Building the Big Society

Lord Wei, Government Adviser for Big Society

Big Society Public Services Seminar Series
Institute for Government, 6th June 2010
The Big Society is being developed in a three-fold context

- Lack of trust in politics
- Longstanding social problems
- Unprecedented challenge to public finances
The Big Society represents an approach that seeks to give increased power to people to solve problems closer to where they live.

**Demand**
- Post-war reconstruction
- Industrialisation
- Basic welfare
- Urbanisation

**Supply**
- Introduction of the ‘Welfare state’
- Privatisation: “reining back the state”
- Increased investment, active role of government and markets
- ‘Big Society’

**Timeline**
- 1940s
- 1980
- 2000
- 2010

- Economic crisis
- Complex system wide problems
- New technologies
- Diverse social structures
- Increasing public expectations
The Big Society moves from a default position of central design and governmental provision to citizen-driven partnership across sectors

An “ecosystem” of 3 levels where no one player dominates another...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizens and neighbourhood groups¹</th>
<th>• more effectively participating in the governance, design and delivery of services in their communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social, private and public providers</td>
<td>• collaborating in the design and delivery of complementary services and initiatives through a spectrum of service models encouraging testing and innovation of different approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>• protecting the vulnerable and ensuring essential services • facilitating the design and delivery of other services with diverse sector partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An approach to addressing the needs of society

• Policy designed and delivered in partnership across all 3 levels, with government as the enabler
• Policy and delivery closer to the issues on the ground and individuals
• Big Society policy agenda addresses two priorities
• Building the “ecosystem”
• Reconfiguring policy design and delivery

¹ Neighbourhood groups comprise a broad range from those with an explicit social or activism mission to those focused on local participation, engagement and community building whether through informally through sports and interests or more formally in conjunction with local anchor institutions
There are 3 priorities in building the Big Society ecosystem needed to reconfigure how policy is developed and delivered:

1. People more involved in their communities
   - Example focus:
     - Group membership
     - Mass civic action
     - Charitable giving
     - Corporate social activities

2. People able to contribute more effectively through a stronger social sector
   - Example focus:
     - Group formation
     - Leadership and scale
     - Funding and resources
     - Organisation and operations

3. People better able to shape governmental policy and delivery
   - Example focus:
     - Information provision
     - Policy formulation
     - Policy localisation
     - Policy delivery
Elements of the Big Society already exist

1. People more involved in their communities
   - Do-it
   - Leap
   - TIME BANKING UK
   - Volunteering England
   - NALC
   - the big lunch

2. People able to contribute more effectively through a stronger social sector
   - Community-led
   - Social movements
   - Corporate
   - Environmental
   - Education
   - Intermediaries
   - Charities
   - Membership

3. People better able to shape governmental policy and delivery
   - NHS
   - choices
   - Directgov
   - data.gov.uk
   - BARNET
   - Leader Listens
   - SILK
   - E-Petitions
Social entrepreneurship is helping people to engage with complex issues - the challenge is to move from selective to extensive impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charities outperforming public services:</th>
<th>Neighbourhood social action:</th>
<th>Giving skills not just money:</th>
<th>Creating leaders who educate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Giles Trust</td>
<td>Balsall Heath Forum</td>
<td>SI camp</td>
<td>Teach First</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- St Giles Trust enables disadvantaged people to maximise their potential
- The Trust trains offenders whilst they are still on the inside, so they have skills when they are released
- Only 2% of St Giles Trust clients reoffend
  - Improving lives
  - Saving taxpayers money

- Balsall Heath was an infamous red light district
- Residents organised a protest, resulting in an immediate two-thirds reduction in sex work
- Subsequent projects have encompassed
  - Family life
  - Environment
  - Safety
  - Business
  - Education
  - Participation
  - Sustainability

- Camps start with an open call for ideas
- Judges take forward the best entries to build over one weekend
- Everyone is welcome at the camp weekend: web developers, business experts, lawyers
  - 3 UK SI camps have created 300+ ideas, 20 prototypes, 5 have received funding and 2 have been incorporated as companies (MyPolice and Enabled by Design)
- Now rolled out to Slovakia, Georgia, South Korea, Australia.

