

THE *conference report 4 Nov 2010* BIG SOCIETY

Conference Agenda

Keynote speech from Ann Watt, Deputy Director, Office for Civil Society

Local government perspective from Jane Scott, leader of Wiltshire Council

Q & A session

Big Society case studies - interviews and group action with Leslie Silverlock

- Exeter CVS - Speaking Up programme
- Black Development Agency
- Gloucester Neighbourhood Coordination Group
- Young Advisors Charity

Networking lunch

Presentations by Barry Maginn of Localis and Toby Blume of Urban Forum

Open floor discussion, group discussions and feedback



Keynote speech from Ann Watt, Deputy Director, Office for Civil Society

Ann Watt is a Deputy Director in the **Office for Civil Society** in the Cabinet Office. Ann's team is responsible for Big Society Policy and Analysis, which involves leading work across government on the Big Society agenda. From 2007 to May 2010, Ann was a Deputy Director in the Social Exclusion Task Force in the Cabinet Office, leading and coordinating work on the government's Public Service Agreement on socially excluded adults.

Before this, Ann worked in the Home Office setting up the youth volunteering charity v. Ann started her civil service career in HM Treasury where most recently she was involved in writing the Government's ten year strategy for childcare. Outside of work, Ann volunteers as a governor of a south London primary school.



Local government perspective from Jane Scott, leader of Wiltshire Council

Jane Scott has been both a District and a County Councillor for 14 years and became Leader of **Wiltshire County Council** in 2003 until 2009. She is now Leader of the new Wiltshire Council. Jane chairs the Public Service Board a group of all the main partners from the public sector in Wiltshire.

Jane's background and training is in the agricultural industry. She has been connected with agriculture since leaving school both as a practical farmer and also in education and public relations.



Presentations by Barry Maginn of Localis and Toby Blume of Urban Forum

Barry Maginn holds a BA(Hons) in History and Social Sciences from The University of Manchester, and an MSc in Social Science Research Methods (Merit) from The University of Bristol. His Masters dissertation sought to understand the causal factors that influence MPs to act to varying degrees as representatives of their constituents. He has previously worked for Policy Exchange, and also with the accountancy firm Grant Thornton. Barry leads on the development of research, including current projects on local government policy-making processes and also on linking 'Total Place' with community engagement.

Toby Blume joined **Urban Forum** as its Chief Executive in 2004, having previously set up Groundswell, a charity helping homeless people to run community projects throughout the UK. Toby has served on a number of governmental advisory groups on LSPs, empowerment and sustainable development. He is a member of CLG's Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Board and was a member of the Beacon Awards Advisory Panel. Toby is a trustee of a charitable foundation that provides grants to Gypsies and Travellers and is currently a leading advocate for banking reform.



Watch full video recordings of all keynote presentations from the Big Society Conference playlist on www.youtube.com/exetercvs

Active Learning for Active Citizenship

Exeter CVS has developed the **Speaking Up** accredited training programme at Entry Level, Level One and Two and is now delivering a pilot course at Level 3 to empower individuals to engage with their community, speak up and influence decisions that affect them and have a greater awareness of the variety of ways in which they might participate in society. Since 2003 Speaking Up has been contextualised and run for groups all over Devon, such as carers, users of mental health services, people with learning difficulties, parents, and members of BME communities. Collaboration with organisations such as Sure Start, Mind and Hikmat has enabled Exeter CVS to deliver 36 courses to over 300 learners.



Promoting Engagement with Young People in the Community

Young Advisors are young people aged between 15 and 21, who stimulate social action by showing community leaders and decision makers how to engage young people in community life, regeneration and renewal.

Working through a social enterprise model, we deliver public service reform helping direct limited resources to where it is needed most.



