LITTLE LEISURE CENTRES AND LIBRARIES IN THE BIG SOCIETY.
LSA 2015

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WE ASK:

- What were the problems volunteer groups faced in asset transfer?
- What support did they need?
- What support could be provided?
- In the context of a critique of the Big Society.
RECENT ASSET TRANSFER IN LEISURE

- sports centres, swimming pools and libraries
- volunteers plan and execute the transfer to trust status themselves
- take roles of governance and delivery afterwards
- an alternative to local government closing non-statutory services as a consequence of reduced funding
Ecclesfield Library is about to become independently run by the community.

This will create exciting possibilities for the library and you, with lots of new opportunities to safeguard and develop this valuable community resource.

We need to act quickly to take advantage of these opportunities!

We would like to hear YOUR ideas and wishes for future activities in the building!

Why not drop in at one of our meetings and find out more about the development of our library?

Entertainment by Raymond Greenoaken
Storyteller (Children Welcome)

FREE REFRESHMENTS

TUESDAY
29th APRIL 2014
9am - 11am

WEDNESDAY
30th APRIL 2014
7pm - 9pm

library.ecclesfieldgroups.com
(0114) 245 0200
IN CONTRAST TO THE FIRST GENERATION OF TRUSTS

- E.g. SIV, Edinburgh Leisure, Greenwich Leisure
- major objective to avoid non-domestic rates to central government; and avoid CCT
- volunteers in governance as trustees; recruited for their expertise
- transfer to trust status led by paid employees
- local authority represented on the board
- BIG and may expand beyond local area
# Review of 5 Years of the Big Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>new kinds of partnerships; voluntary sector resilient, and strengthening communities; volunteering remaining high compared to other countries - although at static levels since 2001.</td>
<td>large companies benefiting - bias against the local and voluntary sector; services not sufficiently meeting the needs of those who most need them -exacerbating gaps rich and poor; lack of dialogue to find a way of adapting to budget cuts; power not significantly transferred from the state; failure to establish a strong partnership with the voluntary sector; failure to mobilise the private sector to work for the common good.</td>
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Methods

- Semi-structured interviews with managers and volunteers [sometimes the same person] in 11 facilities (libraries, museums and sports centres) which have transferred from local government to volunteer control and one in an authority which developed volunteers to work alongside employees (2014-15).
- Review of support and guidance [Sport England, DTS, and N. American]
A small swimming pool and leisure centre - outskirts of Leeds - built in 1904. Used by local residents and schools for swimming lessons.

Opening hours reduced in September 2011 as part of a spending review by Leeds City Council.

Local community group established to support the pool in February 2011 and re-opened in January 2013 as an Industrial Provident Society on a 25 year lease from the Council.

Houses a public gym, swimming pool, steam room and space for community events, meetings and fitness classes.

The trustees are volunteers and paid workers manage the pool and deliver the service.
WHAT SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED TO VARYING DEGREES?

- Guidance and support with establishing legal entity and business plans
- Mentors who have been through the process.
- Volunteer development officers - especially in areas of low social capital
- Advice and support from local authority staff
- Political goodwill
Support - Provided to Varying Degrees

- Technical training and support
- Rate relief
- Favourable leases
- Assurance that building liabilities will be met
- Clarity over liabilities arising from previous grants.
- Redeployment of local authority staff and clarity over application of TUPE regulations.
our examples are ‘little’. individual and small.

Oligopoly - Of 161 contracts with local authorities, three operators hold 61%. Sports and Leisure Management; Places for People and Greenwich Leisure Limited. ‘predatory trusts’. Is big the default option?

Hard to get a national picture in sport

In libraries - all small local trusts.
CONCLUSIONS

- important supportive role of Volunteer Advice Centres
- contrast in collaboration government / volunteers
- has had to be genuine transfer of power
- Most support is required in most disadvantaged areas. - but it tends to be delivered to demand.
CONCLUSIONS

- little evidence of businesses showing leadership in committing resources for the common good
WHAT CAN WE LEARN - ACTION/SUPPORT?

- Improve and promote Sports England’s asset transfer advice - for local govt as well as volunteers.
- Facilitate networking for support
- guidance on TUPE
- Local to be the default option to promote community engagement
- volunteer led transfers should be encouraged, rather than discouraged
WHAT CAN WE LEARN - ACTION/SUPPORT?

- Favourable rate relief and lease conditions
- Technical support and training
- Support from development officers
- Businesses to commit resources for the common good
- Clarify liability for previous grants
Most of this costs
We are here because of cuts in expenditure
We can’t develop volunteers to provide a service for all [rather than the advantaged] without support.
And this takes time
Funds and time are in short supply!
REFERENCES

http://www.mdpi.com/2076-3387/5/2/71

Nichols G. and Forbes D. (2014) The transfer of public leisure facilities to volunteer delivery
ANY QUESTIONS?