

Localism in London

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The plan

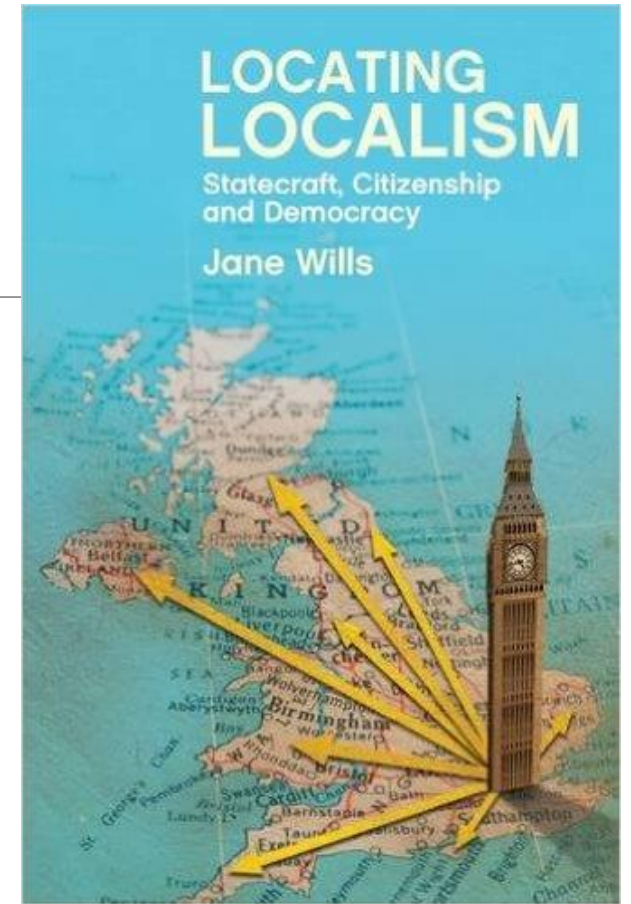
What is localism and how to make sense of it?

A geographical view

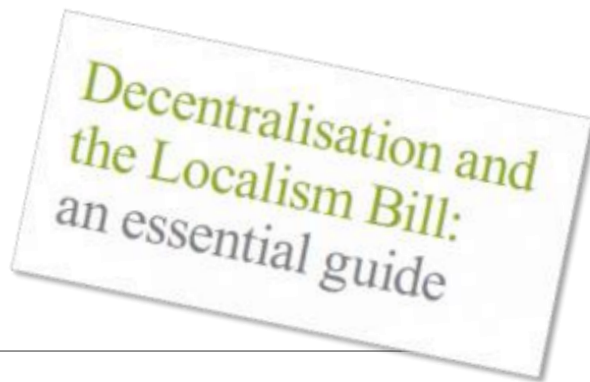
Research into localism in London

- The Poplar Neighbourhood Community Budget
- Lambeth's Cooperative Council and Open Works
- Neighbourhood Planning in Highgate
- Community Organising

Conclusions



The Leverhulme Trust



What is localism?

The Coalition: “We share the conviction that the days of big Government are over; that centralization and top-down control have proved a failure. We believe that the time has come to disperse power more widely in Britain today; to recognize that we will only make progress if we help people to come together to make life better. In short, it is our ambition to distribute power and opportunity to people rather than hoarding authority within Government”. David Cameron and Nick Clegg (2010, 7)

‘Localism is the ethos; decentralisation is the process and the outcome is the Big Society’ (Greg Clark MP, The House of Commons’ Select Committee on Communities and Local Government, 2011, 13).

Localism is about encouraging “*people to get involved with, and direct the development of, their communities*” (HM Government, 2010, 3) ... popular problem-solving.

A policy ‘silver bullet’ on the right and the left ... with an emerging agenda for policy and practice ...

a shift in policy making and practice to decentralise political power towards local institutions and local people

The rationale

Better for decision making and the quality of outcomes
(does Whitehall really know best?)

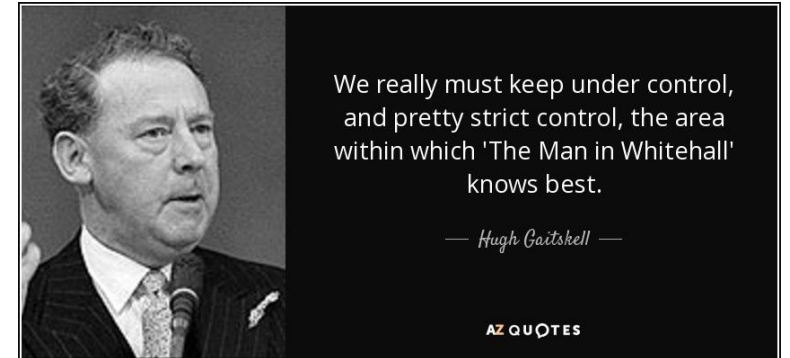
- a way to solve the most pressing concerns

Better for democracy – increasing the scope for engagement, accountability and contestation

A way to save money?

