

News

Keep up to date with the latest news and [events \(/schools/government-society/departments/local-government-studies/events/index.aspx\)](#) from around the department and the wide-ranging projects our staff and students get involved with.

[More news throughout the School of Government and Society \(/schools/government-society/news/index.aspx\)](#)

Latest news

[Blog: Achieving better outcomes for the troubled family of local government \(http://inlogov.com/2014/10/29/achieving-better-outcomes-for-the-troubled-family-of-local-government/\)](http://inlogov.com/2014/10/29/achieving-better-outcomes-for-the-troubled-family-of-local-government/)



Written by Simon Parker. In this debate, Simon Parker (NLGN), Catherine Staite (INLOGOV) and Tony Bovaird (INLOGOV) agree that the current state of UK local government is unsustainable – but see different routes to rescuing a sustainable future.

Thursday 30th October 2014

[Blog: Preaching to the choir: reflections on key leadership skills for local authority chief executives – part 2: charm \(http://inlogov.com/2014/10/28/preaching-to-the-choir-reflections-on-key-leadership-skills-for-local-authority-chief-executives-part-2-charm/\)](http://inlogov.com/2014/10/28/preaching-to-the-choir-reflections-on-key-leadership-skills-for-local-authority-chief-executives-part-2-charm/)



Written by Catherine Staite. Charm is shorthand for a sophisticated set of skills which enable you to make new connections and solve old problems. Charm is about much more than being nice in a superficial way – otherwise known as 'smarm'. If you don't have real charm then just be gruff and honest. Everyone will understand. Smarm, on the other hand, will simply breed distrust.

Tuesday 28th October 2014

[Blog: Postcard from Tokyo: local government remorse, Japanese-style \(http://inlogov.com/2014/10/27/postcard-from-tokyo-local-government-remorse-japanese-style/\)](http://inlogov.com/2014/10/27/postcard-from-tokyo-local-government-remorse-japanese-style/)



Written by Chris Game. I've had the good fortune to spend the past week in Tokyo, as Japan commemorates the 50th anniversary of arguably the most geo-politically transformative Olympic Games, in the city that underwent a scarcely credible urban transformation in order to stage them.

Monday 27th October 2014

[Blog: Preaching to the choir: reflections on key leadership skills for local authority chief executives – part 1: creativity \(http://inlogov.com/2014/10/24/preaching-to-the-choir-reflections-on-key-leadership-skills-for-local-authority-chief-executives-part-1-creativity/\)](http://inlogov.com/2014/10/24/preaching-to-the-choir-reflections-on-key-leadership-skills-for-local-authority-chief-executives-part-1-creativity/)



Written by Catherine Staite. I have called this blog series 'preaching to the choir' as it is dedicated to local authority chief executives and they already know a great deal about leadership. They wouldn't survive and thrive in their posts if they didn't.

Friday 24th October 2014

[Blog: Can smart maps improve local government? \(http://inlogov.com/2014/10/08/can-smart-maps-improve-local-government/\)](http://inlogov.com/2014/10/08/can-smart-maps-improve-local-government/)



Written by Walter T. de Vries. Local governments are increasingly making use of internet-based applications and social media to provide services and to interact with citizens. Are these applications however really helping local governments?

Wednesday 8th October 2014

[Blog: Cinderella has been at the ball for more than a century and no one has noticed her! \(http://inlogov.com/2014/10/07/cinderella-has-been-at-the-ball-for-more-than-a-century-and-no-one-has-noticed-her/\)](http://inlogov.com/2014/10/07/cinderella-has-been-at-the-ball-for-more-than-a-century-and-no-one-has-noticed-her/)



Written by Ian Briggs. Local government has struggled with the concept of localism for far longer than most of us might think. It has not just been the clarion call of localism from the Coalition Government since 2010 and the subsequent Localism Act that posed some pretty serious questions about the structure of our local democratic processes. The issue of connectivity between the citizen and the 'agent of the state' has been under academic scrutiny for a long time.

Tuesday 7th October 2014

[Blog: Buying local votes? Campaign spending effects in Belgian local elections \(http://inlogov.com/2014/10/06/buying-local-votes-campaign-spending-effects-in-belgian-local-elections/\)](http://inlogov.com/2014/10/06/buying-local-votes-campaign-spending-effects-in-belgian-local-elections/)



Written by Gert-Jan Put, Bart Maddens and Jef Smulders. In democratic countries worldwide, elections are being organized on an increasingly larger scale. This makes it more challenging for political parties and candidates to communicate with voters and reach their target groups. Alternatively, they resort to mass media and costly electoral campaigns, for which parties and candidates are often prepared to spend exorbitant amounts of money.

Monday 6th October 2014

[Why Brooks Newmark is a twit, but not a knit-wit \(http://theconversation.com/why-brooks-newmark-is-a-twit-but-not-a-knit-wit-32291\)](http://theconversation.com/why-brooks-newmark-is-a-twit-but-not-a-knit-wit-32291)



Written by Chris Game. Two topics now compete for the opening paragraph in MP Brooks Newmark's political obituary. One is of course his hubris in thinking that a 26-year old woman – be she Tory or not – would be interested in photos of his genitalia. The other, though, are his thoughts, as the short-lived minister for civil society, about charities and knitting.

