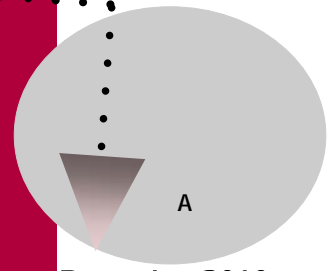


BFVA

Voluntary Action News

December 2010



Big Society and Spending Revenue Special.

As many of you will have heard me say before, the Big Society ideology is nothing new, but the idea that we should all do more for less is. In past recessions governments have spent to get out of them and some of that expenditure has come the way of the voluntary sector, which has always been there to fill the gaps left by public sector cuts.

The scramble for government contracts to 'realise the vision of the Big Society' and 'be at the heart of the Big Society agenda' has thrown up its first winners. Six organisations have been selected to administer the bulk of grant funds from the Office of Civil Society for the next four years. They are the Big Lottery Fund, the Community Development Foundation, the volunteering agency 'v', the Social Investment Business, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Tribal Education. These could be asked to deliver one or more of the programmes, or none.

These will include the £100m Transition Fund, the Communities First fund (successor to the Grassroots Grants scheme set up by New Labour) a new endowment fund. The OCS has not yet specified how much these funds will be worth, to whom they will be available or what the funding criteria will be. The six will also be able to bid competitively with each other to administer funds from other government departments. Sounds like great collaboration. Meanwhile, 12 organisations will divi-up £15M to run pilot schemes for the National Citizen Service. The largest amount - £4.2M - went to The Challenge Network, a charity created with the help of its big society adviser, Lord Wei. Labour criticized this decision saying it raised "serious ethics and transparency questions". Next largest amount - £2.1M - went to Catch 22, the young people's charity.

Whilst, the most favoured friend of all, the Big Society Network, co-founded by government advisor Lord Wei and launched by David Cameron, is to form a charity called [the Society Network](#), alongside a trading arm Big Society Network Ltd, part funded by the Big Lottery Fund and NESTA

mmm..... any one see a pattern developing here?



BFVA Staff and Trustees would like to wish all our readers and colleagues a Very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Our office re-opens on 4 January.

Localism Bill.... Six essential actions as seen by Government

'Decentralisation' as a word is easy to pay lip service to. To actually make it happen we need to break it down into the practical steps that each part of government can - and must - take. This guide describes these steps in the form of the six essential actions that have the power to turn words into reality.

The first two actions are the most fundamental, because decentralisation can't get started without them. They are to:

- 1) **Lift the burden of bureaucracy** - by removing the cost and control of unnecessary red tape and regulation, whose effect is to restrict local action; and
- 2) **Empower communities to do things their way** - by creating rights for people to get involved with, and direct the development of, their communities.

The next two actions provide the resources and the freedom of choice needed to sustain progress on decentralisation. They are to:

- 3) **Increase local control of public finance** - so that more of the decisions over how public money is spent and raised can be taken within communities; and
- 4) **Diversify the supply of public services** - by ending public sector monopolies, ensuring a level playing field for all suppliers, giving people more choice and a better standard of service.

The final two actions complete the picture by enabling local people to take complete control of the process of decentralisation as it affects them in their communities. They are to:

- 5) **Open up government to public scrutiny** - by releasing government information into the public domain, so that people can know how their money is spent, how it is used and to what effect; and
- 6) **Strengthen accountability to local people** - by giving every citizen the power to change the services provided to them through participation, choice or the ballot box.

Dates for your diary



Important
DATE!

What's on and happening

- 18 January - Equalities Conference, Newbold College, 9.40am 'till 2.30pm (inc lunch)
- 20th January - Volunteer Recruitment event, Princes Square 10.00am-3.00pm
- 26 January - 'Census 2011' Community Lunch, Brackenhale Open Learning Centre, 12 noon 'till 2pm
- 2 February - CYP Forum networking event, Easthampstead Baptist Church, 7.30pm
- 2nd March - Big Society event for East Berkshire, Venue tbc
- 3 March - Personalisation/Commissioning event, Easthampstead Baptist Church, 10am 'till 2pm
- 8th March - Faith mapping report launch 6.00pm Council Chamber
- 1st-7th June - Volunteers week

Community Organisers

Information extracted from the OCS tender documents for the National Partners charged with delivery of the Community Organiser commitment 1 Nov 2010

The Coalition Government announced in its Programme for Government that it is committed to training a new generation of community organisers and supporting the creation of neighbourhood groups, especially in the most deprived areas as part of its pledge to build the Big Society.

The Office for Civil Society (OCS) in the Cabinet Office is tendering for an organisation, partnership or consortium to develop, implement and manage the Community Organisers Programme, including any sub-contracted service providers, through this financial year and for the programmes' duration to the end of the Spending Review period in March 2015.

Community Organisers will act as a catalyst for more social action, supporting all parts of the community (including under-represented and disadvantaged groups and individuals), to express their needs and issues, as well as identify opportunities and resources.

The long-term aim is for the National Partner to facilitate the creation of an independently funded and sustainable 'Institute for Community Organising' (ICO), funded by independent revenue. Government's initial role is to stimulate more organising activity, create a critical mass of community organisers and develop the concept through the work of the National Partner, with the ICO in place to take on this role from April 2015.

It is intended that the first cohort of Community Organisers will begin training in April 2011 and will be supported to share their experience and actions with each other and the community via appropriate digital media. The development of these mediums will be a key aspect of the programme.