A response to the changing society – horizontal networking, increased education, an anti-bureaucratic structure of feeling, a desire for engagement etc

A response to the 'political void' (Mair) – the gap between the people and the elite



**Work. Dishes.
Dressing the kids.
Now he wants you to
run the school and
hospital as well.**

What exactly will he be doing?



Nothing new ... or is it?

‘All political parties are decentralizers in opposition and centralizers in government. Once you have power it is very hard to give it up, especially if you find that you are still held responsible for the decisions made by people to whom you have passed them’ (Mount, 2012, 247/8).

A ‘skin-deep localism’ overtaken by the pressures to deliver and the lure of centralised power and authority when in office?

New Labour used much of the same rhetoric – double devolution; active citizenship etc

BUT devolution made a difference and now see the northern powerhouse, devolution deals, a shake up in administrative boundaries – and power relations – is something happening?



#DEVONNORTH
#DevoMANC

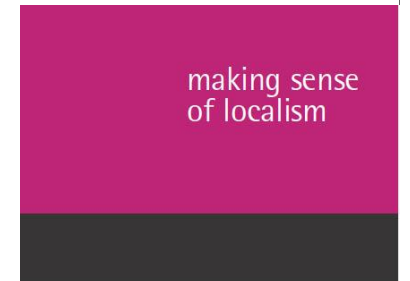
Plethora of new work on this theme

Government ministers when in opposition –
Greg Clark, Jessye Norman, Nick Hurd

Think tanks across the spectrum (Policy
Exchange, Respublica, IPPR, Fabians, The Smith
Institute, NEF, NLGN, Localis)

Enquiries and commissions (Heseltine *No
Stone Unturned* ... RSA on City Growth)

Select Committees in the Houses of
Parliament – on localism, codifying the
relationship between central and local
government, devolution etc



Edited by Jo Coles, Yvette Cooper MP
and Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP



Taking it seriously ...

As an emergent **vision of government**

Underpinned by a **new geography of statecraft**

With implications for the **geo-constitution**

Top down but also bottom up ...

- democracy as popular problem solving (Dewey)?

Manifest in **emergent policy change**

With **implications for the state and its citizens**



A new geography of statecraft?

	Centralism (c20th)	Localism (c21st)
The vision	National standards and uniform delivery	Subsidiarity
The means	A national strategy, targets, audit and local compliance	Local democracy (politicians, voters, lay representatives and community voice)
The fears	The postcode lottery	The lack of local capacity
The risks	Being out-of-touch and unable to meet the challenges faced; the democratic deficit	Providing an uneven and uncertain landscape for business and life; that the loudest voices determine what's done
The goals	Social and spatial equity in access, experience and outcomes of services	Locally determined and accountable activity and outcomes

From the left this is about a relational state and local democracy; from the right it is about a smaller state, a more active civil society and greater freedom to act ...

Implications for new practices of statecraft and citizenship

The Civic Offer	Civic Capacity
The freedom and willingness of different parts of the state to work with diverse local interests and citizens	The capacity of the local state, local organisations and the local population to respond to the civic offers being made to engage
The institutional infrastructure of state, market and civic society at multiple scales	The institutional infrastructure that exists and/or can be generated
The practices being developed to secure new ways of working	The mechanisms developed to secure ongoing relationships and engagement
The culture of relationship building	The capacity to formulate an agenda, act and make change
The emergence of vision and shared identity around collective problem solving and governance	The ability to sustain this work over different projects, over time, in place

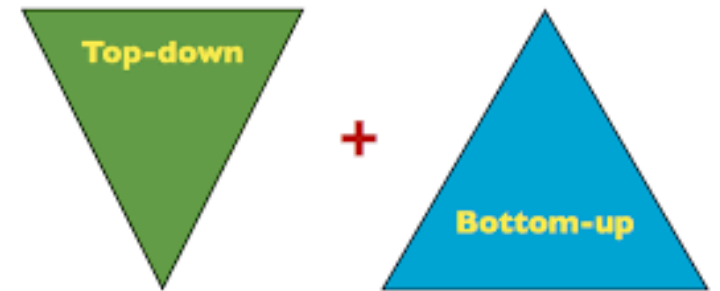
A form of liberal institutionalism?

Freeing up people to act – but doing so will depend on local institutional inheritance and civic capacity (building on Clarke and Cochrane's 2013 notion of 'spatial liberalism')

Localism is a call for freedom that is simultaneously aligned with the need for organisation.

