

The Big Society

Davy Jones

**Horsham District Community
Partnership Annual Conference**

4th April 2011

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A pair of hands is shown holding a small, realistic globe of the Earth. The globe is centered on the Americas, with North and South America visible in shades of green and yellow, surrounded by blue oceans and white clouds. The hands are positioned at the bottom and sides of the globe, with fingers gently gripping it. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the skin and the details of the globe. Overlaid on the center of the globe is the text "The World Has Changed" in a large, white, sans-serif font, arranged in three lines: "The World", "Has", and "Changed".

**The World
Has
Changed**

Coalition Government Pledges



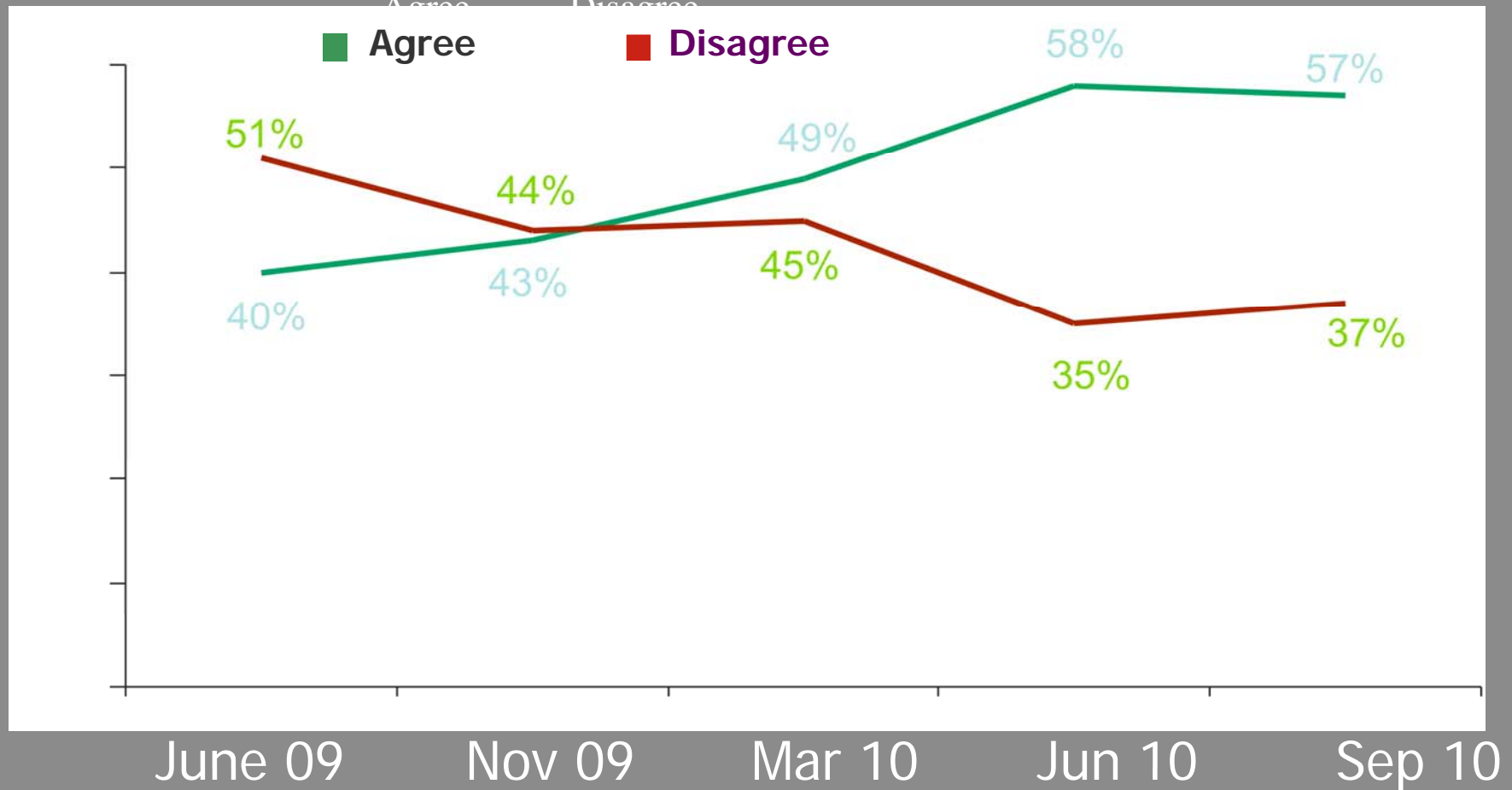
- Reduce public sector deficit
- Shrink the size of the state
- Reorganise local services
- More localism
- More transparency
- More self reliance –
Big Society