- Teach First gives exceptional graduates the opportunity to teach and make a difference in the most challenged schools
- Voted a Times Top 100 Graduate Employer by students on campus
- Recruits ~300 graduates per year from Britain’s top universities
- Benefited thousands of pupils in disadvantaged areas
Big Society builds a more productive, responsive government and a more self-reliant participative society

1. People more involved in their communities
   - Increased participation
   - Increased well-being from
     - Reduced isolation
     - Stronger social ties
     - Greater self-reliance

2. People able to participate more effectively through a stronger social sector
   - Increased capacity and capabilities
     - New groups ENTERPRISES formed
     - More trained leaders and support networks
   - More local and national initiatives to address complex local or topical issues

3. People better able to shape government policy and delivery
   - Increased democratic accountability
   - Increased citizen-led design/delivery
   - Increased focus towards the most needy and/or issues with longest payback
   - More effective and targeted state provision
   - Increased trust in frontline services

Stronger, more resilient society

Better outcomes
- Welfare
- Education
- Health
- Less crime
- Cohesion

More productive and responsive government

Cabinet Office
Initiatives are already planned in the government’s policy agenda for all 3 of the Big Society priority areas to kickstart implementation

1. People more involved in their communities
   - Promoting mass social action, inc. ‘Big Society Day’
   - Encouraging charitable giving and philanthropy
   - Creating a flagship National Citizen Service for 16 year-olds
   - Increasing civil service’s community involvement

2. People able to contribute more effectively through a stronger social sector
   - Developing a new generation of community leaders and neighbourhood groups
   - Support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises
   - Create the right for public sector workers to form employee-owned co-operatives to operate services
   - Use funds from dormant bank accounts to establish a Big Society Bank

3. People better able to shape governmental policy and delivery
   - Promote radical devolution to local government and citizens
   - Give councils a general power of competence
   - Abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, and return housing and planning powers to local councils
   - Create a new ‘right to data’ for public use with regular publication
   - Oblige the police to publish detailed local crime data statistics every month
   - Local community powers to run services
Key themes for central government departments to consider in developing and designing policy

- Reinforcement of increasing localisation of policy, planning and delivery
- Shift from consultation alone to increased citizen and social sector participation within policy development and design, commissioning and (co-)delivery
- Far greater use of social sector in both policy design as well as policy delivery
- General presumption of maximising information provision and transparency of local and central government and agencies
- Presumption that spare public assets should be available for use by the social sector
- Greater local discretion to use different approaches of measurement and commissioning of services across all 3 levels of the Big Society ecology

Develop own departmental Big Society agenda by aligning cross-governmental actions for localism and Big Society with departmental priorities
Departments might want to consider how each level of the Big Society eco-system could help to drive improved policies...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Policy chain</th>
<th>Develop the overall policy objective</th>
<th>Understand the issues and develop solutions</th>
<th>Deliver ‘on-the-ground’</th>
<th>Monitor impact and refine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>• Formal consultation</td>
<td>• Independent panels to solve issues</td>
<td>• Offering choice of multiple public, private and 3rd sector providers</td>
<td>• Formal reviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government bodies (e.g., LAs)</td>
<td>• Formal and informal engagement and lobbying (e.g., via think-tanks)</td>
<td>• Partnerships with central and local government</td>
<td>• Specific service providers</td>
<td>• Self-regulation / self-produced assessments of performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>• Via multiple media/engagement approaches (e.g., blogs, crowd source)</td>
<td>• Via multiple media/engagement approaches (e.g., blogs, crowd source)</td>
<td>• Citizen governance of services</td>
<td>• Feedback and ratings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling bodies (e.g., BSN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
... taking account of the nature of the political, relative capabilities and capacities, and economic constraints

### At each stage of the policy chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given the level of localisation being planned ...</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Local</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will citizens become more involved?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase information</td>
<td>Targeted consultation</td>
<td>Choice and contestability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will provide the service?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>Formal social sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples along each dimension