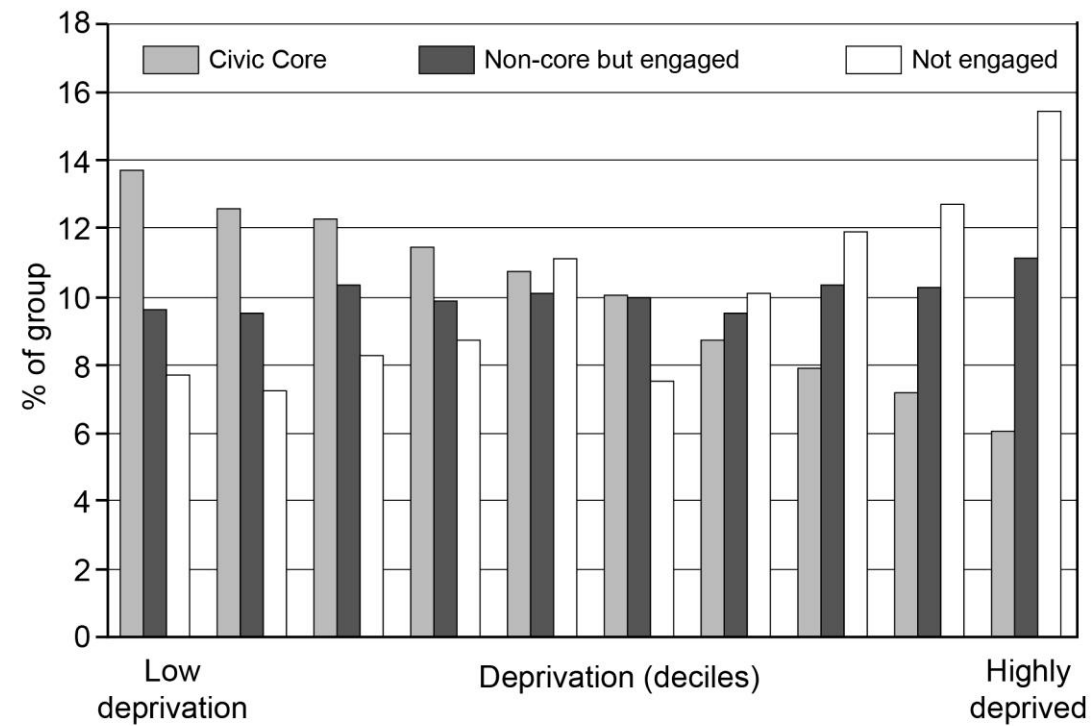
Likely to be an uneven response that in turn widens spatial divides in outcomes.

... and as yet, there is no clear insight about what to do about this.



The civic core

The distribution of the 'civic core' in relation to the deprivation of their home location

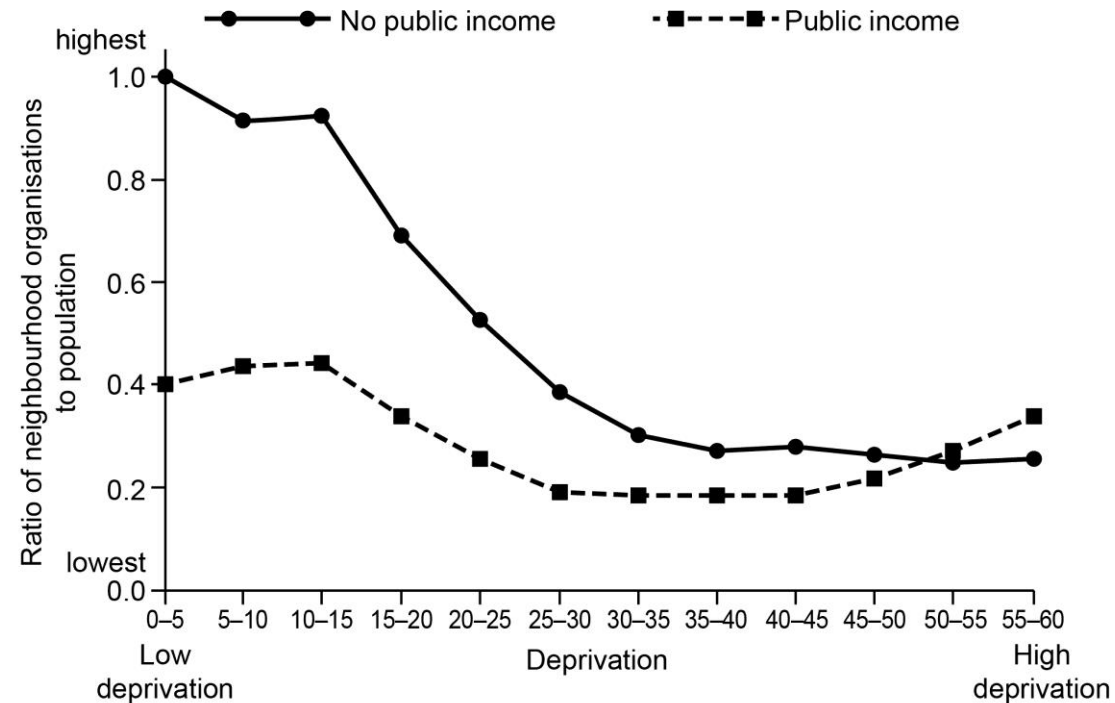


Source: Mohan (2011, 10)