Unprecedented scale of cuts

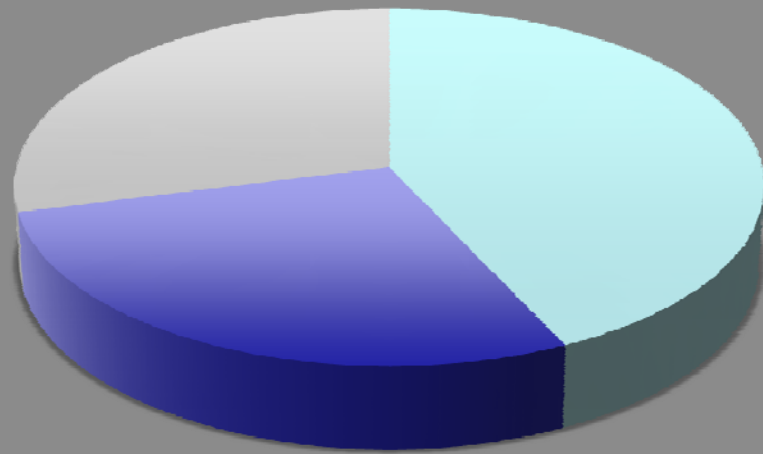


Public support for cuts

"There is a real need to cut spending on public services in order to pay off the very high national debt we now have" Source: IPSOS MORI/Reuters