Watch full video recordings of all presentations in the *Big Society Conference* playlist on www.youtube.com/exetercvs

Empowerment Training in the BME Community

In Spring 2010 the **Black Development Agency**, Bristol's BME led Council for Voluntary Service trained eight Somali, Refugee and Asylum Seeker women as trainers who then took their new knowledge of local decision-making structures to a further 80 women in their communities. These eight women took part in four workshops to learn training techniques, and about the decision-making structures in their communities. An important part of the process was to translate the information into a form with which their communities would engage. The results were immediate. Understanding of local structures was greatly enhanced for all participants. One trainer recruited 60 voters for the May elections, another has set up a lunch club for carers and young children, and the effect on the personal lives of some individuals has been transformational.



Hard to Hear Groups Participation in Neighbourhood Coordination Groups

The Police, County Council and Voluntary Sector are working together in Gloucestershire to empower local residents, particularly from hard to hear groups, through greater participation in the County's 55 **Neighbourhood Coordination Groups**. A project funded by Targeted Support for Empowerment and Participation Improvement is enabling local residents to take over from police officers as Chairs of these meetings, which are supported by police Safer Community Teams and Area Lead Officers from the County Council. Working alongside the police, Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action has both brokered and helped facilitate and provide empowerment training: providing mentoring and support to neighbourhood meeting participants, including police and existing community representatives is the first stage with each Neighbourhood Group. The aim is to support communities in identifying their own representatives, so the police can step back and become equal partners rather than leaders.



The idea of THE BIG SOCIETY is to empower people...

Summary of group discussions and individual feedback

...What needs to be done by individuals?

Speak up; Get involved; Volunteer; Ask questions. Take responsibility, find time, be proactive.

Understand what is your role; Recognise that you can make a difference however small the contribution; think about how you can work with your community within your own capacity; find out more about needs of your community.

Be more involved in local issues; know what the opportunities for involvement are. Staff the barricades; Consider your own responsibilities; Speak to neighbours; Positive customer vs active citizen?

Hold councillors to account. Challenge rhetoric of political parties, Vote against politicians cutting budgets based on ideological dogma.

Be creative, respond not react; Listen, be prepared to learn from mistakes, be solution-focussed.

Be more demanding (complain more); believe that people can change things; Join in and join up, take responsibility, act as champions; Get motivated to help the community and mix the old with the young;

Have a reason and purpose to get involved e.g. care about people/ community. Find your own cause, champion it and get involved. Don't let the bigots shout the loudest.



Corporate Social Responsibilities: Invest your profits and improve your own communities;

Education: Broaden your knowledge base, Recognise the skills we have and how these can contribute to improving our communities; Get smarter, read Cabinet office papers and use them;

Get involved in local groups/meetings and get your voice heard; Recruit active volunteers; Seek out sources of Big Society funding.

Find out which services will be transferred and where they sit in overall structure.

Spread information around Big Society concept. Ask for a Big Society Bill of Rights? What you can expect and if they do not deliver?

Bring back Spitting Image!

Be positive, Be proactive, Be informed; Values, Active, Led by example

Stand up, shout and don't sit around moaning - time to make sure voice is heard.

Make of Big Society what works for you; Use the stick as an olive branch to local gov i.e. work with existing structures of power.

*Vote, learn and think,
discuss, attend, act*



The idea of THE BIG SOCIETY is to empower people...

Summary of group discussions and individual feedback



...What needs to be done by communities?



Caring about the place and people; Binding us together, foster pride in the city: Street parties to begin with to create community feeling, then address social issues and agree priorities. Map service providers, Skills audit, Identify quick wins, Listen and support local initiatives.

Implement neighbourhood management, form groups and look for partners: Establish a community forum/structure if Parish Council ineffective or isn't one; Set up community forums of representatives; Join charity groups like Civic Voice and take part in challenging the status quo. Develop consortium/links, ensure inclusivity; identify champions.

Voluntary and community groups need to share good practice with other communities and each other.

Don't re-invent the wheel, look around to existing models and enhance what's already there; share information. Be aware communities are not just geographic.