Note: Deprivation is reported in relation to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), by deciles

The distribution of local organisations

The prevalence of neighbourhood organisations (standardised by population age)
by level of deprivation



Source: Mohan (2011, 7)

Note: The vertical axis shows the ratio of charitable organisations operating at the neighbourhood scale in relation to population, standardised to 1 for the highest ratio. This ratio is mapped in relation to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for the area on the horizontal axis.

Major questions about how this can work

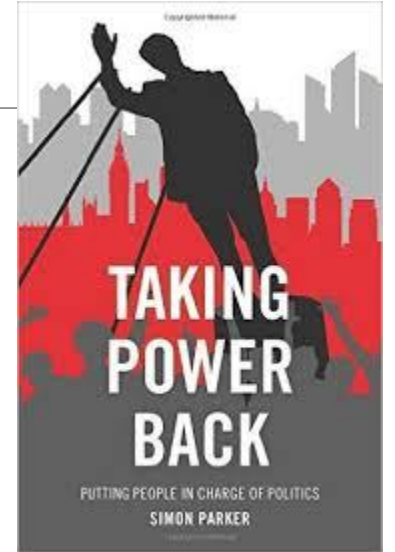
The **existing map** of capacity and organisation is uneven.

People are used to a **centralised system** – there is little experience of the state working with the people nor of the people taking a lead.

National political parties organise at the local scale to national agendas – **weak tradition of non-partisan politics**.

When things go wrong, the kneejerk reaction is **blame the national government** and they feel the need to respond.

Changing the political culture will be extremely difficult ... and doing so requires having something significant at stake.

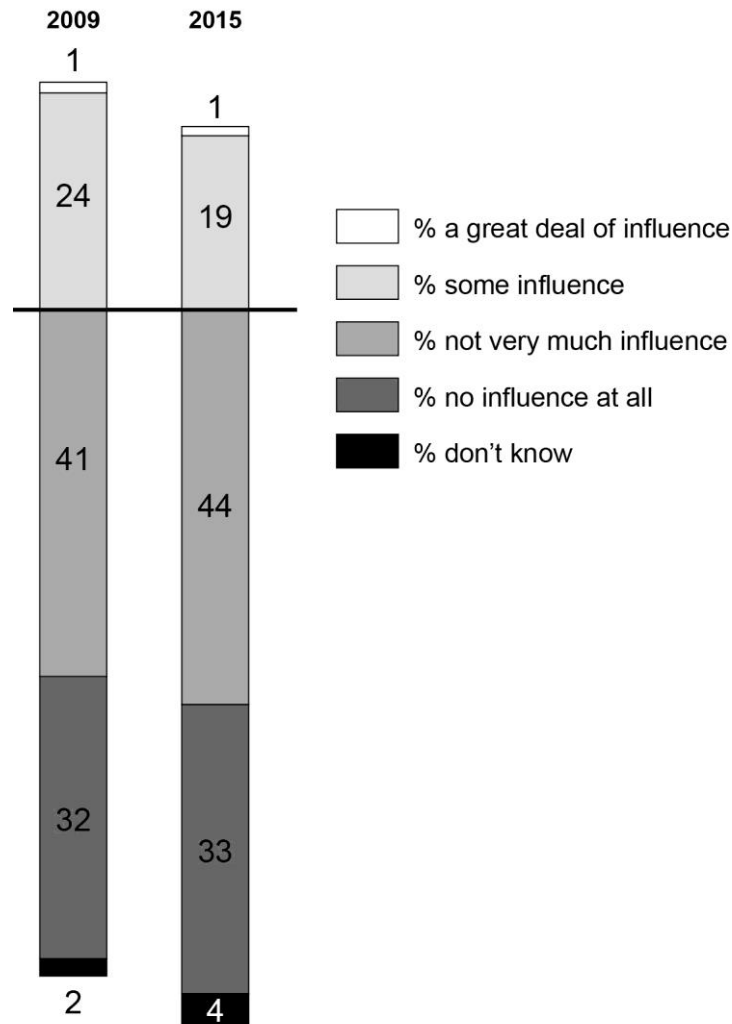


“Any attempt to revive local democracy must tackle the root cause of its decline, which lies in the replacement of local democracy by a very rigid form of local party government, the replacement of local authorities which represented local communities by larger and unwieldy units, and the concomitant rise of a professional political class in local government, a class apart.”
Bogdanor (2009, 259)

A long way to go?

