

## 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: Democracy in The Circle: a route to reconnection and engagement? \(http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/06/13/democracy-in-the-circle/\)](http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/06/13/democracy-in-the-circle/)**



Written by Frank Hendriks. One of the theme's at INLOGOV's 2014 summer symposium is "Strengthening democracy and participation: routes to reconnection and engagement." One of the possible routes is tellingly sketched in Dave Eggers's recent novel *The Circle* (2013).

Friday 13th June 2014

#### **[Blog: Towards a people-centred language of demand management \(http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/06/11/people-centred-demand-management/\)](http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/06/11/people-centred-demand-management/)**



Written by Gavin Jones. I'm regularly asked to make presentations to groups of people (the last one being to 22 Deputy Lord Lieutenants!) to set out the issues and opportunities facing local government in the light of increasingly painful budget cuts. Of the pictorial slides I use to tell the story, the one guaranteed to have the greatest impact and make people hold their heads in their hands and mutter depressing words of despair is my 'motivational' slide that alarmingly shows demand outstripping resources at a frightening pace – often known as the " " or 'Map of Misery'.

Wednesday 11th June 2014

#### **[The Conversation: Watered-down recall bill proves MPs just don't get it \(http://theconversation.com/watered-down-recall-bill-proves-mps-just-dont-get-it-27732\)](http://theconversation.com/watered-down-recall-bill-proves-mps-just-dont-get-it-27732)**



Written by Chris Game. "Meaningless", "a stitch-up", "a breathtakingly cynical attempt to convey an impression of democratic reform" – this was how Conservative MP Zac Goldsmith reacted to his own government's announcement in the Queen's Speech that ministers would, after all, be introducing a recall of MPs Bill before the 2015 election.

Tuesday 10th June 2014

#### **[INLOGOV briefing paper: Social Value Survey Report \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/inlogov/briefing-papers/2014/social-value-survey-report.pdf\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/inlogov/briefing-papers/2014/social-value-survey-report.pdf)**



This report outlines the findings of a joint survey (carried out between August to mid October 2013) by the Society of Procurement Officers (SOPO), the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham on the impact of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

Monday 2nd June 2014

#### **[The Conversation: Both Labour and the Tories are pursuing a cynical 15% strategy \(http://theconversation.com/both-labour-and-the-tories-are-pursuing-a-cynical-15-strategy-27409\)](http://theconversation.com/both-labour-and-the-tories-are-pursuing-a-cynical-15-strategy-27409)**



Written by Chris Game. The "35% strategy" – the idea that a party could win the 2015 general election on 35% of the vote – entered political discourse last year, generally as a Conservative taunt directed at Labour. The 35% comprised Labour's supposed "core vote": the 29% it managed in 2010 and brought it 258 or nearly 40% of Commons seats – plus a guesstimated 6% for Lib Dem defectors.

Thursday 29th May 2014

#### **[Blog: Building communities to bridge the gap \(http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/05/12/building-communities-to-bridge-the-gap/\)](http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/05/12/building-communities-to-bridge-the-gap/)**



Written by Daniel Goodwin. England around halfway through significant reductions in public expenditure and heading for a 'new normal' at much lower levels, whilst seeing demographic and other pressures rise. Local Government is currently projected to see a £10.5bn funding drop between 2010 and 2020. Pressures on services are projected to rise by around £6bn, resulting in a £16.5bn total gap, under-resourcing services by around 30%. This average masks a wide variation – the LGA predicts that some of the poorest areas are projected only to be around 55% funded by 2020, whilst some shire districts will be 100% funded.

Tuesday 27th May 2014

#### **[The Conversation: London aside, Farage's UKIP now has its imprint on England \(http://theconversation.com/london-aside-farages-ukip-now-has-its-imprint-on-england-27131\)](http://theconversation.com/london-aside-farages-ukip-now-has-its-imprint-on-england-27131)**



Written by Chris Game. You'll be expecting, understandably, UKIP stuff – and there will be, but later. These were elections to determine the political and policy control of 161 English local authorities. Working for a department known in the wider world as the Institute of Local Government Studies, it would be inappropriate for me not to look first at those councils where we know control has changed hands, none of which directly involve UKIP – almost inevitably, given its almost baseline starting point.

Friday 23rd May 2014

#### **[The Conversation: Labour should be the biggest local winner – this year anyway \(http://theconversation.com/labour-should-be-the-biggest-local-winner-this-year-anyway-27038\)](http://theconversation.com/labour-should-be-the-biggest-local-winner-this-year-anyway-27038)**



Written by Chris Game. Two countries have synchronised their EU election and local election dates this cycle: Greece and parts of the UK (England and Northern Ireland).

**Blog: Under what conditions are decisions best made? Football managers and the public sector (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/05/14/football-managers/>)**

Written by Ian Briggs. I am not much of a football follower, but I am becoming increasingly bemused by the fascination for premieriership clubs in becoming so closely associated with their managers. You can hardly fail to notice that the headlines stories on the back pages of newspapers concentrate a great deal on the relative merits of the approaches taken by the current crop of managers. Am I alone in thinking that they get more attention now than the players?