In line with the Coalition government's commitments, the OCS is developing a programme to recruit, train and support up to 5,000 Community Organisers by March 2015:

500 'senior' full-time Community Organisers will act as coordinators for organising activity over a relatively large area (e.g. a Borough or District).

4,500 'middle level' part-time voluntary Community Organisers will support the work of the senior organisers at a more local level.

The main tasks of the National Partner will be to:

- Develop a core training framework appropriate for the two types of organisers.
- Develop a support network for Community Organisers.
- Supply and manage training providers to recruit, select and train the organisers across England.
- Support the continued development of Community Organisers that are trained by this programme.
- Build revenue streams to maintain training and support of Community Organisers post-2015 and create the 'Institute of Community Organising' as the vehicle to oversee this work.



More Big Society

As 2010 draws to an end, Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd takes stock and sends a Christmas message to the charity sector

'As we approach Christmas, I look back on a challenging but rewarding year. It is a real honour for me, as Minister for Civil Society, to work on behalf of a sector that has made such a deep impression on me these past few years, with its tireless commitment to helping others, and its practical, human approach to social problems.

We have a mighty task ahead of us, but it is great to see things starting to take shape, with organisations already in place to launch the first wave of the National Citizen pilots, good progress towards building the Big Society Bank and the Transition Fund open for applications, which will help organisations adapt to new opportunities and challenges.

The new Compact with the additional measures I have put in place to increase transparency and accountability is an improvement. Coming down the pipe is more detail on how we will make it easier for VCS organisations to compete for public services, and a Green Paper on ideas to stimulate more giving. Lord Hodgson's taskforce will come to me in the New Year with specific ideas on cutting red tape.

I know this isn't an easy time for social enterprises and community groups and that many charities will approach the New Year with some concern. The economic challenges facing the country are large and our commitment to tackling the deficit is as firm as it is necessary. But the Coalition Government has a social purpose at its heart and it is understood, right at the top of government, that you are central to it. Because whilst the message of the Big Society is new to many, you are there already, supporting people to take positive action, providing services that really work for the people who use them, and speaking up for those who would otherwise be voiceless.

I think 2011 can ultimately be a year of great opportunity for voluntary organisations and social enterprises and I will commit myself to clearing away every obstacle we can to your continued success.'



What does the Spending Review mean in Bracknell ?

Bracknell Forest Council has had a worse than expected allocation from central government, but although serious will have less affect than other areas as the allocation has always been low compared with other councils.

Bracknell Forest Council will see its settlement grant from the government drop by 2.5 per cent next year, reducing its spending power by around £2.4 million, and the same amount for 2012/2013. The council's revenue spending power will reduce from £94 million this year to £91.6 million next year, this will reduce further in 2012/13 to £88 million.

Cllr Bettison, leader of Bracknell Forest Council said that the local authority had not started planning 2012's budget, but that "he could not see any way" frontline services would not be affected.

Being a small unitary, Bracknell Forest has a record of good partnership working and although no longer a Government requirement Bracknell Forest Partnership Board will continue to meet and over see the work of all the major agencies and reduce the impact these cuts will have on the community. At the time of writing it is unknown if the voluntary and community sector will be affected in the first year, but it is highly likely that some cuts will have to be made in year two i.e. 2012/13.

For more information on the Bracknell Forest Partnership visit their website at:

www.bracknellforestpartnership.org.uk



Who's who at BFVA

Chief Executive

Martin Gilman

martin.gilman@bfva.org

Carers Grant Administrator

Rita Woolford

rita.woolford@bfva.org

Carers' Information and Advice Worker

Jane Currie

jane.currie@bfva.org

Equalities Development Officer

Kate Eatwell

kate.eatwell@bfva.org

Development Administrator

Judy English

judy.english@bfva.org

Young Carers Project Co-ordinator

Angela Evans

angela.evans@bfva.org

Finance Officer

Jackie Eddolls

jackie.eddolls@bfva.org

Adult Carers' Support Worker

Melanie Randall

melanie.randall@bfva.org

Volunteer Recruitment Officer

Tracey Morgan

tracey.morgan@bfva.org

Partnership Development Manager

Chris Cowap

chris.cowap@bfva.org

Domestic Support Co-ordinator

Diane Benford

diane.benford@bfva.org

Domestic Support Administrator

Kat Lord

kat.lord@bfva.org

Funding Advisor

Carole Allen

carole.allen@bfva.org

Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator

Gemma Frewin

gemma.frewin@bfva.org

CYP Development Worker

Lynette Robertson

lynette.robertson@bfva.org

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action

Amber House

Market Street

Bracknell

RG12 1JB

Tel: 01344 304404

Services for Members

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action offers a number of services to all voluntary and charitable groups and organisations in Bracknell Forest:

Advice, support and help in setting up new initiatives

Funding and grants information

Linking groups together for mutual support

Researching local needs

Photocopying and loan of books and equipment

Problem solving with individual groups

Newsletters

Minibus for hire

Practical resources

BFVA receives funding from Bracknell Forest Council, without whose help it would not be able to carry out its work. Project funding is received from the Big Lottery, CapacityBuilders, local trusts and companies.

Future editions of Voluntary Action News

If you would like to advertise an event, promote your organisation or have some interesting information to share with others please do get in touch. The deadline for information for the Spring Issue is

25 February 2011.

We produce four full newsletters a year as well as four shorter Members' Updates to ensure that we let you have a rolling programme of up to date news.

Please contact Kate Eatwell on 01344 383513 or email

kate.eatwell@bfva.org