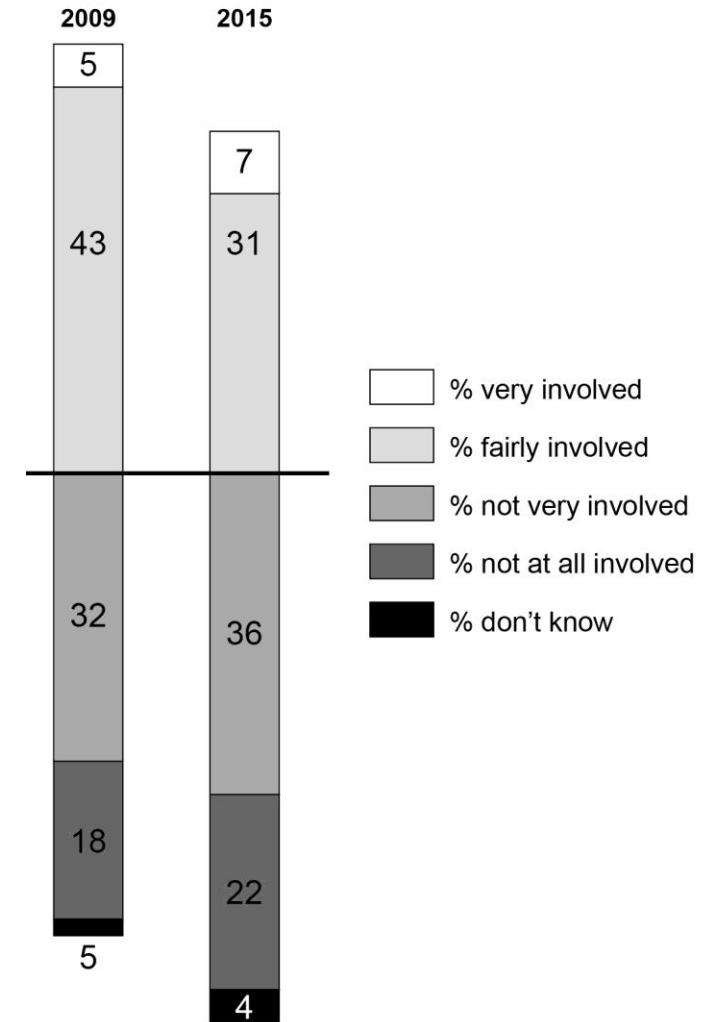
Influence and desire for influence, are low and falling

Perceived influence over local decision making



Source: Audit of Political Engagement 2009 and 2015, Hansard, Audit 12 (2015) Figure 36 p.36.

Desire for enagement locally



Source: Audit of Political Engagement 2009 and 2015, Hansard, Audit 12 (2015) Figure 40 p.38.

Doing research ...

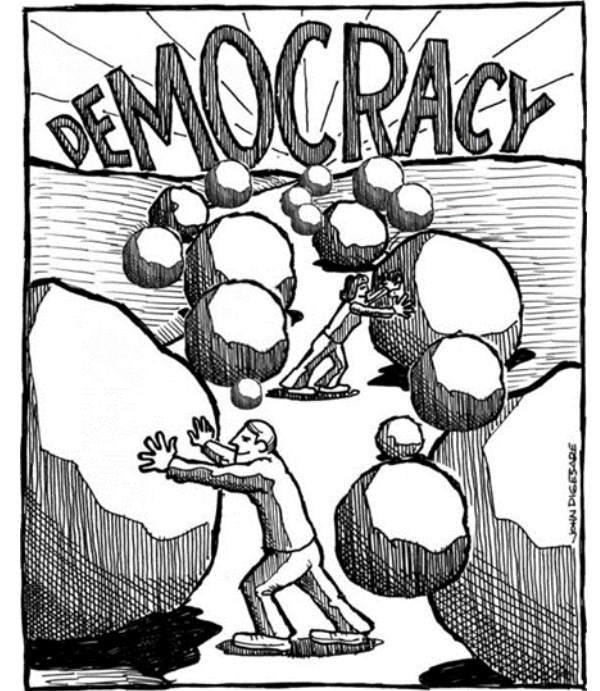
Questions of statecraft and citizenship – and their geography

In context of changing policy landscape and emergent localist experiments

Capturing both the top down and bottom aspects of this agenda

After 2010 ... and there is much more to be done

Started with the emergent policy agenda ...



