for our own neighbourhood so we look to each other when there is a problem



The community organiser helped us set up a group and Facebook campaign to **save the Post Office and turn it into a Community shop.**

More people are **helping out** than ever before - they help out when they can in the shop, and doing football training for the kids.



Things have really improved now the **estate manager is allowed to make more decisions.**



There's **less red tape and you get recognition and support**— plus it's a great way to meet your neighbours!

The **community organiser** has helped with training for young people. Together they've motivated everyone and set up a Big Lunch.



So we need to ensure the right conditions are in place

The challenge for any government is how to help communities to help themselves - to support rather than stifle grassroots community action

- Making it easier for citizens to take over public buildings so they have the **SPACE** to come together and share ideas



- Enabling citizens to see how money is being spent in their neighbourhood, providing **INFORMATION AND INFLUENCE** to set priorities, participate in key decisions and co-design services

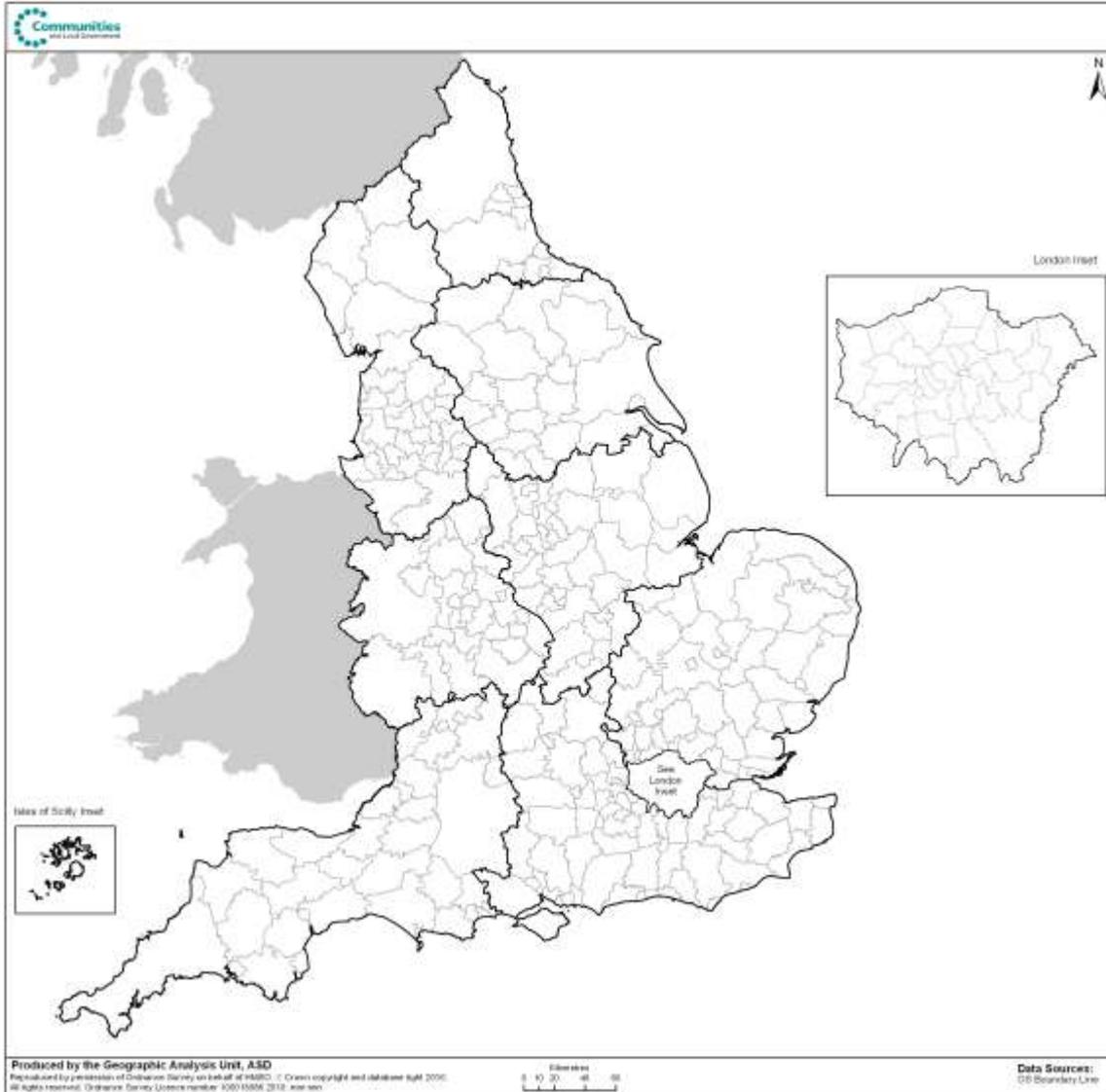
- Helping communities to raise their own **FUNDS** and increase capacity, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods

- Freeing up **LOCAL INSTITUTIONS** from unnecessary burdens and control and enabling them to support grassroots action

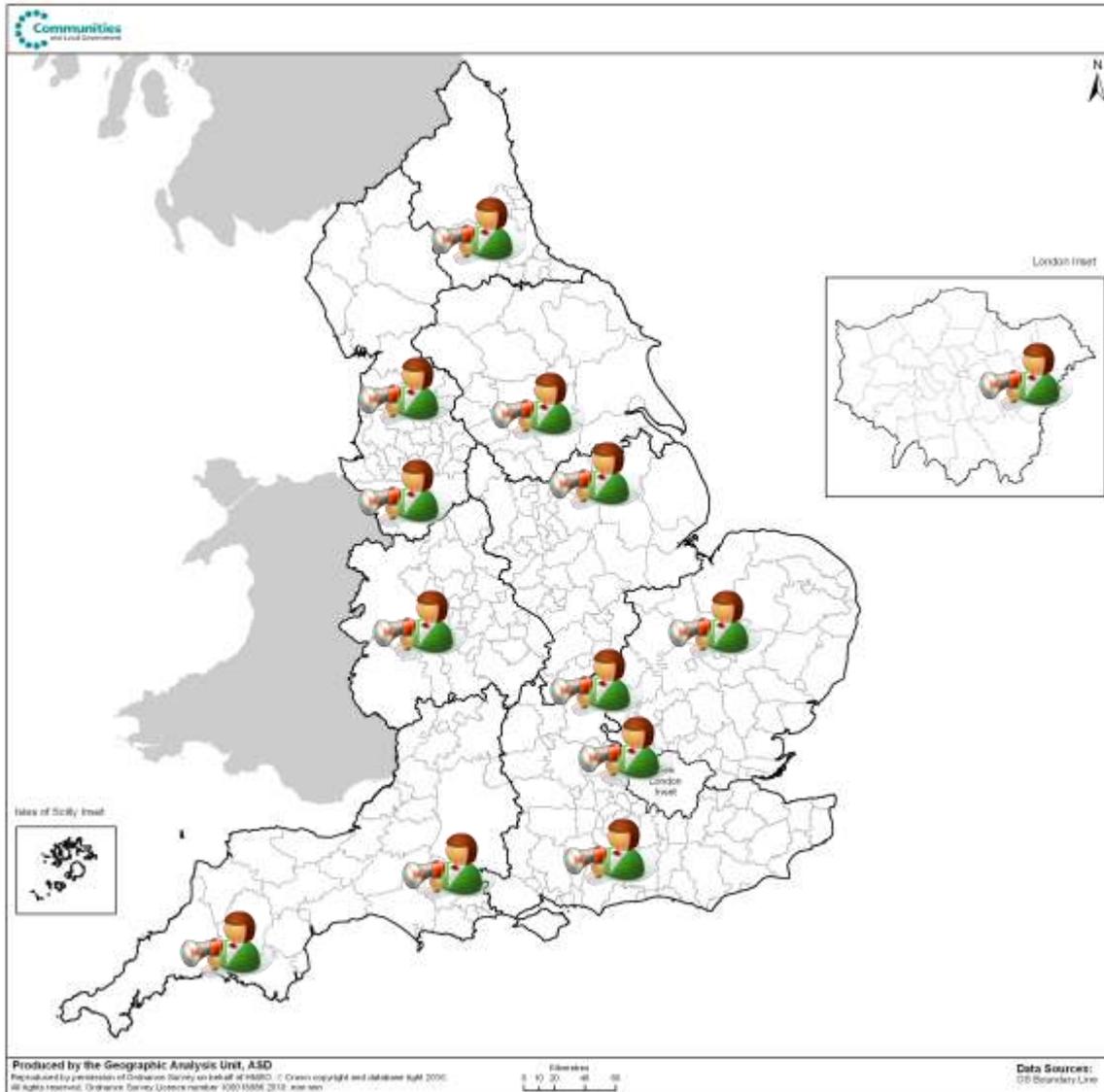


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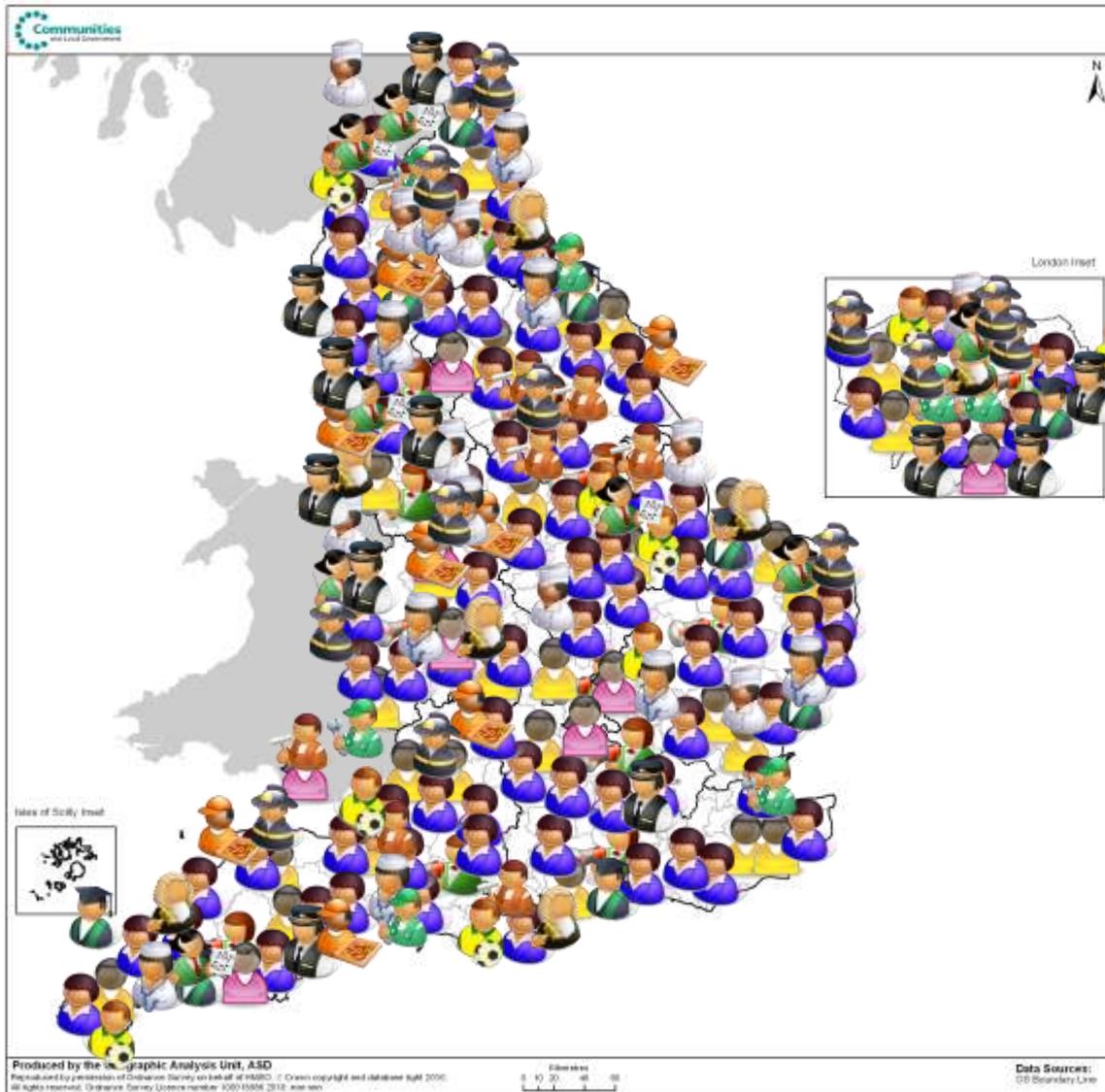