Challenge local authority to provide support and funding to marginalised groups; Recognise diversity and be inclusive; Work together; Network effectively - publicising what they do; gather and strengthen the voice of community action.



THE BIG SOCIETY

conference delegates

Nell Brigham	Contract Funding Officer	Action for Blind People
Janet Dabbs	Chief Officer	Age Concern Bath and NE Somerset
Peter Iles	Chief Officer	Age Concern South Gloucestershire
Faith Davey	Regional Manager	Age UK
Sue Howell-Richardson	Business Development Manager	Age UK Devon
Les Fry	Partnerships Manager	Avon Fire and Rescue Service
Susan Bowen	Funding and Programmes Manager	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Sue Tilley	Commnunity Safety Manager	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Lyndsay Peal	Regional Officer - Development	Big Lottery Fund
Catherine Stevens	Regional Manager - Development	Big Lottery Fund
Ayannah Griffith	Director	Black Development Agency
Nura Aabe	Representative	Black Development Agency
Soad Ali	Representative	Black Development Agency
Rupert Daniel	Director	Black South West Network
Miki Kelford	Representative	Black South West Network
Elizabeth Elwick	Performance and Planning Manager	Bournemouth Borough Council
Graham Starmer	Programme Coordinator	Bristol City Council
Karen Lloyd	Representative	Bristol City Council
Sado Jirde	Policy & Logistics Officer	BSWN
Robin Howell	Project Manager	Burtle Village Hall
Helen Animashaun	Take Part Programme Co-ordinator	CDF
Eleanor Grant	Representative	CDF
Beverley Hepting	Consultant	Creating Excellence
Alan Griffiths	Leader	Christchurch Borough Council
Mike Duckworth	Chairman of Resources	Christchurch Borough Council
Sally Derham Wilkes	Chairman of Community Services	Christchurch Borough Council
Jane Bowley	Partnership Development Manager	Citizens Advice
Cathy Williams	SW Regional Advisor	Comic Relief
Katherine Armstrong	Chief Executive	Community Council for Somerset
Jay Talbot	Chief Executive	Community Council of Devon
Richard Pitman	Chief Executive Officer	Compass Disability Services
Robin Andrew	Localism Team	Cornwall Council
Sally Lewis	Localism Team	Cornwall Council
Sarah Kind	Partnership Manager	Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service
Dominic Murphy	Executive Director	Creating Excellence
Gerald Milward-Oliver	Board Member	Creating Excellence
John Skrine	Coordinator	Creating Excellence
Jim Claydon	Board Member	Creating Excellence
Beverley Hepting	Consultant	Creating Excellence
Janette Oxely	Representative	CVA Torbay
Andrew Shadrake	Chair	Dartmoor Circle
Trish Stokoe	PSA 16 Lead	Department of Health South West
Gill Sims	Consultation Manager	Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
Anne Harrison-Bailey	Consultation and Planning Officer	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue
Martha Wilkinson	Chief Executive	Devon Community Foundation
Ali Eastland	Locality Development Worker	Devon County Council
Sue Rook	County Community Strategy	Devon County Council
Sue Craythorne	Community Strategy Officer	Devon County Council
Mr Michael Bevan	County Councillor	Dorset County Council
Tessa Murphy	Service Manager	Dorset County Council
Debbie Catanzaro	Project Manager	Dorset County Council
Sulina Tallack	S106 Officer	East Devon District Council
Brian Hart	Vice Chair Customer Panel	East Devon District Council
Katrina Midgley	Chief Officer	Engage West Somerset
Jinny Uppington	Equality Development Officer	Equality South West
Aric Lacoste	Research Consultant	ERS Research Consultancy