Blog: Local government: keepers of the moral compass? (<http://inlogov.com/2014/09/30/local-government-keepers-of-the-moral-compass/>)

Written by Catherine Staite. Barry Quirk's excellent article in the Local Government Chronicle highlighted the often overlooked role of local government as the guardian of public ethics.

Tuesday 30th September 2014

Research project: Evaluation of Community Organisers and Community First programmes (Nov 2012 - Feb 2015) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/research/projects/inlogov/2014/evaluation-community-organisers-community-first-programmes.aspx>)

The evaluation will assess the delivery and social impact of both programmes, providing continuous learning and relevant insights for programme development.

Tuesday 30th September 2014

Research project: Translation across borders: exploring the use, relevance and impact of academic research in the policy process (Jan 2014 - Mar 2015) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/research/projects/inlogov/2014/translation-across-borders.aspx>)

This project seeks to explore and suggest ways to address the frustrations which attempts to translate research into policy can bring. A focus of concern for academics is the fidelity of translation to their research findings. For policy-makers, the focus is often the function of the translation for the demands they are seeking to address.

Tuesday 30th September 2014

Blog: Local government - more appreciated than it often thinks (<http://inlogov.com/2014/09/29/local-government-more-appreciated-than-it-often-thinks/>)

Written by Chris Game. Someone asked me recently if, in those opinion polls that regularly monitor these things, net satisfaction with the government's record was ever positive. In other words, are there ever nowadays more of us satisfied than dissatisfied with those who govern us, or have we become, on balance, a nation of malcontents, whoever we happen to have elected?

Tuesday 30th September 2014

Blog: What skills does a 21st Century fire service need? (<http://inlogov.com/2014/09/26/what-skills-does-a-21st-century-fire-service-need/>)

Written by Dave Cross. Over the past twenty years the fire service, like many other public sector agencies has undergone radical change. Whilst the public's expectation of the fire service as a response based fire and rescue service remains the same, the organisational expectations of fire fighters has increased markedly. To quote a senior Greater Manchester fire officer "The job of a fire fighter nowadays has changed from not just putting out fires... to almost being a semi social worker".

Friday 26th September 2014

Blog: Devo max - what it is and why it won't happen (<http://inlogov.com/2014/09/25/devo-max-what-it-is-and-why-it-wont-happen/>)

Written by Chris Game. Devo Max – it sounds like a 99% efficient toilet cleaner, or a dodgy West Country car dealer, but either way I visualise its initials in upper case. And that's its problem. It's undoubtedly the 'must use' expression of the month. It's not complicated, like 'full fiscal autonomy' or the Barnett formula, so anyone feels able to drop it authoritatively into even casual conversation. And everyone has their own idea of what it is.

Thursday 25th September 2014

Ban pre-election opinion polls at your peril (<http://theconversation.com/ban-pre-election-opinion-polls-at-your-peril-31762>)

Written by Chris Game. I really thought we might make it. We'd got past the publication of YouGov's potentially constitution-changing poll showing a minuscule lead for the Yes campaign without anyone grabbing for an easy headline by calling for opinion polls to be banned in the run-up to elections and referendums.

Thursday 18th September 2014

Scotland vote appears to be defying usual referendum swing (<http://theconversation.com/scotland-vote-appears-to-be-defying-usual-referendum-swing-31490>)

Written by Chris Game. It seems Scottish voters are warming to the whole independence idea, then – bucking the trend that the experts have been telling us for months they're almost bound to follow.

Monday 15th September 2014

The staff at the School of Government and Society look forward to meeting all new students for the start of the 2014/15 academic year. All the information you'll need for starting at the University of Birmingham can be found on our Welcome homepage.

Friday 12th September 2014

Blog: In case you missed it: the Local Government (Independence) Bill (<http://inlogov.com/2014/09/09/in-case-you-missed-it-the-local-government-independence-bill/>)



Written by Chris Game. It was partly the timing. In combination, the suddenly increased likelihood of both Scottish independence and a Coalition break-up were bound to eclipse last Friday's scheduled Second Reading of the Local Government (Independence) Bill. It was unfortunate, though. After all, local government independence would be a pretty big deal too, wouldn't it?

Tuesday 9th September 2014

Student Enhancement Fund profiles 2014 (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/funding/student-enhancement-fund.aspx>)



Find out how our undergraduate and postgraduate students have used the School of Government and Society student enhancement fund throughout 2013/14 and read about their experiences.

Thursday 4th September 2014

Blog: Councils should have the power NOT to tax supermarkets (<http://inlogov.com/2014/09/01/councils-should-have-the-power-not-to-tax-supermarkets/>)



Written by Chris Game. There's no shortage of reasons to dislike supermarkets generally and Tesco in particular – their flimsy carrier bags, their irritating BOGOFs and BOGOHOs (Buy One, Get One Half Off), their unpoliced disabled parking bays, their Everyday Value instant coffee granules. Then there are all the economic, environmental and social reasons – the ones understandably more emphasised in Derby City Council's recent proposal that local authorities be given the power to introduce a levy of 8.5% of rateable value on large retail outlets: a supermarket or Tesco tax, as it was instantly labelled by the media.

Monday 1st September 2014

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