Activity	How is it localist?	Examples
Restructuring existing state-funded services	Taking decision-making closer to people via devolution of existing structures.	City Deals; Local Economic Partnerships (replacing regional policy bodies and targets); Clinical Commissioning Groups in the NHS (replacing Primary Care Trusts).
Changing the culture of existing state-funded services	Working together in areas and engaging service users in the direction of co-production.	Neighbourhood Community Budgets; the Whole Place programme. Local government given the 'general power of competence' and wider culture change programmes endorsed such as Lambeth's Co-operative Council.
Creating new elected posts and structures	Identifying responsible local people who can be held accountable.	Elected Police Commissioners. Support for elected local Mayors.
Granting new rights	Facilitating local activity and devolving control.	Free Schools; Neighbourhood Planning; Community right to buy; Community right to bid; Community right to build.
Fostering active citizenship amongst particular groups	Training citizens to engage and to act at a local level.	The National Citizen Service; Locality's Community Organisers programme.
Generating a 'shadow effect' amongst other service providers and 'think and do' tanks	Funding local projects that engage citizens in their local community.	The Lottery's Big Local; The Big Lunch; My Square Mile; the RSA's Citizen Power in Peterborough; JRF's Working in Neighbourhoods project in Bradford; NESTA's mass localism work.

Then developed a series of projects

State-led localism

- Poplar Neighbourhood Community Budget (2012-13)
- Lambeth Council, Co-operative Council, neighbourhood working (2014-15)

Civil-society-led localism

- Neighbourhood Planning, Highgate (2012-15) (and comparisons with Exeter and Leeds)
- London Citizens – with focus on Tower Hamlets (2001-2015)



FOR HIGHGATE
HIGHGATE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM



Headline results from each project: the PNCB

The **NCB pilot** to pool budgets around a shared concern with a view to co-producing solutions.

Led by Poplar HARCA and partners in NHS and education 2012-2013 (spending £100K).

Consulted with 1170 people individually and in groups – found concerns about health, jobs and young people – and a willingness to engage.

But ended up with a project proposal for work on diabetes ... without any pooled budget and no clarity about if or how to work with the community.



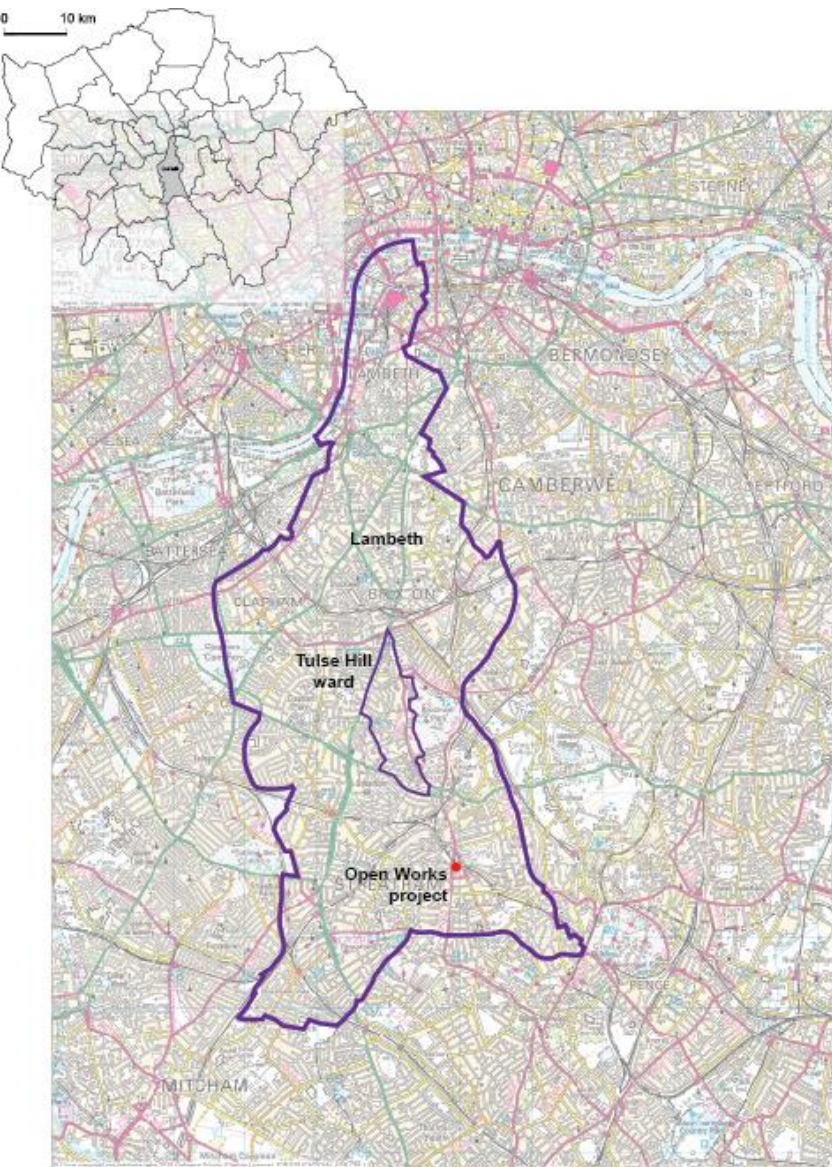
Headline results from each project: Lambeth's Co-operative Council

In the Cooperative Council Citizens' Commission, Leaders Steve Reed set out a vision for reshaping 'the settlement between citizens and the state by handing more power to local people so that a real partnership of equals can emerge' (London Borough of Lambeth, 2011, 1).