Dawn Rivers	Community Involvement Officer	Exeter City Council
Alistair Beattie	Chief Executive	Faithnet South West / REP
Judith Forde	Head of Customer Services	Flourish Homes
Mark Stephens	Police Representative	Gloucestershire Community Partnership
Rachel Wright	Head of Cd Partnerships	Gloucestershire County Council
Tessa Liebschner	Community Development Manager	Gloucestershire County Council
Margaret Firth	Stronger Localities Lead	Government Office South West
Mr Alistair Cormie	Managing Director	Groundwork South West
Leslie Silverlock	Consultant	Groups Work
Claire Gordon	Regional Consultant	Home Start
Kathleen Gibson	Trustee	Isca Wheelchair Dancers
Gill Millar	Youth Work Adviser	Learning South West
Brian Mathew	Parliamentary Spokesman	Liberal Democrats
Trevor Smale	Grant manager	Lloyds TSB Foundations
Barry Maginn	Researcher	Localis
Jane Sharp	Economic Regeneration Officer	Mendip District Council
Dominique Swain	Economic Regeneration Officer	Mendip District Council
Paul Tucker	Grants and Funding Officer	Mid Devon District Council
Philip Collins	Advocacy and Partnerships Manager	Natural England
Osea Mala Mala Nitabua	Representative	Neighbourhood Coordination Group
Emily Poyner	Diversity Officer	North Devon Council
Caroline Leaver	Funding Officer	North Devon Council
Pat Diango	Chief Officer	North Devon Voluntary Services
Lorraine Bush	Policy and Partnerships Officer	North Somerset Council
Philip Humphries	Senior Development Officer	North Somerset Council
Sharon Dyke	Floating Support Service Manager	Novas Scarman Group
Miranda Steele	Director	People and Places in Glos CIC
Phil Mitchell	Private Sector Housing Manager	Plymouth City Council
George Plenderleith	Chief Executive	Plymouth Guild
Hilary Evans	Community Planning Manager	Poole Borough Council
Chris Beale	CEO	Poole CVS
Ruth Shearn	Communications Officer	Poole Housing Partnership
Jenny Budden	Director	Rolle Exmouth Ltd
Clare Bower	Marketing and Funding Officer	Routeways Centre Ltd
Sue Harding	Coordinator	SCEN
Nick Carter	Representative	SCIIPP
Lorna Bell	Research Manager	SERIO
Nura Aabe	Representative	Somali Women's Group
Soad Ali	Representative	Somali Women's Group
Mike Atkinson	Social Enterprise Coordinator	Somerset County Council
Gareth O'Rourke	Group Manager	Somerset County Council
David Orr	Representative	Somerset County Council
Rose Stephenson	Community Development Worker	Somerset Racial Equality Council
Liz Johnson-Idan	Assistant Director - Youth Projects	Somerset Racial Equality Council
Ruth Davis	Councillor	South Gloucestershire Council
Heather Goddard	Councillor	South Gloucestershire Council
John Goddard	Councillor	South Gloucestershire Council
David Bell	Representative	South Gloucestershire Council
Deborah White	Communities Coordinator	South Gloucestershire Council
Linda James	Councillor Development Officer	South Gloucestershire Council
Jill Davies	Chief Officer	South Hams CVS
Amanda Harvey	Community Development Officer	South Hams District Council
John Robinson	Volunteer Centre Manager	South Somerset Assoc for VC Action
Jo Morgan	Community Cohesion Officer	South Somerset District Council
Chris Head	Director West of England	South West ACRE Network
David Bowater	Programme Manager	South West Councils