The Big Society is already here



- **62,000 social enterprises**

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- 62,000 social enterprises
- 171,000 charities
- 600,000 informal community groups
- In 2009-10 25% of adults volunteered formally at least once a month

Decentralisation: the redistribution of power

This means.....

Issue: Planning regulations mean the council, not the community decides where our community centre is built, and its design

Old response: Extensive Consultation

New Response: Change the planning regulations, and give the money to the community to spend as they wish

Strengthened democratic accountability

- Mayors, free schools, elected police chiefs.
- Doing whatever the community needs – ***without targets, inspections, guidance, tsars,***
- And certainly no central programmes**

Diversity of suppliers of services

- community choice, innovation, new providers, mutuals

<p>Remove top down burdens and barriers - breaking the chains (targets, inspections, regulations)</p>	<p>e.g. Abolish RSS, CAA Audit Commission. Various “reducing regulation” websites</p>
<p>Rights – to know, to do things differently, self-determination by communities</p>	<p>Community right to buy; transparency of local information, and scrutiny</p>
<p>Turn Government upside down</p>	<p>e.g. civil service at disposal of communities supporting local innovators; vanguards</p>

Community housing and assets: Government Aims

Aims:

Right to Bid - to give local communities the opportunity to bid to save local assets (for current or community use)

Right to Build: to give rural communities the Right to Build housing and community buildings that they know are needed, providing there is overwhelming support in respective communities

New Homes Bonus: to put in place a framework to encourage authorities to deliver housing that communities want and need

Also: changes to **local planning** processes

Localism Bill:

- Introduced before Xmas
- Consultation on details of some elements (already consultation on right to build)
- In force about April 2012 (subject to parliamentary process and approval)

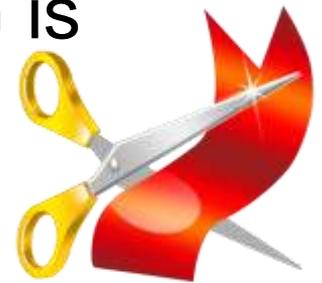
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In July, the Prime Minister announced four Big Society '**Vanguard Communities**'.

Liverpool, Eden Valley (Cumbria), Windsor and Maidenhead, London Borough of Sutton approached us with Big Society ideas and needed help with *barrier busting*

A dedicated team of civil servants from CLG is available to work with them directly to:

- develop proposals,
- assist the community in cutting through unnecessary red tape, form filling and regulations.



Summary of work streams: Eden

Workstream

Objective

Timing

Rural broadband	Ensure that everyone in constituency has 2Mbps and the majority have access to NGA Have a community driven approach that heightens awareness, helps solve the 'last mile' problem and uses broadband as platform for wider community activity	January 2011

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Sustainable funding	<p>To access funding for buy out/upkeep of pub in Crosby Ravensworth</p>	November 2010

Update Conference: Early November

- **Updates on progress in Eden**
- **Advice and support from government departments and others**

Thank You

Questions? Observations?