This was about 'finding new ways in which citizens can participate in the decisions that affect their lives' and the council doing 'things *with* its community rather than ... *to* the community' (emphasis added).

New approach to commissioning, early adopter scheme, ongoing experiments and internal reorganisation – research into:

- Community-based commissioning – to get councillors to lead in working with the local community around shared concerns.
- Open Works, West Norwood, starting new citizen-led activities from scratch



Focus for CBC on Tulse Hill – 16,000 residents, 3 Lab councillors. Officers unaware of the work already going on in the area.

Unlike Poplar, there were pan-community orgs (Hightrees CDT and the neighbourhood forum) able and willing to represent the community.

Council assumed it had to lead rather than follow or support and it could COST the community time and resources by being slow to respond.

'I think the officers have a view of the community which is not helpful ... It doesn't feel like an equal [relationship] ... and it doesn't feel like we're respected for what we're doing ... [They] have got a huge amount of resource and we've got a tiny bit of resource and yet still we get things done ... and then they even obstruct what we're trying to do and take away from the little we've got.'

There was a need to shift local relations of power.

Headline results from each project:

Neighbourhood planning

Permissive legislation opening the door to local organisation.

Galvinising the community: much easier in Highgate and Exeter St James than in Holbeck, Leeds where City Council took the lead.

Consulting the community: surveys, workshops, events.

Going beyond planning: Friends of Highgate Bowl and a wide range of activities.

Shifting the balance of power with the state

- in the past: 'we produce a plan, we consult [and] you tell us what you think of it but this is the opposite. You're doing a plan, you come to us, you show us what you've done and we comment on it and we're helping you, so it reverses that relationship.'
- 'it is a significant transfer of power ... you have the chance to have a plan that has teeth that is written by you, it is a big thing ... Ultimately, their plan has the same weight as our plan.' North London planning officer

Filling a political space at the neighbourhood scale – with debate about urban parish councils (Queen's Park Community Council)



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HIGHGATE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Headline results from each project: community organising

Two different models in the UK: BBCO as practised by Citizens UK; organising from scratch by Locality (funded by coalition 2011-15; more akin to community development)

BBCO: Linking civil society orgs and fostering political action/citizenship ... originally conceived to operate at the neighbourhood scale (Chicago 1930s) but since up-scaled to the borough/city

Find a desire to work together but need geographical proximity to forge close relationships