- How can the Big Society policy agenda augment what is being planned for greater localisation?
- What is the appropriate balance for each policy area given:
  - Nature of policy
  - Relative capabilities, capacity and re-sources of parties
  - Prior learning
  - Economic constraints
  - Urgency of delivery?
OCS is available to work with departments to support implementation and use of the Big Society approach over the next 6-36 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Given the level of localisation being planned...</th>
<th>How will citizens become more involved?</th>
<th>Who will provide services?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HMT</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOJ</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLG</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO/OCS</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFE</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIS</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCMS</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECC</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

- Given the level of localisation being planned...
  "Weekly MRSA and CDiff data by hospital"

- How will citizens become more involved?
  "Co-design of jobless programmes"

- Who will provide services?
  "Police Community Support Officers"
  "Joint working with social sector rehabilitation organisations"
  "Social sector providers for public health programmes (e.g., smoking cessation)"

Approach adopted needs to be shaped by nature of policy, relative capabilities and resources of parties; prior learning; economic constraints and urgency of delivery

A simple excel tool is available to support departments in identifying opportunities
How can central government get involved in creating the Big Society?

**Ministers / Politicians**
- Promote Big Society key messages
- Ensure austerity measures are consistent
- Catalyse activity in own geographical area

**Departments**
- Remove obstacles to civic action
- Create new powers for civil society groups
- Orientate own staff more towards communities

**Service Delivery Organisations**
- Consider options for setting up as mutuals
- Gather citizen feedback using social media
- Take into account community benefit in decisions
How can institutions get involved in creating the Big Society?

**Business**
- Think local and not just globally in sales
- Target employee activities where they live
- Find ways to interact with small providers

**Local Government**
- Think in terms of transition when cost cutting
- Use spend, invest, shop model fiscally
- Facilitate most, co-commission, deliver least

**Voluntary Organisations**
- Gear organisation up to provide public services
- Find ways to support and harness citizen groups
- Ally with financial partners to retail social investments
How can citizens support the Big Society?

**Daily activity**
- Think more locally about where to carry out activities
- Connect with a mix of neighbours online/offline
- Join local time banks and other means of local association

**One-off activity**
- Take part in local events, and national ones like Big Lunch
- Participate locally based on interest (e.g. budgeting, mentoring)
- Give feedback on public and non-public bodies online

**Long-term commitments**
- Join or set up a group, which in turn may commission
- If in public sector, consider creating a mutual
- Use professional or other skills to support social enterprise
Big Society activity already underway in many areas but in others key to success will be through showing the way and making the Big Society real

- Providing easily understood and clear examples of Big Society at work will allow citizens and institutions to learn by example and apply the general lessons to their particular contexts

**Geographical showcases**
- Whole systems demonstrations of the Big Society approach
- Variety of contexts – urban / rural; levels of deprivation
- Strong involvement of citizens and social sector in identifying issues to target

**Flagship policies**
- Iconic policies which represent core Big Society principles e.g. Free Schools, Data Transparency etc.
- Across Whitehall departments

**Case studies**
- Bank of detailed case studies showing how citizens, institutions and government implemented aspects of the Big Society
- Success stories as well as examples of how overcame difficulties
- Freely available centrally
How will we know we have a Big Society?

• Measurement and evaluation key to understanding what sorts of activity are more successful than others

• Measurement of the Big Society needs to take into account:
  • **Focus on groups** - Estimation of active community groups and group involvement
  • **Department specific** – some elaboration regarding how longer term high level outcomes can be related to specific departmental activity
  • **Consideration of level of geographical analysis** e.g. LA, ward, SOA
  • **Longer term impact** – Both in terms of positive and negative outcomes e.g. Increase in social capital and wellbeing, reduction in negative outcomes such as criminal behaviour etc.
Questions for discussion

How does the Big Society link with other key agendas in government (e.g. Transparency, Nudge, Localism)?

What are the key factors to bear in mind when pursuing the Big Society agenda in the context of fiscal austerity?

What would be most helpful from the centre in encouraging your organisation / department to implement this vision?
Further comments or suggestions:

GovAdviserBigSociety@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk