

Local councils and localism

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Three questions



- **What does decentralisation, localism, and the Big Society mean?**
 - **How is power going to be decentralised to the local level?**
 - **What are local people and communities going to be able to do?**
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The big picture

- The Prime Minister has been clear that the government has three priorities

Generating growth



Creating the Big Society



Implementing reforms



**Voluntary and
philanthropic
action**

**Community
empowerment**

**Public service
reform**

Localism

Is the ethos...

Doing everything at the lowest possible level and only involving central government if absolutely necessary

Decentralisation

Is the process...

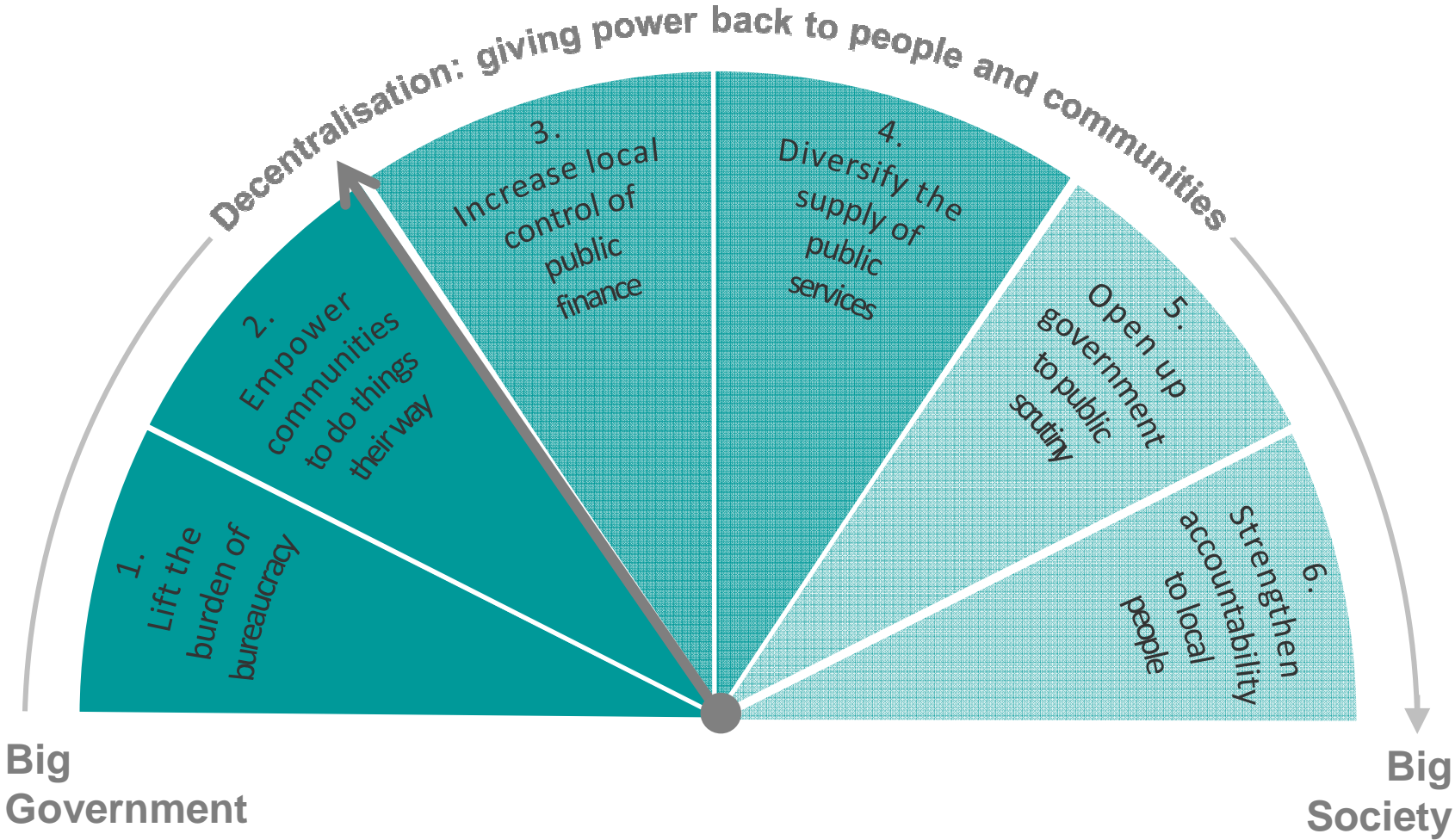
Giving away power to individuals, professionals, communities and local institutions

Big Society

Is the vision...

A society where people, neighbourhoods and communities have more power and responsibility and use it to create better services and outcomes

The six essential decentralisation actions



Action taken and underway

Lift the burden of bureaucracy

- Red Tape Challenge
- CAA/LAA/Audit Commission
- Regional strategies
- Standards Board

Increase local control of public finance

- Removal of ring-fencing
- LG Resources Review
- Community budgets
- Social Fund

Open up government to public scrutiny

- Transparent crime data
- DCLG and LAs spend data
- Single Data List
- SCS salary data

Empower communities to do things their way

- General Power of Competence
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Community Right to Buy

Diversify the supply of public services

- Academies and Free schools
- Right to challenge
- Mutuals
- GP Commissioning

Strengthen accountability to local people

- Health and Wellbeing Boards
 - Police and Crime Commissioners
 - Directly elected mayors
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Specific new powers for communities



Community Right to Challenge

Community Right to Buy

General Power of Competence (including parishes)

Local Referendums

Neighbourhood Planning

Big Society Bank

Council Tax Referendums

Community Budgets

Community Right to Build

Free Schools

Community Organisers

The difference for local communities

- More opportunities for people to get involved in their local communities
- Citizens able to see how money is being spent in their neighbourhood. Information and influence to set priorities, participate in key decisions and co-design services
- Easier for citizens to take over public buildings so they have the space to come together and share ideas



Citizens able to challenge existing services where they see opportunities for improving services and value for money

Local people and communities have greater ability to determine the shape of the places in which they live

Local institutions freed up from unnecessary burdens and control and enabling them to support grassroots action

The Open Public Services White Paper: rationale



- The purpose of the White Paper is simple – to make sure that everyone has access to the best public services, and that the best becomes better still.
 - The Open Public Services White Paper commits Government to a programme of modernising public services based on the key principles of:
 - ❖ increasing choice;
 - ❖ decentralising services;
 - ❖ opening services to a range of providers;
 - ❖ ensuring fair access, and;
 - ❖ accountability to users and taxpayers.
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A framework for opening up public services

Individual services

- introduce personal budgets (direct payments) for vulnerable people as part of the supporting people scheme
- Ensure users of DCLG sponsored services are prompted about the choices available to them
- Identify independent champions for consumer choice in each service area (e.g social housing)

Neighbourhood services

- Develop a draft national framework for local schemes of delegation
- Set out proposals for how to implement a new requirement that every local authority publish a scheme of delegation
- Set out proposals for a new process to make it easier to set up a neighbourhood council

Commissioned services

- Encourage local authorities and locally elected individuals to open up locally commissioned services further
- Consider whether and how to decentralise power to commission more services locally
- Develop plans for extending commissioning approaches to services run or sponsored by the DCLG
- Lead work on the next phase of community budgets

Other actions

- **Accountability – holding providers to account and publishing user satisfaction data**
- **Stimulating more openness and innovation in public services**
- **Ensuring fairness and access**
- **Promoting opportunities to potential providers**
- **Recognising local authorities most supportive of the VCS**

The Open Public Services White Paper: timeline and next steps



July 2011

- Open Public Services White Paper published.

July to
September
2011

- Wide ranging discussion and listening exercise with individuals, communities, public sector staff, providers and others with an interest in how public services are delivered.

November
2011

- Government will set out how Departments will take forward ideas to implement open public services over the rest of this Parliament, including proposals for legislation.
- Commitments will be reflected in departmental plans, taking into account responses to the listening exercise and with consideration of the current economic climate.