Margaret Gibson	Principal Officer	South West Councils
Mrs Christine Marshall	Executive Director	South West Food and Drink
Stephen Woollett	Chief Executive	South West Forum
Jan Crawley	Director	South West Foundation
Isabel Livingstone	Voice and Influence Coordinator	South West Foundation/REP/CE Legacy
Sue Martin	Representative	South West Foundation/REP/CE Legacy
Lynn Jarvie	Representative	South West Neighbourhood Resource
Julie McKay	Resident Involvement Officer	Sovereign Housing Association
Sue Cohen	Director	Span UK
Maggie Tamblin	Representative	Speaking Up
Michelle Barnett	Representative	Speaking Up
Katrina Commander	Representative	Speaking Up
Jason McNamara	Centre Manager	St Sidwell's Centre Exeter
Francis Macnaughton	Renewable Energy Development	Sustainable South Brent
Adrian Roper	SW Regional Director	Sustrans
Brian Warwick	Board Member	SWSN and WSUN
Simon Clarke	Representative	SWINDON CIVIC TRUST
Gabi Recknagel	Director	Take Part Network
Lisa Redston	Representative	Taunton Deane Borough Council
Simon Thornley	Representative	Teignbridge District Council
Gary Powell	Community Projects Officer	Teignbridge District Council
Chapman Harrison	Regional Manager - South West	The Charity Bank Limited
John McLaughlin	Coordinator	The Main Place
Fiona Phur	Development Worker	The Regional Youth Work Unit
Sarah Vaughan	Director	The Silvanus Trust
Hazel Lonsdale	Chief Executive	Third Sector Services
David Lausen	Councillor	Torrige District Council
Dee Sandham	Representative	Transition Town Exmouth
Douglas Ross	Project Officer	Trowbridge Community Area Future
Roy Bezzina	Take Part South West Participant	TTVS
Jenny Fish	Representative	TTVS
Christopher Balch	Professor of Planning	University of Plymouth
Toby Blume	Chief Executive	Urban Forum
Kate Hathway	Network Development Manager	Urban Forum
Simon Clarke	Representative	Voluntary Action Swindon
John Phipps	Development Officer	Voluntary Action Swindon
Catherine Beedell	CEO	ViSTA
Margaret West	Chief Officer	Voluntary Action Kennet
Craig Womble	Centre Manager	Volunteer Centre Dorset
Maxine Powell	Consortium Coordinator	West of England Consortium
Tom Bown	Corporate Information Officer	West Somerset Council
Helen Barbrook	Neighbourhood Involvement Manager	Westlea Housing Association
Kate Wheller	Councillor	Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Julia Willoughby	Communities Manager	Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Linda Farrow	Representative	White Design/CE Board
Sarah Cardy	CEO	Wiltshire Citizens Advice
Jane Scott	Leader	Wiltshire Council
Julie Martin	Corporate Advisor	Wiltshire Council
Steve Milton	Head of Community Governance	Wiltshire Council
John Popowicz	Partnerships Manager	Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Laura Pictor	Development Officer	Wiltshire Community Area Partnerships
Tom Lock	Representative	Young Advisors Charity
Rimini Rumdan	Representative	Young Advisors Charity
Jane Brooker-Wood	Development Director	Young Advisors Charity
Liz Packer	Director	Zebra Collective

Keep the conversation going at www.empowermentworks.blogspot.com

...What needs to be done by local government?



Take control of local services, as in support and oversee. Facilitate and empower rather than necessarily provide: Offer expertise, data, monitoring quality; facilitation, pump priming, suggesting solutions, brokering, defining boundaries, need to manage transition when getting funding to seed innovation rather than just withdraw.

Be visionary, creative, open to innovative approaches and actively encourage them, take risks and have trust. Mediate and balance people's interest, allowing/supporting diversity of provision.

Create the infrastructure, as per Wiltshire Council model. Greater facilitation of local community led initiatives: provide expertise or bring it in to enable communities to get involved. Work with local communities and partners to provide them with support necessary. Recognise the Voluntary Sector's ability to leverage further funding.

Create greater access and make sure information is more widely available.

Empower and enable and let local people take the lead; Offer leadership and be champions. Remove barriers from community involvement.

Issues-based political structure rather than party system;

Shorten lines of communication with neighbourhoods. Greater transparency. Give training to councillors and strengthen their role in the community.

