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# News Release

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## **Big Society strategy for charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises**

A strategy to support charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises was unveiled by Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society today. It is the first step towards helping civil society organisations grasp new opportunities arising from the massive devolution of power to local communities and reform of public services that underpins the Big Society.

Speaking to civil society representatives at the National Council of Voluntary Organisation's head quarters in London, the Minister also announced he would consult on how best to improve the infrastructure that provides advice, training and funding to front line groups.

Already changes in welfare to work, health and social care and the criminal justice system, offer civil society groups more opportunities to bid for and run public services. The strategy pulls together ideas and initiatives to give civil society a clear picture of the Government's vision.

Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society, said:

“Civil society groups cannot be immune from public spending reductions which are necessary for the whole of society. But our vision for a Big Society, with more

diverse providers of public services and greater power for communities to make local decisions, brings huge opportunities to charities voluntary groups and social enterprises.

“The *Building a Stronger Civil Society* strategy gives a clear plan for government support to charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises as they adjust to a new relationship with the state. It’s important that we hear from the front line about the kind of support that will really help them which is why we are launching a consultation.”

Plans in the strategy include:

- reducing red tape for small organisations;
- giving public sector staff the right to spin-out and form a co-ops or mutual supported by a new network of advice and mentoring;
- give local communities the right to buy or bid to run community assets;
- continue to match fund local endowments to encourage giving; and
- modernisation of public service commissioning so the most efficient and effective charities can get a fair chance to bid for public contracts.

Charities voluntary groups and social enterprises will also find new opportunities in the drive for greater transparency. For example local authorities are now required to publish all their spending above £500 which will give the sector greater access to competitively important information.

#### **Notes to Editors**

1/The Building a Stronger Civil Society strategy is available at: [inserts link]

2/The consultation, Supporting a Stronger Civil Society is available at: [insert link]

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