Is the tide turning ? Latest MORI poll



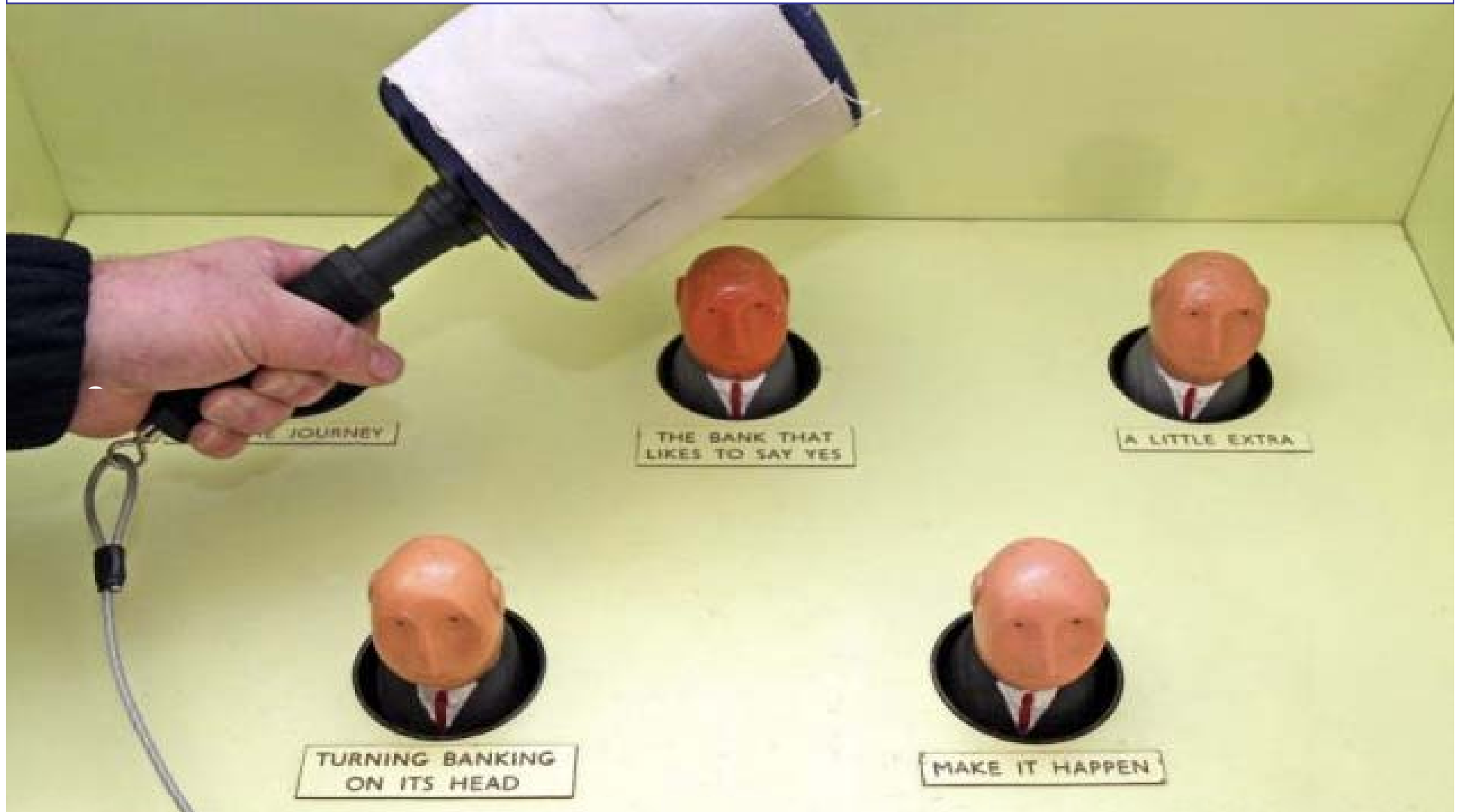
- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW

Cuts are too fast / severe

And 71% say cuts will hit poor hardest

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Who's to blame ?



Whack A Banker at Southwold Pier

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Partnerships - all change !

Abolished !

- CAA/Audit Commission; LAAs/Place Survey,
- PCTs, RDAs, GOs, RIEPs

Promised !

- Local Economic Partnerships
- GP commissioning
- Elected Police Chiefs



Where do Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) fit in ?

What's it all about then ?



“What this is all about is giving people more power and control to improve their lives and communities”

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“I want people to take power into their own hands” - PM



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What about the Big Society?

" What this is all about is giving people more power and control to improve their lives and communities" David Cameron

- But what is it ?
- Is it about shrinking the state ?
- What about capacity & infrastructure ?
- Is it a cover for making cuts ?



