NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE AND PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 November 2010

Work Programme and Forward Plan

1.0   Purpose of the Report

1.1   To invite the Committee to consider the work programme.

2.0   Scope of the Committee

2.1.   Under the Council's constitution the scope of this Committee is defined as

> "*the Council's corporate organisation and structure, resource allocation, asset management, procurement policy, people strategy, equality and diversity, performance management, communications and access to services.*
>
> *Partnership working, community development, community engagement, community strategies and community safety (the designated Crime and Disorder Committee)".*

3.0   Developing a Work Programme

3.1.   When the County Council reduced the number of scrutiny committees you inherited the business of three former Committees, Communications, Corporate Affairs and Safe and Sustainable Communities. Merging three work programmes has inevitably resulted in a long list of potential lines of inquiry. You agreed with the Chairman and Group Spokespersons that retaining this workload is neither sustainable nor desirable. At the last Mid Cycle briefing they completed the work on slimming down the number of items on the work programme and identifying the key areas for further working. The following are their suggestions as key items:

4.0   Access to Services: Big Society, Broadband

4.1.   This Committee inherited from the Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee a planned piece of work around Access to Services, particularly in rural areas. This would take into account developments in communities which provide innovative access for County Council and partner services managed by the community.

4.2.   Your Group Spokespersons considered this request in the light of:

1. Concerns from the Richmondshire Area Committee regarding a number of Post Offices in the upper dales areas and local community initiatives to bring Post Office services in local villages with the assistance of Post Offices Ltd.

2. The Coalition Government's plans regarding Big Society (the briefing to the Mid-Cycle is attached).

3. The rollout of Broadband to communities, particularly those in "not spot" areas and the recent successful bid by NYnet to participate in a major new Government backed scheme to transform access in rural communities in North Yorkshire – the Rural Market Testing Project.

4.3. Since this meeting the Government has announced a consultation paper on "Supporting a Stronger Civic Society" which is a part of its political vision associated with the Big Society (Attached). The County Council will be responding before the January deadline; I will report verbally on this.

4.4. At the Mid-Cycle Briefing it was agreed that Access to services is a significant theme for the county council and its communities at a time of financial uncertainty and service change through budgetary pressures. Your Group Spokespersons are minded to form a Task Group to determine how a review on Access to Services might be tackled. The purpose would be to seek reassurances that opportunities for such developments in communities were being supported appropriately by the Council and everything was being done to promote and raise awareness of best practice.

4.5. Such a review would focus in particular on community managed resources, building community capacity, sustainable Broadband–led transformation and the aspirations of the Big Society. I have tried to capture initial views on this expressed at the meeting and initial thoughts as to the terms of reference on the Draft Project Plan Attached.

4.6. **Recommended:**

- **The Committee determine whether it wishes to play a part in an NYCC response to the Big Society Consultation.**

- **Decide whether is wishes to appoint the Members to a Task Group to progress an Access to Services Review based on the draft project plan attached.**

5.0 Local Performance Indicators

5.1. The Executive had agreed that this Committee look at the status of local performance indicators in the light of the Coalition Government's stated intention to reduce the number and range of local performance indicators on which the Council is required to report to the Department of Local Government and Communities.

5.2.   Your Group Spokespersons understand that the authority is still collecting data alongside current performance indicators but this of course will change. It was suggested that the Committee revisit this issue next year, when a proposition could be made on the performance management information it would be most appropriate for the authority to retain or develop in future financial years. This item is therefore provisionally scheduled for your meeting on Monday, 28 March 2011.

6.0   Citizens Panel

6.1.   Also referred to this Committee by the Executive was a request that there be a review of the current status of the Citizens Panel. This would include an assessment of the value of this resource, what evidence is there that the results are being used by directorates to inform service planning and what options there might be for potentially defraying the costs amongst partners.

6.2.   Your Group Spokespersons agreed that a report on this topic be submitted to the meeting on Monday, 31 January 2011.

7.0   Recommendation

7.1.   The Committee is recommended to review the work programme in the light of this report.

HUGH WILLIAMSON
Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance

County Hall
NORTHALLERTON

November 2010

Background Documents - Nil

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme			
In-depth Scrutiny Projects			
SUBJECT	AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
DAAT review and drugs alcohol services/support	Work in three phases - Initial report assessment of commitment/progress. Second structural "total place" analysis, third balance of alcohol drugs activity. Committee invited to re-appoint or replace the Members appointed to work jointly with Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members on this subject.	Seamus Breen / Cllr Tony Hall / Ray Busby	Task Group meetings August to December and beyond. 28 January 2011
Citizens Panel	Initial consideration at Mid-Cycle. Assess value to directorates and evidence that the results are influencing and contributing to service improvement. Referred via Executive.	Hugh Williamson / Neil Irving	Not decided. 13 December 2010
Future Performance Monitoring Arrangements	Referred via Executive. Initial consideration at Mid-Cycle	Hugh Williamson	Not decided 11 October 2010
Partnerships Contribution and Resources	Proposals be drafted for consideration at the Committee on a potential project which invites Corporate Directors to list and report to Committee on, partnerships they are involved or associated with. Information to be supplied could include resources committed and outcomes and objectives received.	John Moore	Initially at Mid-Cycle 11 October 2010

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme			
Overview Reports			
SUBJECT	**AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE**	**ACTION/BY WHOM**	**TIMESCALES**
NYSP Community Safety Agreement	Reviewed annually as part of Crime and Disorder designation.	Neil Irving / Chair Safer Communities Forum	Autumn 2011
Area Committees	Follow up reports remains to be scheduled.		To be decided
Council Plan	This work be directed more towards a post-implementation review of how the Council Plan was developed with a view to making recommendations on how it (the product and the process) can be improved in future.	Neil Irving	Before January Executive 15 November 2010
Sustainable Communities Strategy	Work on the SCS and LAA has been suspended so may be unnecessary. A watching brief only be made on this issue at this stage in the light of the decision to temporarily suspend work on the Strategy, recognising that the Committee be invited to consider any future drafts.	Neil Irving	Before January Executive 15 November 2010
Executive Members Update	Schedule alternately?	Cllr Carl Les	Potentially Every Committee
Leader of organisations attend to explain commitment/contribution to Community Safety/Safer Communities Forum	Key feature of Designated Crime and Disorder committee. Programme be drafted for attendance of strategic leaders at forthcoming meetings.	Ray Busby	Order NYPA/NYFRS/NYP/Probation 20 September 2010
Enhanced two tier working	Joint meeting with representatives of District & Borough Councils deferred. This has been deferred, but will be discussed further at Mid-Cycle Briefing.	Gary Fielding	11 October 2010
Equality Framework	Monitor progress towards "Achieving" Equality Framework	Neil Irving	Twice a year 28 January 2011
Corporate Asset Management	Reported at the appropriate time.	John Moore	Annual
Health and Safety – 2010/2011	Includes Public Liability – reported annually.	John Moore	Annual Report 24 March 2010

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Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme			
Annual Procurement Report	Annual report including Sustainable procurement for Directorates within NYCC and in respect of property and highways works.	John Moore	Annual Report – Summer 2010 Summer 2011
Communications Strategy	Further dates to be discussed.	Helen Edwards	Not decided
Community Engagement/Duty to Involve	A key part of the Committee's Work Programme but no decision has yet been made on when a report be submitted.	Neil Irving	Not decided
Total Place	To be raised at Mid-Cycle.	Neil Irving	Not decided 11 October 2011
Scrutiny and the Budget Process	Proposals be drafted for consideration at the Committee that this work be directed more towards a post-implementation review of how budget information was made available to Members, i.e. a snapshot / satisfaction assessment.	John Moore	Not decided 11 October 2011
Access to services in rural areas - innovation	Proposed method in-depth review – raise at Mid-Cycle. Work to include roll out of Broadband in rural areas.	John Moore	Not decided 11 October 2011
HR Annual Report	Overview and update of HR internal communication.	Justine Brooksbank / Helen Edwards	To be decided

	2010/11			
Scheduled Committee Meetings	*20 September* *10:30 am*	*15 November* *10:30 am*	*31 January* *10:30 am*	*28 March* *10:30 am*
Scheduled Agenda Briefing	*16 September* *10:30 am*	*9 November* *14:00 pm*	*27 January* *10:30 am*	*24 March* *10:30 am*
Scheduled Mid Cycle	*11 October* *10:30 am*	*13 December* *10:30 am*	*28 February* *10:30 am*	

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The Big Society and the implications for NYCC
- a discussion paper for Directorate SMTs September 2010[1]

1   Introduction

Management Board considered a paper on the Government's Big Society agenda at its meeting on 10 August 2010 and asked all Directorate SMTs to identify the potential opportunities for NYCC.

2   Background

The Big Society agenda is evolving on an almost daily basis. The main principles are of promoting community resilience, self-sufficiency and shifting public service delivery to the voluntary and community sector (VCS). The Government is sponsoring pilots in Liverpool, Eden Valley, Maidenhead and Sutton but the focus of these is not yet clear. The balance between the emerging localism agenda and the encouragement of large-scale, voluntary sector run public service contracts is also unclear.

Ministers are increasingly talking about:
- 'giving citizens, communities and local government the power and information they need to come together, solve the problems they face and build the Britain they want'
- a 'right to know' how public funds are spent - transparency is the foundation of public accountability
- a 'right of challenge' so consumers and potential providers of public services have the right to change the way that public resources are deployed wherever and whenever a better proposal can be found - judgements on these proposals should be made at the most local level possible enabling communities to truly take control of their own development
- 'turning Government on its head' - the state should exist to serve civil society, not the other way round
- a huge culture change, so that people feel 'free and powerful enough to help themselves and their communities'

3   Funding

The funding for the Big Society is still unclear. Monies from dormant banking and building society accounts will be used to establish a Big Society Bank, supplemented by philanthropic donations. Eligibility criteria are still unclear, but funds will be allocated to VCS organisations to support their activities. The VCS has access to a larger range of funding sources than the public sector, but there are increasing demands on decreasing pots from grant-making trusts etc. Public sector contracts are expected to provide valuable resources for the Big Society on the ground.

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[1] ACS - 1 September, CYPS - 2 September, BES - 6 September, CEG - 14 September, FCS - 29 September

## 4	Public service delivery

The shift of service delivery from public sector providers to VCS providers will continue, with payment increasingly on the basis of outcomes achieved. Consideration will need to be given to:
- the allocation of risk when demand for services is difficult to predict
- how services are commissioned to ensure that locally-owned VCS organisations can have a realistic opportunity of becoming providers

The Government's preference appears to be for social enterprise to take on these services under commercial terms. In North Yorkshire and York, only 7% of VCS organisations describe themselves as social enterprises or cooperatives. Whilst some organisations are moving to consortia models to prepare themselves to undertake larger contracts, the sector in North Yorkshire may not yet be prepared to undertake the scale and nature of shift the Government has planned. The Big Society will therefore not offer an immediate solution to the challenges the authority faces in meeting service demand in a tighter financial environment.

The Government is still supportive of the national Compact with between the public sector and the VCS. The North Yorkshire Compact (www.nysp.org.uk/compact) is a commitment to how we will work with the VCS.

Free Schools and other community-led initiatives also come under the Big Society banner.

## 5	Community Asset Transfer

NYCC may plan to dispose of elements of its estate as part of the review of services. Community Asset Transfer is an established mechanism for transferring estate to communities to manage and deliver services from. This has benefits for communities and it provides an asset for the VCS organisation to borrow against. It is an option that should be considered as part of a wider transfer of services to communities.

## 6	Participatory budgeting / devolved budgets

NYCC has already been involved in successful participatory budgeting (PB) pilots in Scarborough and a RIEP-funded project to support parish councils to hold PB events to determine how their precepts are allocated. Devolved budgets and local control over budget allocation is another strand of the Big Society agenda, although how this will develop is, as yet, unclear.

## 7	Volunteering

The Big Society relies on individuals within communities giving their time freely to undertake work in their communities. NYCC already uses volunteers extensively to support service delivery eg countryside services, home library information service and youth justice service. NYCC will need to make difficult decisions about which service to continue to operate - supporting local communities to take on some of the provision may make the cuts more acceptable. Managers will need to be supported to understand the

considerations which need to be made when transferring services, particularly for employment and safeguarding issues.

To be successful, volunteering programmes need to be supported by volunteer coordinators or managers. NYCC has produced its own Volunteering Policy, Guidance and Toolkit, commissioned by the Corporate Risk Management Group, to ensure that council-operated volunteering programmes meet the risk appetite of the authority. This will be presented to Management Board in September, but is already in use informally across directorates. The implementation of this Policy, Guidance and Toolkit will be supported by the VCS who have accessed external resources to provide training to the statutory sector in how to manage volunteers.

8   NYSP Thriving Third Sector Steering Group

Through the NYSP Thriving Third Sector Steering Group, NYCC is able to participate in joint problem solving with VCS organisations and public sector partners. This will allow NYCC to explore with partners, including the VCS, how the Big Society can be developed in North Yorkshire. The VCS will be able to put forward solutions and provide feedback on where there are barriers that we can work to overcome.

9   Next steps

Management Board asked that all Directorate SMTs identify the potential opportunities for NYCC. A report on the potential opportunities identified for NYCC will be considered further by Management Board.

Neil Irving
Head of Policy and Partnerships
24 August 2010

CabinetOffice

Office for Civil Society

Supporting a Stronger Civil Society

An Office for Civil Society consultation on improving support for frontline civil society organisations

CabinetOffice

Office for Civil Society
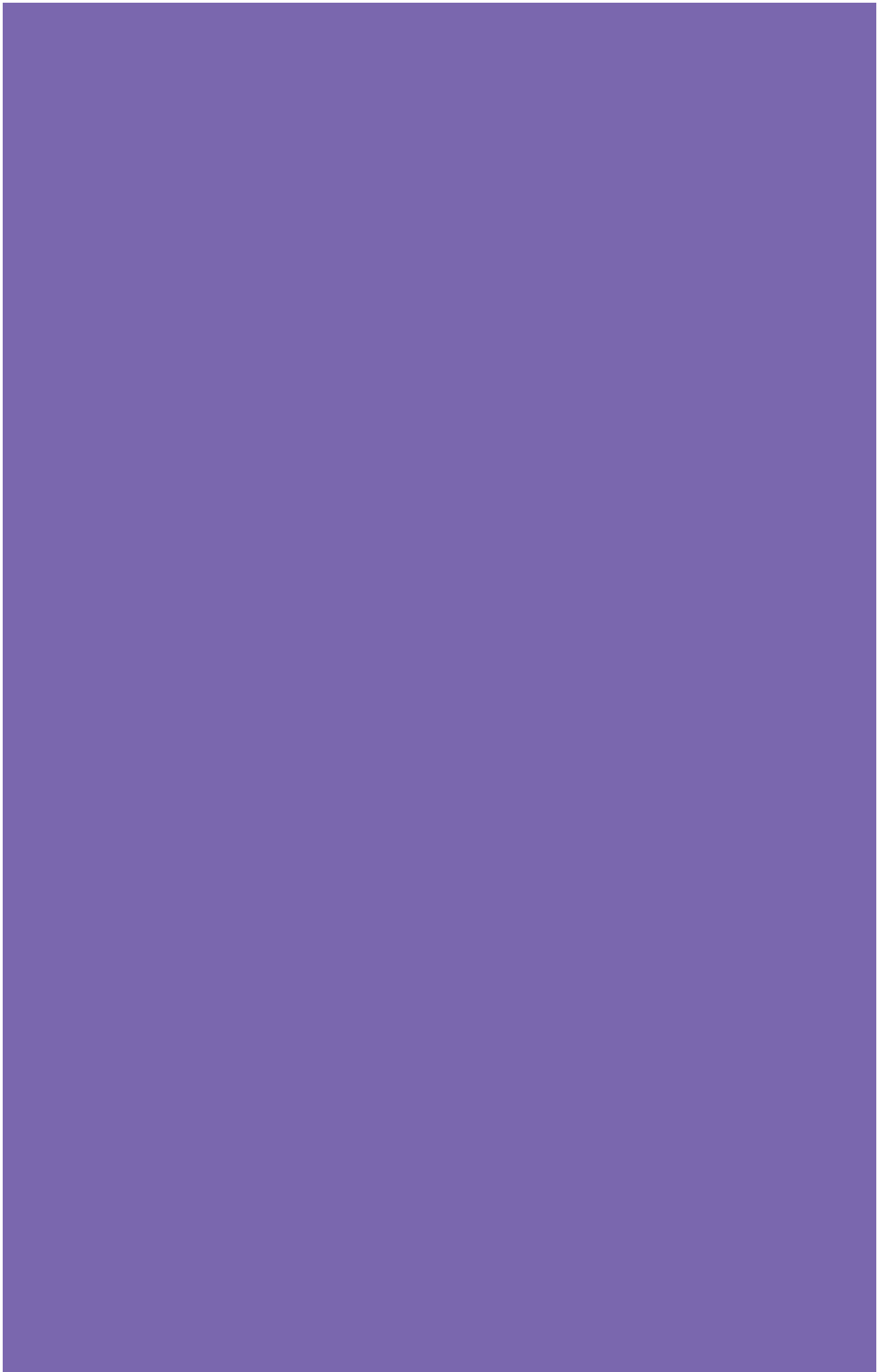
Foreword

The Prime Minister has put building a stronger sense of society – the Big Society – at the heart of our agenda for Government. Through a radical transfer of power and information we want to inspire more people to come together and drive local solutions to our social problems.

We want to open up our public services to new providers, including within the voluntary and community sector, to harness innovation and responsiveness to public need. The Big Society will not come about simply through Government withdrawal, but requires active and thoughtful remoulding of the state. We recognise that the Government has an active role to play in strengthening the capacity of neighbourhood groups, social enterprises, charities and voluntary groups to meet the challenges and take full advantage of the new opportunities ahead.

So among other initiatives, and subject to the Spending Review, we are planning to train a new generation of community organisers to help build local networks and leadership to support those who want to take more control. We intend them to have access to a new community grant programme, which will encourage neighbourhood groups to form and develop their own plans.

We will also set up a Big Society Bank to make it easier to access capital and advice. This will be funded by dormant bank accounts.

As a result of the Government's plans for reform, there will be more opportunities for charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises than ever before. There will be greater access to government funding through public sector contracts, but we recognise that you will need support to help you prepare for these new opportunities.

The purpose of the paper is to consult on how central Government can best play a role to support building infrastructure in the sector. We want to end top down initiatives that filter spending through multiple layers, and we want to make the support you receive more relevant, simpler to obtain and in keeping with our agenda for the Big Society. Tell us how you think we can best do this.

Nick Hurd MP
Minister for Civil Society

Contents

1. Context

"You can call it liberalism.
You can call it empowerment.
You can call it freedom.
You can call it responsibility.
I call it the Big Society...
the biggest, most dramatic
redistribution of power from
elites in Whitehall to the man
and woman on the street."

David Cameron 18 May 2010

The Big Society agenda will create new opportunities and challenges for civil society across the UK. Our long term vision for change is based around three areas:

Promoting social action: We believe that more people will look for opportunities to make a difference with their time and money.

Empowering local communities: Those who think they can do better will have the right to bid for public contracts and take over the use of community assets. There will be much more information available to help challenge the status quo.

Opening up public sector contracts: We are committed to ensuring charities, social enterprises and cooperatives will have a much greater role in the running of public services.

Over the long term, this profound culture change should strengthen the role and influence of the diverse ecosystem that is British civil society. However, this opportunity emerges at a very challenging time. In the short term the funding environment will continue to be very tough. The priorities for the Office for Civil Society are to make it easier to set up and run a charity, social enterprise or voluntary group; get more resources into the sector; and make it easier for the sector to work with the state. We will work to strengthen the capacity of the sector through a renewed Compact, a taskforce to cut red tape and a new programme to improve the effectiveness of infrastructure organisations[1] and support services.

Civil society organisations (charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups) will need to embrace new skills, partnerships and organisational models if they are to seize the opportunities that lie ahead. It will be vital for civil society organisations to improve their business skills, become more entrepreneurial and strengthen their governance. It is in this context that we want to look again at the effectiveness of the support frontline groups receive and the role of Government in helping civil society make the transition to greater strength and independence.

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1. Infrastructure organisations give support and advice to frontline groups, and in some cases advocate on their behalf (distinct from organisations that advise individual citizens).

2. Principles of reform

"The rule of this Government should be this: If it unleashes community engagement – we should do it. If it crushes it – we shouldn't."

David Cameron 18 May 2010

We know that only 18% of organisations receive support from infrastructure organisations but those groups that do are more likely to be successful in grant applications or bidding for contacts (see the analysis in Annex A). Currently the sector receives support from a wide range of organisations and funding streams and we believe the landscape is too confusing and centrally driven. Therefore the purpose of this document is to find out what types of support would be most helpful to you and how the Government can help improve local relationships, support mentoring schemes, and facilitate the sharing of skills and experience within the sector.

We know that Government's resources must be targeted where there is most need, address disadvantage and achieve the maximum impact. Our funding will be guided by the following principles:

- Central investment must be a catalyst for driving greater efficiency and reducing long term dependence on the state.

- Reform of the support system must be driven by frontline needs.

- Infrastructure organisations have a valuable role to play, not least in strengthening local networks.

- To address inequality, ensure all voices are heard and promote cohesion, there is a need to ensure support is accessible by diverse organisations.

Through this consultation, the Office for Civil Society is looking for your thoughts on its role in ensuring that civil society has the advice, support and influence it needs to help build the Big Society in England. The consultation presents some potential priorities for this.

