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Subject: Ideas on Devon's 'Big Society' go to Parliament.

• **For immediate release**

Representatives from the Community Council of Devon visited MPs at the Houses of Parliament yesterday to share their ideas on how the Big Society can work for Devon's communities.

The visit was organised by the Community Council of Devon's Chief Executive Jay Talbot and was attended by MPs and their researchers.

'The aim of our visit was to highlight the good practice that is already happening in many areas of our county and share ideas about how the Big Society can work for the good of Devon's communities.

Across Devon communities are already used to being self-reliant and neighbourly. There is a great opportunity here to build on the foundations that currently exist, such as outstanding Parish and Town Councils, effectively run community buildings and community run and owned transport schemes to name but a few' Jay said.

However he also sounded a note of caution 'Individuals and groups need to feel supported and positive about more power being given to communities. There must be practical support in place to help them understand and to adjust to any changes. And communities must not be taken for granted'

*** CCD press release ***

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The response of the MPs was very positive ‘ It was a particularly hectic day in Parliament, so we were delighted that these MPs showed such interest’ commented Jay. ‘All of them indicated that they wanted us to keep them informed and continue the dialogue’

The Community Council of Devon’s short paper - ‘The Big Society: Making it work for Devon’ is available on request or by following the link

<http://www.devonrcc.org.uk/news.php?mode=2&nid=395>

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Notes to editors

Community Council of Devon is an independent Charity committed to working for the future of rural Devon since 1961. We support the fundamental institutions of rural life, and help communities develop new and imaginative ways of meeting needs, working in partnership with statutory bodies and voluntary organisations.

Visit our website on www.devonrcc.org.uk and find out more about us.

The ‘Big Society’ – Making it work for Devon

The concept of the ‘Big Society’ seems to summarise a new approach by Government to put both power and opportunity into the hands of the ‘community’. Whilst the Government develops the detail of what ‘Localism’ and ‘Big Society’ mean in practice, there are already many ideas in circulation. These tend to look at the needs and nature of our inner cities and are not always relevant to small and rural communities, such as are typical in Devon.

A short paper [<http://www.devonrcc.org.uk/news.php?mode=2&nid=395>] has been agreed by our Board of Trustees. It sets out how we at the Community Council of Devon feel the Big Society could work for Devon. We hope this will stimulate discussion and help shape a debate. We are sending this paper to County and other District Council colleagues, other public and voluntary bodies.

It has already received a good response from Leaders and Chief Executives of our local Councils as well as senior civil servants in Whitehall, and a number of further local meetings are now being planned.