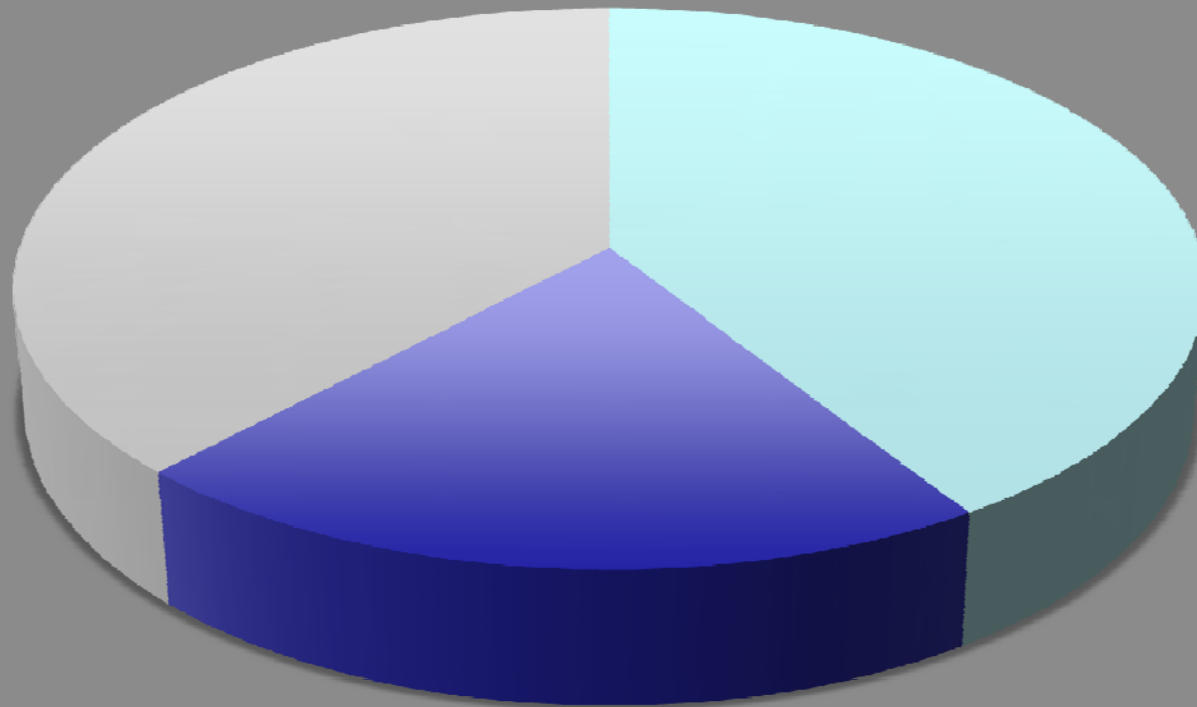
Big Society & Deficit Reduction



The
Economist

Davy Jones Consultancy

Big Society – a cover for cuts?



Latest
MORI
poll

■ YES

■ NO

■ DON'T
KNOW

Big Society controversy?



“How my top government job left me almost penniless and unable to support my family”
Lord Wei, Government Big Society czar



Cuts ‘destroying big society’
concept
Dame Elisabeth Hoodless, CSV Head



“The Big Society has always been a good idea awaiting better definition. It still is.”

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Key projects of Big Society

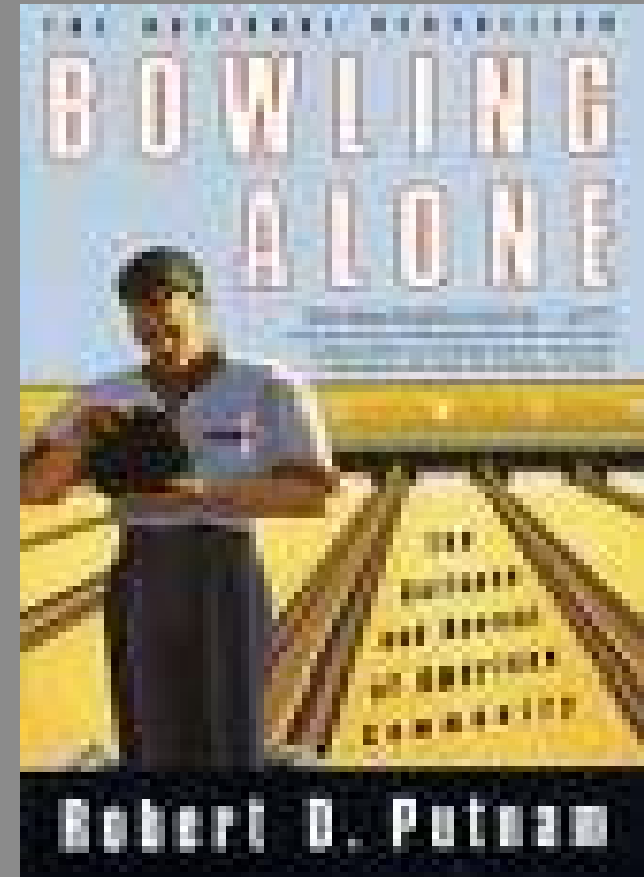
- **Your Square Mile** – 16 pilots launched
- **Big Society Bank** – £200m – loans not grants
- **National Citizens Service** – two month programme begins in July for 16 year olds
- **5000 Community Organisers** – details soon
- **Your Local Budget** – pilots launched with PBU/NESTA
- **Big Society Day** – to be announced
- **Mutuals** – pathfinder areas set up