Responses will also help to develop an Equalities Impact Assessment, to be published with the Government summary and response.

3. Potential priorities for action

"… the best ideas come from the ground up, not the top down. We know that when you give people and communities more power over their lives, more power to come together and work together to make life better – great things happen."

David Cameron, 18 May 2010

Government wants to invest in a new programme of strategic interventions which will help organisations modernise and become more efficient and more entrepreneurial in order to take advantage of the opportunities ahead. We want to help improve the effectiveness of support and advice that can enable this change to happen, including the advice provided by infrastructure organisations. This could involve:

• Easier access to advice through better use of online support,

• Encouraging better connections between small organisations and skilled volunteers or mentors from business or larger charities,

• Enabling infrastructure organisations to rationalise and become more effective,

• Direct support to frontline organisations to help them get ready for the new opportunities ahead.

Easier access to advice

There are already rich sources of online support for groups. Current examples of websites providing information to voluntary and community groups are:

www.fundingcentral.org.uk
www.direct.gov.uk
www.improvingsupport.org.uk.

In addition, some civil society groups may not be aware of the relevance of resources on www.businesslink.gov.uk (for example on financial management and employment law).

The Office for Civil Society could have a role in streamlining existing online directories to ensure that toolkits and resources can be shared efficiently, providing higher quality and timely information on locally available support.

Question 1: How can online services for frontline groups be improved?

Accessing wider sources of support

In the past, the Government's approach to building the capacity and skills of civil society focused on a limited range of providers, primarily charities and social enterprises such as local Councils for Voluntary Service. The current Government wants to encourage better connections both among civil society organisations and with the public and private sectors. The potential to transfer relevant skills has barely been tapped. Whether a large charity mentoring a small organisation, or businesses providing advice

to community groups, we see huge potential for skills transfer in this area. This type of mentoring scheme is consistent with Big Society principles, and would be a break from the top down approach of the past.

Employer-supported volunteering is also under used and is of benefit both to the volunteer and the organisation they help. It utilises important business expertise in areas where support can be expensive or in short supply. Pro bono support can be brokered locally or by national organisations which match skilled volunteers to the needs of civil society organisations.

Research shows that frontline groups do not always know what pro bono support is available in their area and shows that brokerage is unevenly spread or uncoordinated. Better brokerage and matching of volunteers could help tap this under used resource.

Question 2: What can Government do to forge more effective links and transfer skills between small civil society organisations and businesses or larger charities?

Question 3: How could brokerage of pro bono support be improved?

Direct support to build the skills of frontline organisations

The Government wants to help organisations modernise and restructure to take advantage of the opportunities that are opening up. Bursaries could help frontline groups access specialist services to become less reliant on the state, bid for public service contracts, modernise or be more entrepreneurial. Bursaries put the organisation in control, enabling it to access the advice that is right for its circumstances and choose from a range of providers. They can play a role within the wider system of support. Evaluation found very high satisfaction with bursaries; 83% of grant recipients from the recent Modernisation Fund indicated that these made their progress 'more likely to be successful'[2].

Question 4: What support might your organisation need to become more resilient?

Question 5: What do you think should be the priorities for a bursary fund?

Question 6: How could any bursary fund be delivered simply and fairly?

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2. Evaluation of Real Help for Communities: Modernisation Fund Interim Report, 2010, Cordis Bright.

Consolidation of infrastructure

In a time of fiscal tightening it is more important than ever for local and national infrastructure organisations to maximise economies of scale. Mergers and substantial collaboration (such as sharing back office functions and joint procurement), can help ensure that frontline groups continue to benefit from coordinated, high quality, sustainable support services. There is a strong case for rationalisation of support services at a local and national level. Case studies show strong results from mergers, and commissioners have very positive views (a survey found that 92% felt that greater collaboration of infrastructure would bring benefits)[3].

Consolidation can require radical changes with up-front costs, which infrastructure organisations have difficulty funding. There could be an opportunity for time-limited consolidation grants to enable infrastructure to implement merger or substantial collaboration. The funding will be limited, so clear criteria would be needed, potentially around ensuring that rationalisation is part of locally agreed plans for the reconfiguration of services with local authority support over time; or targeting improved quality of services to the frontline; or support for diverse groups.

Question 7: How could consolidation grants help ensure the sustainability and efficiency of infrastructure services?

Encouraging better public sector partnerships

As new markets for the sector open up, the role of infrastructure organisations can increase. They can act as a conduit between the local public sector and civil society in decision-making, designing and delivering services and supporting the voice of people who use services. Evidence shows that those who use support services are much more likely to report good relationships with the public sector. We know that in some areas this social capital is weak, so an option could be to target these areas to improve access to support and promote better relationships with the public sector[4].

Question 8: Are there ways that expert intervention can support areas which are lacking social capital to improve local relationships and develop a stronger civil society?

3. Learning from Mergers, Shared Intelligence, 2010

4. Getting Things Done Together: Key Findings from the Partnership Improvement Programme 2009. I&DeA and IVAR

Central Government partnerships with national infrastructure[5]

National infrastructure organisations (such as umbrella bodies) have a role to play in shaping the development of Government policy. Their economies of scale can enable them to provide specialist advice. The Office for Civil Society strategic partners grant programme began in 2006 and is due to end in March 2011. It contributes to the core costs of 39 organisations operating at a national level. The Office for Civil Society intends to commission a new strategic partner programme (dependent on the result of the upcoming Spending Review). The key funding criteria for any new programme may include an organisation's ability to:

• Represent a part of the sector or the sector as a whole, in helping to shape government policy,

• Help to deliver the vision for the Big Society, including the three priorities for civil society (set out in chapter 1).