Wednesday 14th May 2014

**Blog: Gerrymandering in Northern Ireland local government? Surely not. (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/05/07/gerrymandering-in-northern-ireland/>)**

Written by Chris Game. It seemed obvious from the outset that Gerry Adams' arrest in connection with the 1972 murder of Jean McConville was a momentous event with potentially massive implications: long-term, short-term, north and south of the border. So I was slightly surprised the following morning to hear a Sinn Fein spokesperson, protesting about the timing of the arrest, highlight its impact specifically on the Northern Ireland local elections.

Thursday 8th May 2014

**Blog: Public data: saleable asset or national resource? (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/04/30/public-data/>)**

Written by Tom Barrance. Recent announcements by two government agencies, the HMRC and the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC), regarding the sale of information has thrown a spotlight upon government information and the attendant debates of privacy verses exploitation. What is the ownership of information collected by the state? Held in trust for the citizen, or seen as assets like 3/4G mobile phone licences to be sold by government to the highest bidder? Or should all government data be treated as open data that is made freely available to all?

Wednesday 30th April 2014

**Blog: The 2014 local elections – a preview (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/04/28/the-2014-local-elections-a-preview/>)**

Written by Chris Game. Two EU countries this May will hold local elections that coincide with their European parliamentary elections: Greece and ourselves. On Sunday 25 May Greeks vote in the second, 'run-off' round of elections to all their 13 regions and 325 municipalities. England, though nearly five times as populous as Greece, also has 325 lower-tier and unitary authorities. We, however, will elect mostly only fractions of fewer than half of our councils, yet still it takes seven lines of a table to summarise the 161 authorities whose voters on Thursday 22 May will probably have both a local and Euro vote. We bemoan our disappointing local turnouts, but we don't make the system exactly voter-friendly.

Tuesday 29th April 2014

**INLOGOV briefing paper: The 2014 local elections – a preview (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/inlogov/briefing-papers/2014/2014-local-elections.pdf>)**

By Chris Game. This year's English local elections have been postponed to Thursday 22nd May to coincide with those to the European Parliament. There are all-out elections in the London boroughs, elections by thirds in the metropolitan boroughs, and a mixture of the two in some unitaries and shire districts. This preview will lead you through this potential confusion, and also provide a guide to those councils most likely to change political control.

Monday 14th April 2014

**Blog: The Great NHS Robbery - and the great fraud headline con (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/04/01/great-nhs-robbery/>)**

Written by Chris Game. Some social phenomena are exceptionally tricky to measure: the black economy, white-collar crime, illegal immigration. So when someone claims to have done so, no matter how flaky their findings, they attract huge, and largely uncritical, media attention. Like last week's excitement about the scale of NHS fraud.

Tuesday 1st April 2014

**Blog: Why do some PPPs fail to meet objectives? Evidence from Ireland (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/03/31/ppps-objectives-ireland/>)**

Written by Eoin Reeves. Governments around the world are seeking new ways of meeting the challenges of renewing and providing new infrastructure. Factors such as disenchantment with traditional procurement methods and increasing pressures on public finances (intensified by the global economics crisis) have encouraged governments to look to public-private partnerships (PPP) for the purpose of meeting these challenges.

Monday 31st March 2014

**Blog: Councillors and their disappearing pensions (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/03/27/councillors-pensions/>)**

Written by Chris Game. There's no doubt about the domestic conversation topic of the past week: pension pots. Which for many councillors, following a budget with little good news for local government – unless you're a pothole hoping for a makeover under the Chancellor's 'potholes challenge fund' – must have felt like being kicked when already down.

Thursday 27th March 2014

**Blog: Rebalancing Britain (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/03/24/rebalancing-britain/>)**

The Scottish referendum campaign is having an interesting knock-on impact on English political debate. The position and dominance of London – the place Scots most dislike about the United Kingdom in its present form – is being looked at more critically. There have been a couple of think tank reports recently, but the debate has moved quite a way beyond the narrow audiences that these reports usually attract. That in itself is a reflection of the way the ground is shifting.

Monday 24th March 2014

### **Blog: The impact agenda and political agency (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/03/21/impact-agenda-agency/>)**

Written by Matthew Wood. Why should we, as political scientists, 'bother' with impact? My answer is that as social actors we cannot avoid 'impacting' on society in one way or another, just like any other profession. The question is how we should choose to influence society. As British political scientists our choices are, thankfully, quite broad.

Friday 21st March 2014

### **Blog: Reclaiming the impact agenda: making impact work for you (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/03/20/reclaiming-the-impact-agenda/>)**

Written by Helen Louise Turton. When encountering the 'impact agenda' the ease of engagement is often dependent upon your discipline and/or the type of research being conducted. Certain forms of research don't lend themselves to be easily compatible with the requirements of the impact agenda as it is currently defined.

Thursday 20th March 2014

### **Blog: The French local elections – and a quiet revolution? (<http://inlogov.wordpress.com/2014/03/19/french-local-elections/>)**

Written by Chris Game. This Sunday, March 23, the French will be voting in their local / municipal elections, an occasion about as different from our forthcoming local elections on May 22 as it's possible to be.

Thursday 20th March 2014

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