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Evolving involvement agenda

- Old-style “community development” work
- Private sector approach to customer focus
- Robert Putnam – Social Capital
- New Labour “top-down” Empowerment - laws
- Big Society – “bottom up” emphasis



Big Society: pros and cons

- Most agree on reinvigorating civil society & people taking more responsibility
- Positive emphasis on “bottom up” – get on with it !
- But it needs capacity-building & a strong voluntary sector – now being cut in many areas !
- Are there the people to do it ? Do they have time?
- The economy is not “neutral” – danger of leaving people at the mercy of market forces



Underlying reasons for Involvement

- Evidence of benefits of participation:
 - Better services
 - Better outcomes
 - Strengthens democracy
 - Benefits community cohesion
 - Strengthens social capital
- Rise of consumer choice & explosion of information through internet
- Individual & collective voice & choice
- People now expect to have the right to “have a say” and their views be listened to



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Want involvement on the cuts ?

5.7m people

11%

Would like to be actively involved

15m people

29%

Would like a say in decisions

18.6m people

36%

Would like Information only

22%

Not interested as long as experts involved

Base: 1,000 GB adults, 18+. June 2010. Source: Ipsos MORI

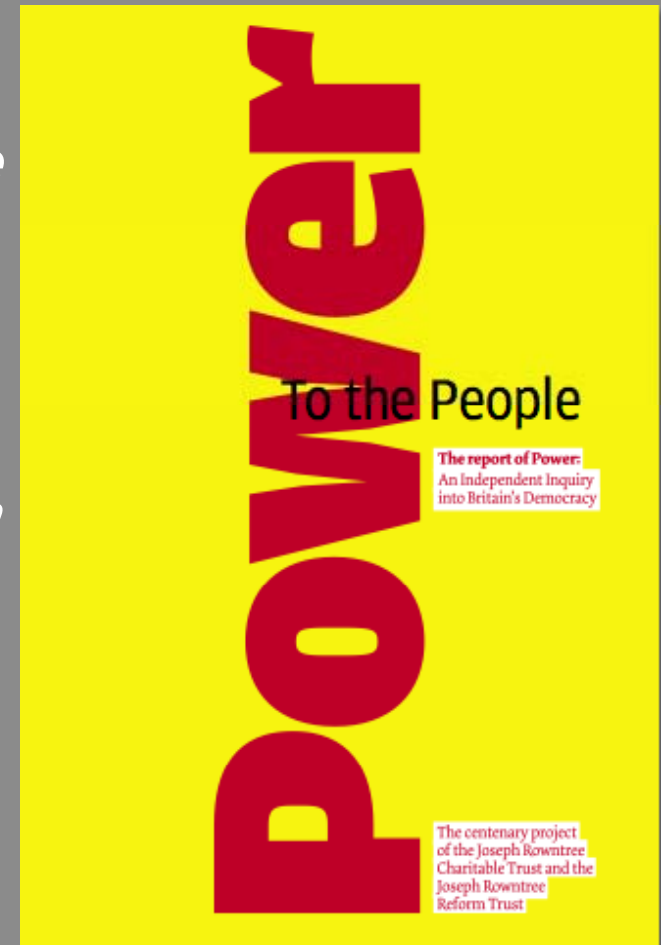
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Why don't people get involved?