Question 9: How can central Government best work with national infrastructure to support and deliver the Big Society?

Final note

All the potential priorities set out in this consultation paper are for discussion and should not be considered to indicate firm commitments to action.   However, any action taken in these areas could be linked, to ensure that the frontline experience of accessing support is coherent. This could mean that an organisation would first search online for useful toolkits and resources. If they needed further help, the website would help signpost them to infrastructure services. If these did not meet their needs, then improved brokerage would enable them to access skills from pro bono volunteers. Where their needs were still unmet, and in line with the criteria, then they could apply for a bursary. This would encourage efficiencies by ensuring that low cost options are explored first and help make the process of accessing support more streamlined for local groups.

Question 10: Do you have further suggestions or comments on how the Office for Civil Society can help frontline groups become more efficient and effective?

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5. Note that responses to Question 9 in this section are needed by an earlier date, set out in Annex B

Annex A
Market analysis of current advice and support

Support providers and infrastructure organisations

A wide range of support and advice is currently available to local groups. Organisations including Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) and Rural Community Councils have long provided 'infrastructure' services to smaller groups, such as supporting start-ups, fundraising, and help with business planning[6]. Specialist organisations focus on topics such as accountancy, or support particular groups, such as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations. Pro bono support (typically professional advice and services offered free of charge) can be available from the private sector, but this is patchy and can be hard to access.

The environment for local infrastructure

Evidence[7] shows that infrastructure organisations have mixed sources of funding but rely heavily on public funds and that local public funding is essential for sustainable infrastructure services. Funding is currently too thinly spread amongst hundreds of infrastructure organisations[8], leading to competition for funds with frontline groups[9]. The NAO found that the need for funding by infrastructure groups is much greater than that available to them[10]. Consolidation of some services could increase efficiency and address risks in times of reduced public spending. Evidence shows benefits from mergers, and increasing interest among both infrastructure and commissioners[11].

The frontline experience of infrastructure

Whilst the coordination of local support has improved, the quality of support to frontline groups is variable[9] and finding support can be confusing for small organisations. Evidence[7] shows that only 18% of organisations are accessing local infrastructure support and there is a lack of awareness of what might be available. However, organisations working with excluded communities and equalities groups are much more likely to access support, with the exception of faith-based groups. Many faith-based groups make a significant contribution to voluntary action for the common good, so their needs will be

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6. These services are listed more fully elsewhere, e.g. ChangeUp, Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector, 2004, Home Office, or more recently, Portfolio of Support, Progress Report and Proposal, Adrienne Hunter, GMCVO, 2010

7. National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, (NSTSO) 2009

8. Nearly 300 members are listed on the website of NAVCA (the umbrella body for CVSs); there are also further specialist infrastructure organisations and over 300 volunteer centres

9. Building Blocks: Developing Second Tier Support for Frontline Groups, 2007, Alison Harker and Steve Burkeman, published by City Parochial Foundation

10. Building the Capacity of the Third Sector, National Audit Office, 2009

11. Learning from Mergers, Shared Intelligence, 2010

considered, including in the Equality Impact Assessment. Evidence shows that those groups which do receive support report greater success in grant applications and have stronger local partnerships.

This analysis helps shape the principles of reform set out in Chapter 2.

Assessment of past investment in infrastructure

Since 2004, the previous Government spent over £200 million on local and national infrastructure through the ChangeUp programme, which includes national and local investment in improving the provision of support, such as funding consortia of local infrastructure organisations. Benefits included better communication with the frontline and the local public sector, improved services and collaboration between infrastructure organisations[12]. The National Audit Office (NAO) found evidence of the benefits reaching the frontline.

However, evidence has also shown that the benefits are variable, some have not been sustained, and the strength of consortia varies. ChangeUp funding was dispersed through around twenty different national, regional and local programmes. Although partial assessments show benefits from some of these programmes, there is no clear, independent evidence of overall strategic impact.

The NAO was therefore not able to reach a conclusion on the value for money of ChangeUp. The current financial situation throws this lack of robust evidence into sharp relief when weighed up against other national priorities better able to demonstrate outcomes. Although grant commitments in the current financial year will be honoured, no ChangeUp programmes will be renewed in April 2011 (including funding for regional networks). Capacitybuilders[13] will work with current grant holders as these programmes draw to a close, including any additional flexibility required in the use of funds.

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12. Evaluation of ChangeUp 2004 to 2008 Summative evaluation report, 2009, Third Sector Research Centre, BMG Research, Guidestar and Sustain consultancy

13. Capacitybuilders is the public body established in 2006 to deliver the ChangeUp programmes

Survey data that informs the market analysis

The following tables contain data from the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations (now renamed National Survey of Charities and Social Enterprises), underpinning some of the preceeding analysis.

In response to Question 4 of the National Survey, 1,502 respondents identified 'capacity building and other support etc' as a main area of their work and are assumed to be infrastructure organisations for the purposes of this analysis. In response to Question 19, 8,861 respondents reported that they currently access support services; these organisations are identified as infrastructure support users. All data are available at www.nstso.com.

In total 18% of all respondents to the survey reported that they were accessing local infrastructure support, and 55% were not. However, organisations that work with excluded communities and equalities groups were much more likely to use support (see Table 2 below). Infrastructure organisations also reported a particular focus on these groups, suggesting a relatively strong reach into excluded communities.