From April
2012

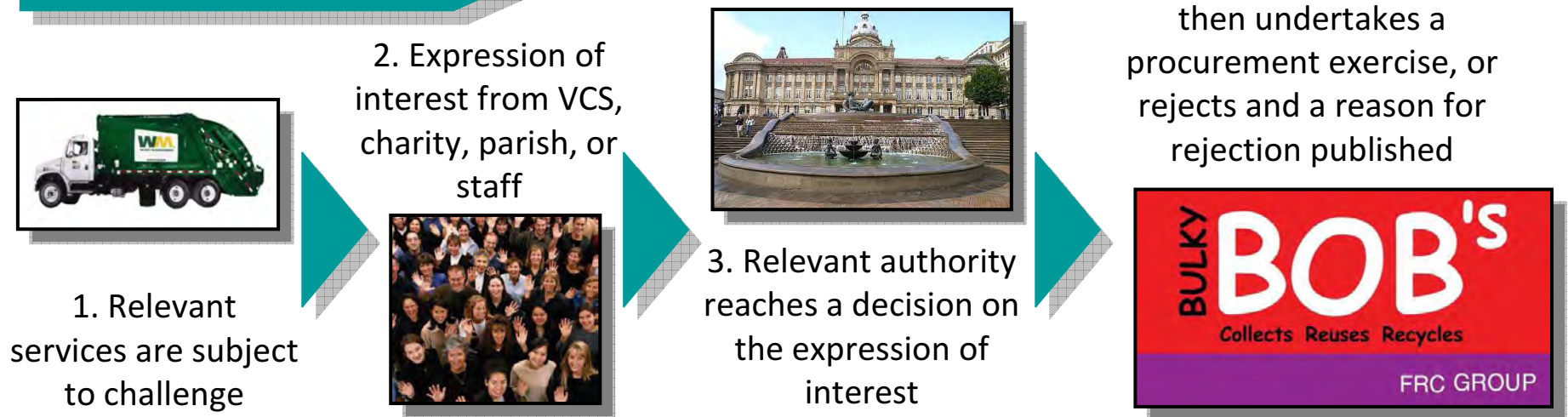
- Departments will publish regular progress reports, setting out the steps that have been taken to open public services.

www.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

A powerful Right to Challenge

- Public bodies already contract out services – local government spends £42 billion a year on contracts for goods and services
- Many public bodies already make good use of the talents of voluntary and community bodies, but in some areas good ideas fall on deaf ears – only 2% of spend on public services goes to the VCS
- The Right hands the initiative to communities with good ideas about how services can be run differently or better, ensures these ideas get a fair hearing, and gives them the time they may need to prepare effective bids to run the service

How does it work?



A new Community Right to Buy

- The Community Right to Buy is a radical new community right
- The aim is to give communities a fair chance to bid to take over land and buildings that are important to them
- This will help local communities to save important community assets, tackle social need and build up resources in their neighbourhood

How does it work?

1. Communities identify assets of community value



2. Local authorities hold and administer a list of assets of community value

3. Communities – including town and parish councils - get time and support to bid for assets



4. More communities take control of local assets

Breaking down the barriers

- Government has extended an offer to any individual, community group or council experiencing government barriers to taking local action to contact DCLG in writing, over the phone, or online
- DCLG then works with colleagues across Government to try to tackle the barrier if possible
- As of 9 June the team had 340 requests, 35% are about policy, legislation or regulation; 50% are local issues, about 15% want information or funding



- The barrier to action imposed by Criminal Record checks has been raised a number of times
 - Government recognised this and has responded with a review addressing the issues raised, streamlining the procedure, and enabling transferability in the same sector
- Barrier busting is part of a wider systemic change in the way government operates. Instead of only being focused upwards on providing advice to Ministers, Whitehall is now putting those resources at the service of communities
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Big Society in Action:



Newant Initiative Trust take over community centre in South West

Locals take over the running of the town's community centre

Gayton Swimming Pool

A £1m community swimming pool opened in January 2011, rebuilt after a campaign by

locals.



Neighbourhood planning in Bermondsey

Southwark Council working with community to develop two Neighbourhood Plans in adjoining Bankside and Bermondsey that will provide more homes, improve housing conditions and bring more employment.

Community Matters Partnership in Hampshire

Social Enterprise that encourages local corporate companies to work together to better their local communities.

Big Society in Action:



Kirdford Community Shop

A community owned and managed village shop and community space, where all profits go back to the benefit of the community. It was awarded the sought-after title of Daily Telegraph Best Corner/Village Shop in Britain.

Community refuse to call time on their local – Local pub ‘George and Dragon’

When their local pub closed three years ago, residents got together to form a co-operative. Members sought local investment, and about 100 members of the community put up funds that enabled them to buy the pub.

Superfast broadband in Eden

Parishes across the Eden Valley are to be the first rural communities in England to benefit from superfast broadband thanks to work led by local residents in partnership with Broadband UK, Cumbria County Council and

DCLG.

Darnall Post Office in Sheffield

Darnall Post Office is the first in the country to be run by a charity after the original facility closed in 2009.

This is only the beginning

- **Localism, Decentralisation, and the Big Society underpin everything the government stands for and its approach to policy making**
- **The government is putting in place a number of specific new powers for communities that over the next couple of years will begin to make a real difference**
- **What happens next and the success of these powers is up to people taking these opportunities.**

Over to you
