

Social Enterprise and The Big Society

How Social Enterprise fits into Government Policy

Jeff Scales

*The Development Trusts
Association*

About the DTA

- ▶ National network of multi-purpose community enterprises
- ▶ 500 members (44 in the northwest) – combined income of £272m, £590m in community ownership, 6700 staff and 19,400 volunteers
- ▶ DTA Mission: A Development Trust in every community
- ▶ Merging with *bassac* to become **LOCALITY**
- ▶ Provide childcare, make benches, manage office space, teach ICT, support small businesses, cook healthy food, run cafés, recycle paper, support other community organisations, employ people with special needs, grow stuff, manage community centres, run cinemas, rent out houses, undertake youth work, provide home help schemes for older people, run community transport schemes, lobby Council's for improvements on behalf of local people, undertake consultancy work, run schools for excluded young people, manage parks and play areas, have festivals & fun days & Dickensian Christmas Fairs, run credit unions, support neighbourhood management and other local initiatives, refurbish derelict buildings, set up social enterprises, support people to find work, homework clubs, DJ Workshops, five a side football, manage Healthy Living Centres, support local artists, provide wedding and conference facilities, create web-sites, regenerate market town centres, teaching basic skills English and Math, lend money, employ local people, repairing and selling bicycles, running play schemes, sports days, manage sports facilities, provide a refuge for women, publish community newsletters, teach construction and catering skills, support community radio, run community arts projects, manage renewable energy schemes, build green homes, manage grant funding, managing local markets (market stalls), run community cohesion projects, manage street ranger schemes, install CCTV, manage shops, benefit advice and debt counselling, promote tourism, manage heritage sites, undertake social audits, run pubs and bars, building and managing a BMX track, run Archaeology schools, provide sets for film and television productions, manage allotments, run Tourist Information Centres, run Abattoirs, provide ferry services, develop World War 2 bunkers and prisoner of war camps.....



Kids Community Club



Blacon Young People's Project



Blacon Community Trust



Social Enterprise Support



Community Resources Team



Blacon Furniture Project

Great Ecclestone Village Centre





Localism, Decentralisation, Big Society

Localism is the ethos.

Decentralisation is what we do

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

Pillars of the Big Society (policy pledges)

- ▶ Localism: Great community/local control and influence over public services and local decision making
- ▶ Social Enterprise, Charities & Workers Co-ops delivering public services (e.g. NHS reforms: ‘to create largest and most vibrant SE Sector in the world?’)
- ▶ Support for volunteering (Community Organisers) and Community Groups (Communities First Fund)
- ▶ Rights for communities to save community assets under threat
- ▶ National Citizenship Service (Young People)
- ▶ Big Society Bank
- ▶ Community Owned Schools

Recently...

INVESTMENT

- ▶ Local Enterprise Partnerships
- ▶ Regional Growth Fund

POLICY

- ▶ The Localism Bill
 - Community Right to Challenge
 - A Community Right to Buy

PRACTICE

- ▶ Vanguard Pilots
- ▶ Local Pilots
 - Your Local Budget
 - Local Commissioning

Quotes from the concerned...

- ▶ *Big Society is a smokescreen for cuts and privatisation*
- ▶ *The Social Enterprise focus and increasing volunteering is about providing public services on the cheap*
- ▶ *They want more social enterprises delivering contracts but at the same time contracts are getting scarcer, bigger and now it's all 'payment by results'*
- ▶ *They don't understand this sector – half of them think we're just groups of volunteers*
- ▶ *Community Groups taking on assets is a con – they want us to pay to run buildings they can't afford to – these are liabilities*
- ▶ *But when's all this going to happen? I need to pay wages next month*

And optimism...

- ▶ *There is much in the Big Society which commands admiration. It signals a determination led from the front by the Prime Minister, that government has a role, even a duty to create conditions for independent civil society to flourish. It is genuinely a Big idea, representing a rejection of the command and control state, and equally of unbridled corporate greed*

4 'pillars' of resources for enterprise

- ▶ **Grants (increasingly scarce and competitive)**
- ▶ **Public Sector Contracts (increasingly scarce, competitive and bigger)**
- ▶ **Asset based development (potential to tap private, public and voluntary/community sector funding streams)**
- ▶ **Direct Selling (products and services to customers/beneficiaries)**

Strategies for Survival

- ▶ Strong financial management
- ▶ Having the confidence to invest in an idea
- ▶ Take Business Planning seriously
- ▶ Strong risk management
- ▶ Think about customers (not just beneficiaries)
- ▶ Selling your service and organisation
- ▶ Diversify income (beware grant and state dependence – consider ‘direct selling’)
- ▶ Have an enterprising attitude (board and staff)
- ▶ Collaboration, Consortia, Merger

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