Accessing infrastructure was associated with positive outcomes, including a substantially higher likelihood of success in grant applications and bidding for contracts: 52% of support users reported being very or fairly successful, compared to 22% of non-users. 33% of support users reported that their local authority was a positive or very positive influence, compared with 16% overall. Satisfaction varied according to the type of support (Table 3) but overall 77% of users of infrastructure reported being very or fairly satisfied. However, 27% of respondents did not know whether they received support, felt the question was not applicable, or did not answer it, suggesting a need for greater awareness of support and the positive outcome associated with it.

In response to Question 23 ('how do the statutory bodies in your local area influence your organisation's success?'), statutory bodies were found to be a positive or very positive influence for 33% of support users, over twice the national average.

Table 1. Sources of income for infrastructure organisations

Funding question		Infrastructure organisations	Average response
Top sources of local grant funding	Local councils, whether borough, district, county or single tier	36%	22%
	Local NHS body	9%	3%
	Other local partnership involving statutory bodies	8%	4%
	Other local statutory funding	8%	5%
Top sources of local contract funding	Local councils, whether borough, district, county or single tier	26%	12%
	Local NHS body	10%	4%
	Other local partnership involving statutory bodies	8%	2%
Top sources of national grant funding	Non-departmental public body (e.g. Capacitybuilders, Big Lottery Fund)	24%	10%
	Central Government department	10%	5%
Which source of funding is most important for your success?	Grants or core funding (including SLAs)	25%	9%
	Donations and fundraising activities	18%	30%
	Earned income from contracts	16%	6%
	Grants from non-statutory bodies	11%	6%
	Membership fees/subscriptions	8%	19%
	Earned income from trading including retail	8%	7%
	National Lottery (e.g. Big Lottery)	7%	2%
Success applying for funding or bidding for contracts from local statutory bodies over last five years	Very or fairly successful	40%	23%
	Not very or not at all successful	22%	17%
	Never bid	34%	52%
Level of dissatisfaction with local funding	Range of grants available	41%	25%
	Range of contracts available	38%	16%
	Processes for accessing grants and contracts	45%	23%

Table 2. Levels of support use, broken down by the beneficiary of the respondent

Which are the main clients / users / beneficiaries of your organisation?	Support users	Non-support users	Don't know/ N/A/no answer
Socially excluded / vulnerable people	47%	43%	10%
People with mental health needs	41%	46%	13%
Asylum seekers / refugees	38%	53%	9%
Victims of crime and their families	37%	50%	13%
People with learning difficulties	36%	49%	15%
People with addiction problems (e.g. alcohol, drugs)	36%	50%	14%
Homeless people	35%	49%	16%
Offenders, ex-offenders and their families	35%	51%	14%
Other third sector organisations	30%	46%	24%
People from Black and Minority Ethnic communities	30%	57%	13%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people	29%	58%	13%
People with physical disabilities and / or special needs	28%	52%	20%
People with particular physical health needs	24%	54%	22%
Young people (aged 16 to 24)	22%	57%	21%
People with a particular financial need (including poverty)	21%	53%	26%
Children (aged 15 or under)	20%	57%	23%
Older people	19%	55%	26%
The general public / everyone	18%	58%	24%
Women[14]	16%	55%	29%
Men	13%	59%	28%
Animals	13%	61%	26%
Faith communities	12%	59%	29%
Total	**18%**	**55%**	**27%**

14. Note that due to the high percentage of overall respondents reporting women and men among main beneficiaries, these cannot be a proxy for specialist support for each gender.

Table 3. Satisfaction with local support.

Note that satisfaction ratings are given as a percentage of support users that provided an answer (i.e. excluding those that do not use support, and excluding support users that gave no response or ticked not applicable / don't know).

How would you rate the support available in your local area from all bodies to...	% of support users providing an answer	Satisfaction rating as % of those support users providing an answer		
		Very + fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very + fairly dissatisfied
...Access training	79%	62%	24%	14%
...Access advice and support for your organisation	89%	61%	22%	17%
…Work together with other third sector organisations to influence local decisions	76%	50%	29%	21%
...Work together with other third sector organisations to deliver local services	72%	46%	32%	22%
...Find volunteers for your organisation	75%	43%	29%	28%
...Recruit and retain management and leadership staff for your organisation	65%	40%	38%	22%
...Recruit and retain paid staff for your organisation	55%	40%	36%	24%
...Find trustees / management committee members for your organisation	60%	40%	40%	37%
...Ensure you have enough space to operate (e.g. office space)	63%	37%	30%	33%
...Apply for funding or bid for contracts	76%	36%	28%	37%
...Maintain sufficient financial reserves	67%	25%	33%	42%

Annex B
About the consultation

Although this consultation is specific to Office for Civil Society programmes in England, the Office will share learning from this consultation with other Departments and policy areas.

The Government wishes to consult individuals and organisations about proposals for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of support and advice for frontline civil society groups, over 12 weeks from 14 October 2010. Please respond by 6 January 2011.

Note that due to specific timing requirements for any new strategic partners programme, responses to Question 9 should be received by 25 November 2010.

There are a number of ways to respond to the consultation:

Online: responses via the online consultation are particularly encouraged. This, and further information on the consultation process, can be found at www.strongercivilsociety.org.uk

Email: send your responses via email to: info@strongercivilsociety.org.uk

Postal: send a written response to:

The Consultation Support Team

FREEPOST (RRGR-AKAL-HLBT)
Capacitybuilders
77 Paradise Circus
Birmingham B1 2DT

Copies of this consultation in alternative formats (such as larger print or Braille) can be supplied on request via phone: 0121 288 6559 or email: info@strongercivilsociety.org.uk.