Power Inquiry (2006): *"citizens do not feel that the processes of formal democracy offer them enough influence over political decisions"*

"Citizens often believe that the official mind is already made up, or that it will not listen to the results of participation exercises" (Lowndes et al 2001)

Audit Commission 2005 survey of 'best practice' authorities found that three-quarters failed to link the results of consultation with decision-making processes



Involvement in the economic crisis

People now expect transparency & to “have a say” in how their money is spent !

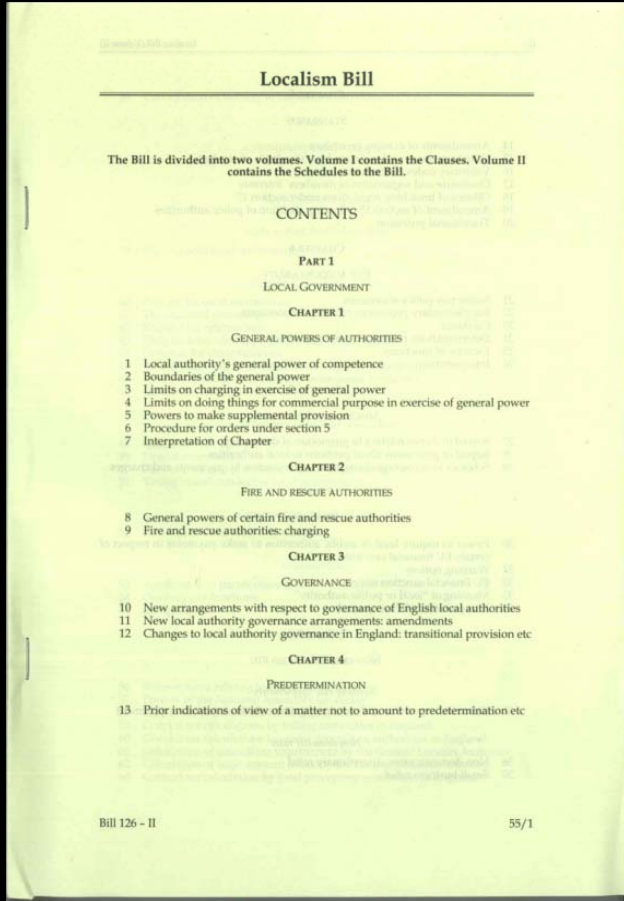


- Involvement leads to better targeting of services
- Co-ordinated involvement can save money

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Localism Bill extends participation

- General Power of Competence
- Neighbourhood planning
- Local referenda – 5% petition
- New community right to challenge
- New community right to buy
- Legal duty to inform, consult & involve still in place !



The image shows a page from the Localism Bill, Volume II, which contains the Schedules. The page is titled 'Localism Bill' and 'CONTENTS'. It lists the following sections:

- PART 1**
 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT**
 - CHAPTER 1**
 - GENERAL POWERS OF AUTHORITIES**
 - 1 Local authority's general power of competence
 - 2 Boundaries of the general power
 - 3 Limits on charging in exercise of general power
 - 4 Limits on doing things for commercial purpose in exercise of general power
 - 5 Powers to make supplemental provision
 - 6 Procedure for orders under section 5
 - 7 Interpretation of Chapter
 - CHAPTER 2**
 - FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES**
 - 8 General powers of certain fire and rescue authorities
 - 9 Fire and rescue authorities: charging
 - CHAPTER 3**
 - GOVERNANCE**
 - 10 New arrangements with respect to governance of English local authorities
 - 11 New local authority governance arrangements: amendments
 - 12 Changes to local authority governance in England: transitional provision etc
 - CHAPTER 4**
 - PREDETERMINATION**
 - 13 Prior indications of view of a matter not to amount to predetermination etc