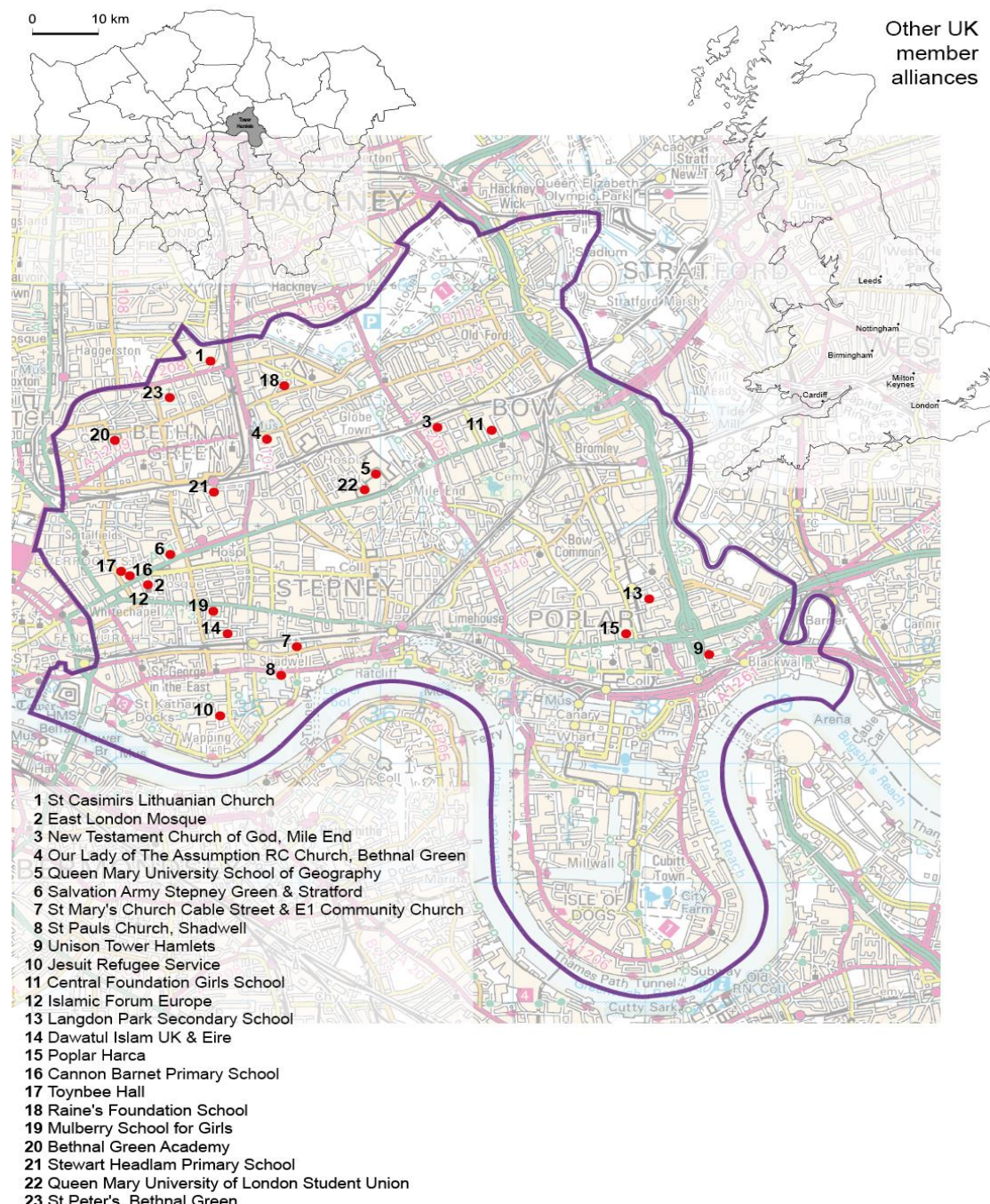
Orgs undermined by population mobility (land prices)

The alliance undermined by shallowness of commitment and need to resource their own group

Localism probably needs an amalgamation of the two models: community development and alliance building at the local scale.

The example of Tower Hamlets Citizens

Members of Tower Hamlets Citizens, May 2015



Key findings

1. Community-wide neighbourhood institutions are essential ... in every case
 - Across diversity
 - Incorporating existing organisations
 - Forging an alliance and relationships between the willing (always a minority sport)
 - For leadership, voice, activity, negotiation, and action
2. The neighbourhood scale (parish) has persisted for hundreds of years – despite efforts against it.
3. Without a community partner the state reverts to type ... and ends up doing yet more consultation ... largely business as usual.
4. Activity generates interest and more capacity.
5. The actions of the state can make a very significant difference to this.

New relations between citizens and state?

We're not quite at the stage of creating "a turning point in the relationship between government and people – and the beginning of a new chapter in our democratic history" (HM Government 2010, 4) ... But things have changed – the localism act has prompted new community-scale organisation in hundreds of towns and neighbourhoods.

It means civic capacity is developing ... (and there is a geography to this ...)

But the bigger question remains the state response ... will officials make a civic offer and embrace an invitation from civil society?

- Erica Tate, chair of the Tulse Hill forum: 'let us have accountability, you can't say that you want this thing to work but we don't trust the community ... they've still got a guard at the door to keep us out ... and that's going to be the biggest problem.'

Concluding thoughts

Are we in the early days of a **new period** of statecraft and citizenship? (see next slide)

Experiments underway but no clear direction of travel

Clearly need neighbourhood level organisation and ideas for creation where it doesn't exist

Changing the state will be extremely hard to achieve ... how to do it?

People will need something at stake to engage ... how to make this possible?



Time	Regime	The major political tradition	The institutional infrastructure of the state	The geography of power relations	The 'civic offer' to citizens
C17th C18th	Juridical	Conservative	Crown, parish, borough	Semi-autonomous localism	To be self-appointed and anointed guardians of order; to serve.
C19th	Governmental	Liberal	Parliament, local authorities (county, city, borough, district)	Central oversight of local expansion	For some: to vote, join a party, stand for office.
C20th	Welfarist	Social democratic	Government, parliament, civil service, local authorities	Centralisation	Universal: to vote, join a party, stand for office, join a movement.
C21st	Localist	Liberal-republican/ institutional	Government, parliament, civil service, local authorities, state-funded bodies, civic organisations.	Towards subsidiarity, dispersed away from the centre	Universal: to vote, join a party, stand for office, organise, negotiate, co-produce.

The shifting governmental regimes and spatial orders of English state-craft, from the seventeenth century

Open works