If you have any questions about the consultation, you can call 0121 288 6559 between the hours of 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Following consultation, the Government will consider the feedback to the consultation. A summary will be published in 2011 with the overall Government response to the consultation.

When they respond, representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions.

The information you send may need to be passed to colleagues within Cabinet Office or other Government departments, and may be published in full or in a summary of responses. Capacitybuilders is assisting with management of the consultation process, events and collation of responses.

All information in responses, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If you want your response to remain confidential, you should explain why confidentiality is necessary and your request will be acceded to only if it is appropriate in the circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department. Contributions to the consultation will be anonymised if they are quoted.

Individual contributions will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond. If you have comments or complaints about the consultation process itself, please contact:

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Cabinet Office
Capability and Programmes
Kirkland House
22 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

E: vanessa.barron@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Annex C
Who we are consulting

Government wants to hear the views of a wide range of individuals and organisations through this consultation, including:

• Local frontline voluntary organisations and social enterprises

• Infrastructure agencies at local, national and regional levels

• Local public sector agencies and private sector businesses

This consultation document will be sent to key representative and expert organisations, including:

Local Government Association

Office for Civil Society Strategic Partners

Capacitybuilders grant holders

Skills - Third Sector

I&DeA

IVAR

Annex D
Code of practice on consultation

This document and the consultation process have been planned to adhere to the Code of Practice on Consultation, and are in line with the consultation criteria, which are:

- Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence policy outcome.

- Consultation should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

- Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

- Consultation exercise should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

- Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

- Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

- Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Plan of Scrutiny Review

TOPIC	Access to Services	
OBJECTIVE	To review and report upon Access to Services on North Yorkshire Communities focussing in particular on community managed resources, building community capacity, sustainable Broadband–led transformation and the aspirations of the Big Society. To identify issues, challenges and any improvements that may be recommended to the Executive and/or Portfolio Holder.	
REASONS FOR REVIEW	Access to services is a significant theme for the county council and its communities at a time of financial uncertainty and service change through budgetary pressures. The Big Society is the driving political vision of the coalition government: a commitment to shifting power away from the state and towards people and communities. There are many reasons to think that this sort of approach is necessary. Long term trends such as an ageing population and climate change will transform what communities look like, how they operate, and what responsibilities they assume. At the same time, public services face an increase in demand and rising 'consumer' expectation of service standards in the face of which radical redesign and innovative new models of delivery will be necessary. The government's emergent Big Society programme will also materially affect the way in which councils deal with planning, ownership of assets and the running of services.	
CORPORATE OBJECTIVES (Please tick as appropriate)	To ensure good access for all	√
	To help people to live and thrive in safe and secure communities	√
	To help all children and young people to develop their full potential	
	To promote a flourishing economy	√
	To maintain and enhance our environment and heritage	
	To improve health and wellbeing and give people effective support when they need it	√
METHOD	Initial briefing to task group.	

	Members refine the terms of reference and scope of the expected in-depth review Visits to exemplars and emerging best practice- • Hudswell Community pub • Shared premises with partners and community groups • Communities forming ISPs to work with NyNet – Robin Hoods Bay Desktop research - Consultation with interested groups
TASK GROUP MEMBERS	To be decided
STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPANTS	
ISSUES	**Drivers** • What are the national policy drivers • What are the local policy drivers • Community initiatives and the Big Society in the current public sector financial climate • Ensuring North Yorkshire is not left behind other areas of the UK in terms of digital access. **Accountability** • Community groups and voluntary organisations in local service delivery; what the involvement of councillors will be • How will it sit alongside the decision making and scrutiny mechanisms that already exist? • Making community managed services sustainable in the longer term **Localism Vs strategic planning and the Decentralisation and Localism Bill** • Place Based Budgeting and Community Budgets • what the Big Society means in practice in the context of the statutory requirements upon the council • Opening up Public Services, releasing control and management of services and the impact and significance of considering different supplier options **Capacity building** What represents current practice in the county area - emerging models, cooperatives , mutuals, Community Pubs, social enterprises etc

	• How do we proactively support local initiatives in helping develop the concepts and the local policies that will make it a reality • In order for community groups to take on greater roles and responsibilities in service design and delivery, they are going to need a range of skills and expertise - how do we assist?
WORK PROGRAMME	To be decided - provisionally review commences in December with initial meeting. Conclusion circa July 2011
SUCCESS INDICATORS	Review clearly contributes to greater understanding of - • Community initiatives in the context of the Big Society for the council, its partners for the community at large. • How NYCC reaps efficiencies around access to services whilst maximising the community benefit derived from a diverse approach • How local decision-makers are going to devolve power and responsibility to others - ie how we empower communities to develop plans based upon local knowledge and shape places for themselves. • How NYCC currently and in the future might support communities to take responsibility for land, buildings and services transferred to them to deliver broad-ranging community benefits • The wider implications regarding planning and the running of those services • The significance of Sustainable Broadband-led transformation in this context
ESTIMATE OF RESOURCES REQUIRED	To be determined when Method of review clearer but will include an estimate of : • Officer support – Chief Executives Group and Financial Services • Discussions with Managers from Partner organisations and Third Sector representatives • Consultation with local representatives of schemes • Visit to premises and initiatives
	R Busby Scrutiny Support Officer County Hall NORTHALLERTON