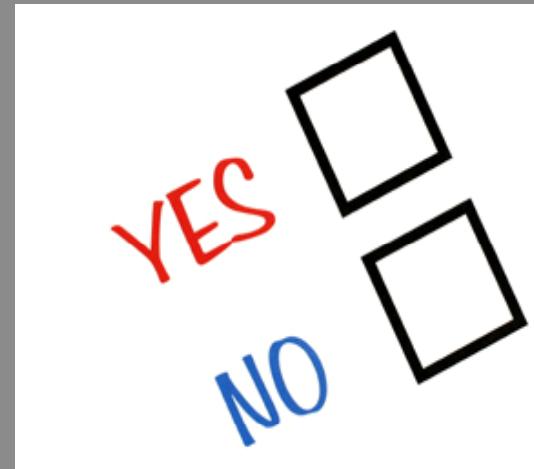
Referendums 'R Us !

- Binding Referendums

- Changing governance
- “Excessive” council tax
- Neighbourhood Plans

- Advisory Referendums

- 5% petition (or less if they wish)
- Written request from elected member(s)
- Then ‘consider’!



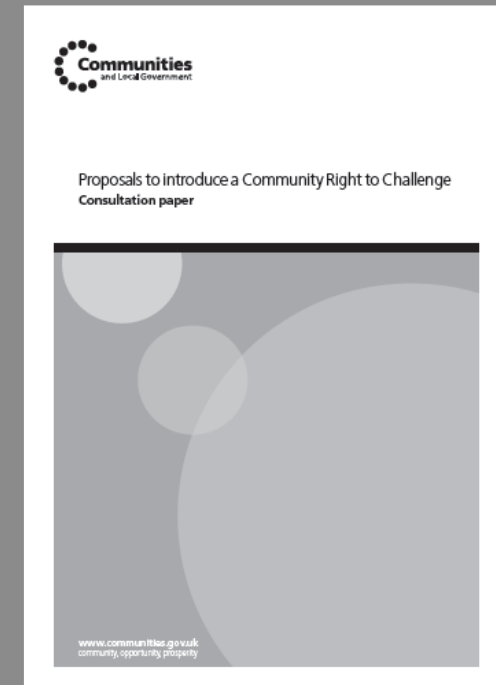
Community Right to Challenge

An EOI (Expression of Interest) can come from

- Voluntary/Community body
- Charities
- Town/Parish Councils
- 2+ employees
- Any others specified by Secretary of State

May lead to procurement exercise - but what about smaller groups?

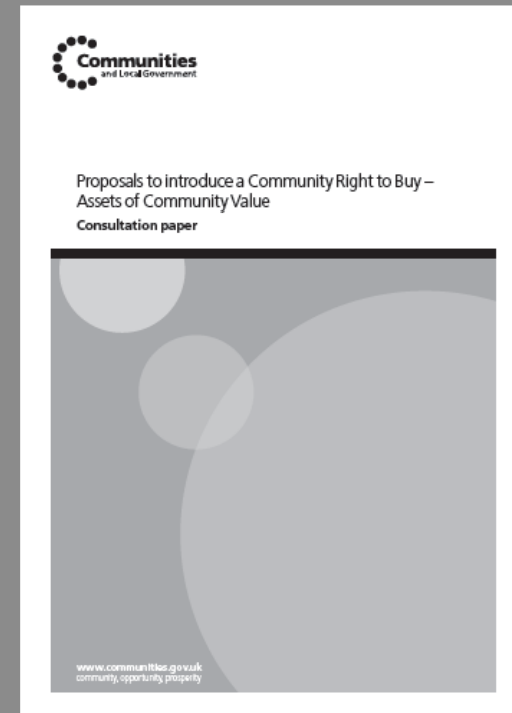
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**CLG
Consultation**

Community Right to Buy

- List of assets of Community Value
- Community Nomination (Parish/Town Councils etc)
- No disposal without 'potential bidder' opportunity via moratorium
- No right of first refusal – just time to submit a bid
- Compensation for loss by Asset Holders!



