

Big Society Inquiry – Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted by Executive (Y/N)	How will the recommendation be achieved? (Key actions)	Responsible Organisation/officer	Target Date for Completion
<p>Communication</p> <p>1. Work with partners and Southampton Connect on the delivery of a city wide vision with a consistent communication/marketing plan based on ‘Your Southampton’ branding that supports and celebrates the messages and successes of the Big Society and, is included in the refresh of the Southampton Connect Plan.</p>				
OPENING UP PUBLIC SERVICES				
<p>Localism Act</p> <p>2. The 2013/14 Council and Directorate plans should identify how this drive towards localism will be implemented across the authority.</p>				
<p>Transparency and Engagement</p> <p>Cabinet, Leaders of Political Groups, senior management and Southampton Connect partnership to pledge to lead the community by example, by making transparent decisions to do things differently, shift thinking and encourage the ground swell of cultural change to champion the Big Society and localism in Southampton to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish locality forums to expand the role of neighbourhood planning, making it easier for communities and residents to access and drive public services where they live, through supporting new links or using existing groups, to ensure increased transparency and a proactive open dialogue. 				

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and signpost to make better use of web based resources and social media outlets at community level, for example Southampton Placebook and the Volunteer Alliance and other online forums • Map and assess current community resources and activity via Southampton Placebook, to feed into the single needs assessment <p>3. Increase the use of community centres and voluntary sector premises as a first choice for meetings and hubs for mobile working.</p>				
EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES				
<p>Resources</p> <p>4. Rationalise Big Society funding to make access to existing funding streams at the council easier and timelier for local organisations and establish new funding sources to support the Big Society agenda to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify the council's procurement processes by adopting best practice examples in Hampshire, Bristol and Cardiff, as identified in the report. In particular, contracts under the EU threshold should be proportionate, support local delivery, use a standard contract template, give advance notice/planning to enable joint working and bids, and make best use of e-forms / websites to minimise documentation used and required. • Investigate opportunities to develop additional community funding sources, for example, through the creation of a Big Society Fund or use of Social Impact Bonds to support the launch of new and innovative community projects 				

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<p>Local Businesses</p> <p>5. Southampton Connect to organise a city wide discussion around how businesses in Southampton can support Southampton's Big Society in a more joined up and coordinated way, involving Business in the Community, Business Solent and the Chamber of Commerce. This should also include signposting to encourage and support the setting up of mutuals, social enterprises and community interest across the City.</p>				
<p>Prioritising Communities</p> <p>6. To work alongside RISE and WICT to harness the learning and experiences of the Community Organisers and identify how existing community resources, both within the Council and with key partners such as faith organisations, can be directed so that shared community posts or community organisers are operating within the least affluent areas in the City to ensure equal opportunities exist for engagement and to build capacity.</p>				
<p>SOCIAL ACTION</p>				
<p>Celebrate success</p> <p>7. Celebrate and reward volunteering to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how volunteering could be rewarded, offering discounts for council services or local businesses, as part of the Change Programme to expand the City Card 				

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Southampton Voluntary Sector and other partners to establish a city wide annual volunteering awards hosted by the Mayor. 				
<p>Encourage Volunteering</p> <p>8. Work with Southampton Voluntary Services to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a volunteering bank to be a one stop shop for volunteering opportunities for businesses, organisations and individuals; Develop a simple website which allows basic description of volunteer offer to match with volunteering opportunities and linked with www.do-it.org; Work with the business sector to encourage recognition of the skills and experience of volunteering through a City Volunteer Passport. 				
<p>Harnessing and supporting student activity</p> <p>9. Harness the energy and potential of students to support a Big Society approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the planning for the new Arts Centre in Southampton, Southampton Connect to develop a city-wide cultural programme which includes arts, sports and cultural activities to harness the civic responsibilities and builds a greater sense of pride and place in the city; Work with universities to develop street captains in areas with a high student population of students 				

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<p>Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy</p> <p>10. Develop a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy for the Council,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a brokerage scheme, in partnership with the Southampton Voluntary Sector, to link council employees and councillors with opportunities to become trustees, provide professional skills or mentor voluntary organisations, particularly those operating in the least affluent areas. • To encourage and support volunteering, professional skills and mentoring opportunities through staff being given an agreed level of paid leave, starting from senior management. 				
<p>Measuring Success</p> <p>11. Work with the University of Southampton Third Sector Research Centre to monitor the development and success of the Big Society in Southampton</p>				