Demonstrate how people can get involved. eg. budgeting, area boards, monitoring spend, monitoring outcomes, online tools. Legal and logistic support to communities.

Develop a new culture; develop two-way trust in communities; Invest resource in long-term culture change eg systems thinking; Attack bureaucracy and "make it real"; Position themselves as community facilitators;

Set out clear plan for implementing and supporting Big Society principles in practice; Create a cross dept info/resources info HUB; set out what success looks like (so we can tell how well we are doing); ensure the commissioning process is fair and transparent; feedback on cell's using whole system/total place in from central government.

Mediate tension and process support.

Provide effective and up to date evidence bases of need; Consider levels of staff/management; restructure to start with "customers" residents; follow Wilts Councils bottom-up approach; Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of payroll giving/philanthropy.

Local government to support communities who struggle to engage but don't have a community org to stop them from becoming more marginalised; allocate budgets on needs of the most vulnerable. Manage projects using place/space funding.

Provide leadership resources and let communities get on with it; Give communities the support and resources to enable them to be empowered; Support those who are least equipped to get involved or have voice heard - through education, literacy, confidence building etc; provide excellent information and an easy to use access point;

Listen to Prime Minister and do not cut grants to vol sector support organisations as quick way to make savings.

Smarter commissioning; look at refocusing 'consultancy budget' towards use of voluntary/charity/social enterprise groups (subject to procurement etc). Consider planning involvement as an aspect /type of volunteering & learn lessons to widen forward facing community involvement.

It may be that local government becomes redundant

The idea of THE BIG SOCIETY is to empower people...

Summary of group discussions and individual feedback

...What needs to be done by central government?

Funding (but not grants culture)
Remove bureaucracy Allow time to embed. Get rid of gov dept silos;
Recognise different needs across different communities.

Provide communities and local government with the resources needed to ensure equality and opportunity in the Big Society;

Be bolder about Big Society: offer more comprehensive models; clarify and be more directional about outcomes expected; Provide examples of how people and communities are engaging positively with BS.

De-silo government departments;
Clarify role of local government and councillors and LSP's; Require local authorities to prepare Big Society support plan;

Set up mechanics, so that Council type infrastructure functions are filtered down to charities/social enterprises who lack depts such as payroll/resources; Empower the private sector; Remove bureaucracy (eg Health & Safety) and charges (eg CRB checks). Mandate Civil Service Volunteers;

Push funds downward; Facilitate, not control; Check policy interactions for compatibility with vision; be prepared to adapt policy and funding in response to feedback and experience for everyone;

Recognise that not everyone is in a position to contribute: Provide resources to build capacity.

PR voting systems to reduce party domination; Respond to all local authorities in the UK, using a total place approach; more issues based politics, less party dogma;

Force councils to hand over budgets if not complying; No job protection for Council jobs; If someone can do it better, then go with it; Be directive to those councils that cut community funding. Be directive in ensuring councils make information available, meaningful and reliable; Explain to local government that they are not "delivering a programme" and have to change the way they think;

Appreciate that localism already happens in many communities and find ways to grow community skills;

Establish basic values for Big Society, on the understanding that without them localism may well be a mandate for minimalism, reducing still further provision of social housing, further dividing communities and inequality;
Give clear policy direction across govt depts, give freedoms at a local level; recognise 'community' is local; Take notice - how many Big Society working groups - but no feedback on input nationally?

More local control of finance - local income tax, local business tax, municipal enterprise, end capping; inform local government finance so that local taxation mainly funds local services,

Address dominant power of the market and promote local competition/new entrants; Look again at govt depts and funding - fewer depts - less staff - more specific outcomes - if local communities expected to streamline, so should central government.

*Freedom, Funding,
Legislate to transform,
Support*



Has this conference been useful to you and your organisation?

Great chance to network, thought provoking, exciting, frustrating; up to date with ideas and where to look; interesting debate; useful presentations; good mix of theory and practice.

Highlighted what is happening in different sectors; provided a good VCS perspective.

Not sure there has been much that is new. Big Society is already happening. What is government doing to help it grow?

I've a better understanding of the philosophy and can use it in my workplace.

Improved understanding; Provided introduction to themes of Big Society; Clarification of concept.

Very useful info from Ann Watt, Toby Blume and Barry Maginn.

Sort of; maybe; Some clarity on BS; not sure yet.

Really made one think twice about who we engage with.

As an individual it is indeed my knowledge of Big society and localism. It identified some of the challenges that were new to me.

Gradually picking up meaning of 'Big Society'.

I have been inspired by the energy of individuals in the community to play their part in making a difference.

Loads of information & insight, excellent chance to follow up opportunities.

General imbibing of Big Society vibe, time to think outside the working environment, interesting & varied views of speakers.

Maybe we need to be more creative.

It's been useful to find out how 'Big Society' is affecting the south west.

I realise, what has been said, I have already read about. Morning session would have been more than adequate.

Confirmed the complete emptiness of the Big Society Concept.

It has been very informative and interesting but I have reservations about some of the aims and objectives.

Provided some insight into what philosophy of BS - but less about how it might work.

Helped set scene of what BS is about. Toby gave a balanced and realistic

view. My concern is the first half of the day demonstrated the good work taking place as if it was a result of the BS when in reality this work was taking place before BS.

Brought together views from perspective of organisations representing the community - gave ideas eg about accepting need for change.

Inspiring - given me motivation to go back to my authority to share the inspiration about opportunity presented by BS.

I've got so many ideas and have found out about loads of organisations where I can access more support & info. Clearer about what our organisations can do to help.

Really useful to have a greater understanding of Big Society & appreciation of the opportunities and challenges the vision.

Loads of good promises from speakers.

Useful contacts, reinforced ideas.

I am afraid it largely confirmed my bigotries.

I work for a national charity that has a turnover of over £10 mil. I came to learn of Big Society would be relevant to us. I came to think we need to form even stronger local partnerships and today has confirmed this.

Extremely - pulled together a wealth

of information as to how "I" as a public sector worker, communicate and try to implement the BS agenda.

I learned a lot about local organisations and how they work.

Stimulated, thinking about how to present information in forms of funding bids. Find out about Young Advisers which I think is a really good idea.

Useful but some issues still needing to be given more thought eg how we tap into expertise so that our amateur efforts are taken seriously.

It would have been more useful if any senior officers from my council or any councillors, had thought this sufficiently important to attend.

Good networking but presentations a "bit of a curates egg" Still need information on how this is going to work in the South West.

Consolidated my understanding of policy agenda. Some inspiring case studies to keep a focus on what it's all about.

It has made me more aware that the government is serious about devolving power to local people and that this is over all agencies.

Very useful as I am in the process of drafting strategies for my council around VCS funding & Big Society.

How will you use what you have gained from today?

Feedback to other council officers & chairs; brief our CEO and inform future vision and direction of our organisation; feed back into the local voluntary & community sector, feed into SWF; discuss findings with University of Plymouth; feedback to Cornwall council and Cornwall fire and rescue service; brief senior management board; put details to tenant panel & try to get district council to change its ways;

Build into strategic planning and implement some ideas on project level; Re-assess how I prioritise the potential funding to be committed; funding bids for projects.

Will consider what more I can do towards own communities; engage more people in my community to "involve themselves"; I will be more active, share info with colleague; check websites/inform others; talk & see how ideas can be developed; I will write about this.

I will go back to the council & try to get decision makers to think about how making cuts to the grants to volunteer centre will be counterproductive & against spirit of Big Society;

Communicate with younger people;

Was disappointed in lack of business/ provide investment as the govt have stipulated they must be in the centre, the lack of engagement is quite worrying.

Use the live discussion with people whose lives have been changed by the work funded via Targeted support to support our case; facilitate discussion on the Speaking Up course; back up organisations/people that have spoken.

Plan for the continuation of networked community activity; run more democracy events in the lead up to local elections; try to be optimistic about opportunities.

I will continue to argue against the Big Society Swindle.

Move from participation to co-production.

Lobby government to make use of what it already has.

Good ideas of how to meet in the future to discuss the challenges of building the Big Society:

Use council facilities; have a big coffee morning event.

Communicate more good examples of community working, successful & how projects can be made sustainable.

Give time for capacity building.

Identify immediate practice, who has community direct action, demonstratable value of community access to support knowledge & information (infrastructure needs to be local).

More localised to help local networking.

Good practice website for community groups to access and contribute to the debate.

Internet forum, best practice access, simplifying funding streams, encourage responsibility, discourage apathy.

Get someone from the government to tell us what their criteria are, what outputs they expect & it's a short term idea to be re-elected or are they committed for the long haul, as this will take a long time to come to fruition.

Develop a big society regional network group where we can share ideas, good practise an support what works eg meet twice a year , include local communities to speak out to evidence empowerment & change in the way we work or influence localism.

I think we need to communicate to a wider audience more effectively locally and with decision makers. I have found from networkking with other LA areas - that we are very different and although can share good practice, local knowledge = power.

Regional events, web based forums.

Follow up conference in one year to track progress, highlight case studies.

Seminar, Blogs, Sharing Docs.

Workshop session.

Use social networking more - including learning for technophobes. I'll certainly be tweeting the Urban Forum having heard Toby's views.

Use and provide more community development workers.

Big soc camp, Interactive event with tasks, to complete - collaborate thinking.

Online conferences, peer to peer support, match making with someone working on familiar initiative.

Email alerts/groups can help as we all use email every day anyway

Social networks, forums, twitter discussions, further meeting with further detail.

With the ending of regional funding this will be more difficult, but I am sure moreinformal solutions can be found.

Keep the conversation going at www.empowermentworksblogspot.com
Register online and share your thoughts on the conference, and how to
take the Big Society forward in your area.

Video recordings of all presentations can be found at
www.youtube.com/exetercvs

Conference facilitators:

John Bunting is Chief Executive of **Exeter Council for Voluntary Service** and Chair of the Devon Association of CVS. He started his working life in education but for the last 20+ years he has worked in a variety of roles in the voluntary sector. The focus of his work has always been social inclusion, advocacy, empowerment and citizenship. He is committed to partnership activities both within the voluntary sector and with the public sector and business at a local, regional and national level. He chairs several partnerships including the local Children's Trust and contributes as a member of other strategic partnerships.



Leslie Silverlock is a Community Empowerment Adviser, Director of Groups Work and Crime Concern (94-05), and president of the new **Young Advisors Charity**. He coaches partnerships, pilots neighbourhood charters, and trains trainers. Awarded Learning and Development Professional 2007, he works for CLG, DCSF, Treasury, Encams, NCRC, police, health and local authorities. His master classes include Creating Confident Communities and Safer Neighbourhoods, work which has also been delivered in Canada, Australia, Lithuania, Ireland, Germany, the USA, Wales and Scotland.



Dominic Murphy is the Executive Director of **Creating Excellence**, the regional centre for excellence for sustainable communities in the South West. Prior to his current appointment he was employed by the South West Regional Development Agency as development manager for the emerging centre of excellence, as a senior policy adviser to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, a community based housing association, two local authorities, a citywide regeneration partnership and has led a New Deal for Communities' scheme. Dominic is a past Chair of the Sustainable Communities Excellence Network, has also served as a judge for the BURA Awards for Best Practice in Regeneration, the resident Chair of the Board of Management of Bristol's 'Community at Heart', and is now joint chair of the Neighbourhood Management Board for the inner city wards of Lawrence Hill and Easton.

