



The Chartered Institute of Housing

# **HOUSING 2011** **CONFERENCE**



## Housing 2011 Session Information

# Hooray for fish – is Big Society the answer?

While much attention remains focused on the public deficit and the measures which the government has introduced to reduce public spending, the government has wider ambitions to re-shape the role of the state and reinvigorate community and individual participation.

This clear theme across government has been described by the Prime Minister as his plan for a “Big Society”.

This agenda presents both challenges and opportunities for the housing sector – especially within social housing, community care or other public service provision.



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### BACKGROUND

The three pillars that David Cameron has identified as key to creating a Big Society are:

1. Social action – “the success of the Big Society will depend on the daily decisions of millions of people – on them giving their time, effort, even money, to causes around them. So government cannot remain neutral on that – it must foster and support a new culture of voluntarism, philanthropy, social action.”
2. Public service reform – “we’ve got to get rid of the centralised bureaucracy that wastes money and undermines morale. And in its place we’ve got to give professionals much more freedom, and open up public services to new providers like charities, social enterprises and private companies so we get more innovation, diversity and responsiveness to public need.”
3. Community empowerment – “we need to create communities with oomph – neighbourhoods who are in charge of their own destiny, who feel if they club together and get involved they can shape the world around them.”

These in turn will be supported by three key processes:

1. Decentralisation and the localism of power – to town halls and beyond to communities, to neighbourhoods and individuals.
2. Transparency and increased accountability – to enable individuals and communities to hold decision makers to account and to enable people to take action themselves.
3. Providing finance – paying public service providers by results, in connecting private capital to investment in social projects and through the creation of a Big Society bank.

Much of this is being anchored in the changes being taken through parliament in the Localism Bill.

### OTHER INFORMATION

Prime Minister's speech on the Big Society: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2010/07/big-society-speech-53572>

UnLtd and Affinity Sutton Bright Ideas Challenge  
<http://www.unltd.org.uk/template.php?ID=214>

Hills, J (1989), *The voluntary sector in housing: the role of British housing associations*, in E. James (ed) (1989) *The Non-Profit Sector in International Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New York

Lupton M, Leach M (2011) At the Crossroads: A Progressive Future for Housing Associations, Republica, <http://www.republica.org.uk/articles/republica-launches-new-report-%E2%80%9Ccrossroads-progressive-future-housing-associations%E2%80%9D-0>

Mullins, D (2004) *Transformation into what? Forecasting the Future Shape and Structure of the Non-Profit Housing Sector in England*, Paper presented to the Housing Studies Association Spring Conference, 15-16 April 2004, Sheffield

Wadhams, C (2006) *An Opportunity Waiting to Happen: Housing Associations as 'Community Anchors', Building Communities and Neighbourhoods – a feasibility study exploring the potential of neighbourhood partnerships between housing associations and voluntary and community organisations*, HACT

### UPDATE

#### Challenges and Opportunities

The Big Society debate challenges providers to consider whether they focus too much on new housing at the expense existing communities. This raises a number of questions for consideration:

- Where organisations have a strong local presence, what potential is there to embrace shared services and take on services previously in the public sector in partnership with communities and local councils?
- How can organisations support local communities to take advantage of 'Big Society' opportunities – for example taking on local services or assets under the Community Right to Buy?
- How, and should, housing organisations support the capacity of local communities through funding of community activities and initiatives – where do responsibilities to tenants end, and responsibilities to the wider community begin?
- Is there a need for a new phase of rationalisation of housing stock to enable better engagement between housing associations and communities?
- Are housing organisations prepared to consider opening up the management of their stock to more local levels?
- Is there a need for a renewed emphasis on community and tenant management?
- Are housing organisations sufficiently accountable to their customers and their local communities?

#### This is a Pact session

##### Developing the Housing Pact 2011 – Our commitment to deliver the best possible outcomes for communities



Building on the successes of the 2010 Pact, we will:

- Identify the priorities we want local and national government to address
- Make commitments to specific housing practice

Through four main themes which reflect the challenges and opportunities being faced:

- The housing advantage
- New ways of working
- Setting our own course
- Money

To be presented to the Housing Minister at the end of the conference.

Be part of the session, vote on the CIH Stand, or tweet to #housing2011.



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