CLG
Consultation

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Real “Local Area Agreements”

- Local
 - All partners (3-yr SCS Action Plan & link to Community Contracts)
 - Because it is good practice !
- Area
 - parish/neighbourhood/any locality
 - district & unitary level
- Agreement
 - signed off with local people !
 - Use PB for public money coming into area (Total Place approach)

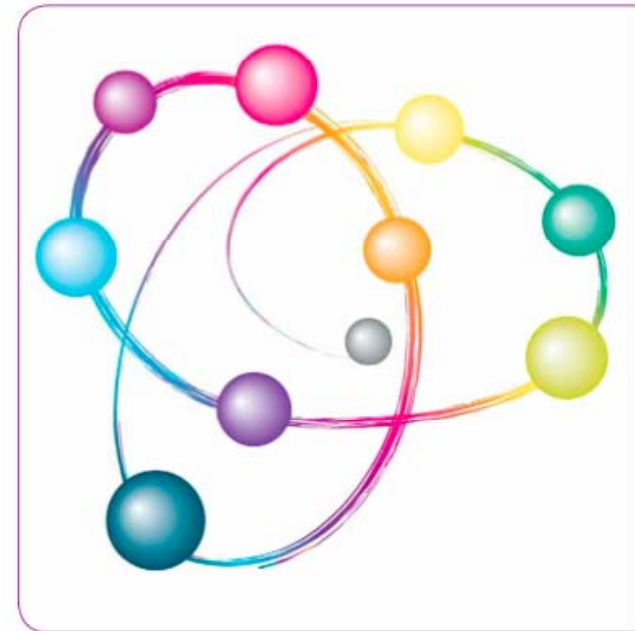


Place-based budgeting

- LAAs/CAA may be gone but emphasis on place still key
- Total Place programme – multi-agency focus on prevention & outcomes
- New LGA / LG Group model of self regulation
- Place-based community budgeting: pooling budgets across council & across partners for better outcomes

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Local
Government
Group



Taking the lead:

self-regulation and improvement in local government

Joined-up partnership working still vital !

- Total Place – community budget pilots
- Multi-agency engagement
- Suffolk Property Partnership
- Haringey libraries – as community hubs
- Durham & Darlington PCT - pavements & admissions
- LSPs – if not LSPs, then what ?



A new co-operative model ?

- **Co-design:** involving citizens & service users in identifying what they want and need from local service providers;
- **Co-commission:** ensuring citizens & service users are directly involved in choosing service and budget priorities and in shaping services to meet identified needs;
- **Co-deliver:** increasingly having services run directly by or with the significant involvement of local service users & communities; and
- **Co-evaluation:** citizens & service users taking a leading role in directly assessing the effectiveness of services and their impact on local areas.

This is a recommended model proposed by Governance International

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Places & Participatory Budgeting

- 1) Long-term work on budget literacy with increasing consultation on budget choices using new & existing forums/mechanisms
- 2) Neighbourhood charters / parish plans / local agreements (multi-agency) agreed with citizens
- 3) Use of PB to agree local neighbourhood budget priorities and allocate money between projects (& sector budgets too)
- 4) Eventually, bringing PB into choices over mainstream “place” budgets across agencies



Online engagement – key area



facebook

e-mails, e-surveys,
e-discussions, crowd-sourcing
& **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Many Big Society activists already
organising / discussing online

- Online one-stop shop for engagement
- But remember, not everyone is online !

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Good practice locally

- Horsham in Bloom volunteers working to improve appearance of urban environment
- Community transport schemes with volunteer drivers
- Unpaid sports leaders working in leisure facilities
- 6 local community partnerships in market towns working closely with parish councils



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