



Can Localism work for Older People in Urban Environments?

Perspectives from the British Social Attitudes Survey

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Executive summary

Context

The current policy landscape in terms of developing homes and communities and providing local services is becoming dominated by two main tranches of policy . the Big Society - and a subsidiary of this . localism. Both represent a devolution of powers from central government; in the case of the former this is more to the hands of local people and voluntary groups, and in the latter more to local authority structures. While there is overlap between both tranches of policy, it is arguably Localism that is the most tangible of these new policy tranches, with the Localism Bill, which is currently passing through parliament, heralding many changes in the running of local services and in the development of homes and communities.

Findings

In this paper we argue that the success of the Localism Bill in any given area is dependent on the pre-existence of three features among the local populace: i) the existence of (cross-generational) social networks with equitable access to these; ii) the existence of interpersonal, intergenerational and political interest and trust; iii) the existence of substantial levels of community engagement. We outline concerns that these key features are not present in equal amounts across different areas, and show that older people in urban areas in particular, as well as urban residents more generally, may be those who are at greatest risk of losing out in the measures contained within the Localism Bill. Among many of the factors we examine, urban-rural differences appear to be driven by the more disadvantaged social profile of urban residents. While the measures contained in the Localism Bill may bring several positive changes, in the absence of real efforts to engage with more disadvantaged residents, these measures may work to empower those who are socially advantaged, and disempower those with more disadvantaged social characteristics.

Intergenerational Trust and Perceptions

Not all of our results were driven by disadvantage, and in some cases older and working age people in urban areas did exhibit different views from those in rural areas that we were unable to explain, particularly in terms of intergenerational perceptions. Older people in urban areas were more likely to state that they felt disconnected from young people in some way, or that they felt young people were societally disconnected, than older people in rural areas. We found that older people in urban areas were over twice as likely as older people in rural areas to agree that young people did not respect traditional British values. Conversely, working age

people in urban areas were more likely to perceive older people as needing greater financial support from the state. While these indicators only represent proxy measures of intergenerational harmony, they nevertheless show that older people in urban areas may feel more disconnected from other groups in their community, more so than older people in rural areas. These findings lead us to highlight the absence of measures within the Localism Bill that will help foster intergenerational trust and cooperation, elements that may be required to ensure that decisions taken on service provision and development reflect the needs of people of all ages.

Access to information and services

Older people in urban areas were significantly more likely to report dependence on public transport, and to report that there were nearby areas which they considered unsafe, even after accounting for several controlling variables. Both transport and safety were identified as possible restrictions on the ability of older urban residents to engage with political structures and to play a more active part in the Big Society in addition to other problems older people in the community may face including poorer health.

The provision of timely, relevant, and accessible information is key to ensuring that all people are able to contribute to the local decision making that will take place under the Localism Bill. Our results show that older people in urban areas are among the least likely to have ready access to internet, with under two-fifths reporting internet access at home, and overall older urban residents were 40% less likely to have internet at home compared to their rural counterparts. This difference largely disappeared once we accounted for socioeconomic factors, and that older urban residents generally have a more deprived social profile than older rural residents. Many of our findings reflect wider concerns about the ability of less advantaged people to participate in decision making structures and to lobby for the continuation of services upon which they may be reliant, without clear guidance and minimum standards in place for the provision of information.

Political and Community Engagement

Older urban residents, as well as urban residents of all ages, were found to exhibit significantly lower levels of interest in political issues than rural residents; however, this effect largely disappeared once socioeconomic and socio-demographic differences were accounted for. This finding is of concern as there is little to accompany the Localism Bill that constitutes a strategy for engaging with harder to reach groups. Although no differences were detected among older urban compared to older rural residents specifically, differences in voting behaviour in local elections were found between urban and rural residents of all ages, which again was largely explained by socioeconomic differences. We examined this effect further and our final set of results examined voting and volunteering behaviour among the population as a whole, and suggested that those with low educational qualifications and those in

social housing were the least likely to exhibit these behaviours. We remain concerned about how groups within the older population will fare under the Big Society and Localism, particularly those who may be less well off, or may be marginalised in other ways. For residents of urban areas, where greater concentrations of those with disadvantaged characteristics reside, in the absence of a clear engagement strategy, the opportunities contained within the Bill may disproportionately benefit those who already hold more advantaged characteristics.

Recommendations

In light of our findings, and in addition to the recommendations made in an earlier report (see Kneale & Sinclair 2011), we make the recommendations which are summarised below:

- The results suggest that while older people as a whole have relatively high levels of political and community engagement, those in urban areas often have higher rates of political and community disengagement than their rural counterparts. This appears to be correlated with a more disadvantaged social profile. We are concerned that these lower levels of political and community engagement exhibited by older urban residents and those with disadvantaged characteristics may mean that their needs will be overlooked. We would call for the forthcoming National Planning Framework, the only remaining centralised planning structure by which Local Neighbourhood Development Plans will have to abide (see table 1), to explicitly require that local plans incorporate the development homes and communities reflective of demographic change, including the provision of affordable older people's housing.
- Policy-makers should focus on ways in which to strengthen interpersonal, intergenerational, and multigenerational networks, particularly in urban areas. This could take place through the creation of inclusive spaces or developing inclusive activities (see Lloyd, 2008), or a number of other means¹.
- Despite age positively predicting political engagement, we are concerned that deprived older people, as well as working age people more generally, will become increasingly marginalised through a failure to engage politically. Localism may well be one way to stimulate political engagement, although provision needs to be made to ensure that decisions reflect the diversity of the electorate. We would recommend that in addition to validating local decisions based on turnout number or proportion, that decisions should also reflect the social composition of the electorate. We initially suggest housing tenure or age as being a basis for validation, although other measures could also be used.

¹ ILC-UK are currently undertaking a review and evaluation of work to help foster intergenerational work among the LGBT community, the results of which should be published in Summer 2011.

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- The Localism Bill should include provision to respond to the different levels of existing community volunteering among more socioeconomically disadvantaged people. Given that people in urban areas are more likely to fall into disadvantaged categories than those in rural areas, on aggregate a smaller proportion of urban residents with a select social profile may engage with new volunteering opportunities available, without a programme of activity to encourage community engagement among more hard to reach groups.
 - Similarly, the Localism Bill should include provision to respond to the different levels of existing political interest and engagement among more socioeconomically disadvantaged people. Given that people in urban areas are more likely to fall into disadvantaged categories than those in rural areas, on aggregate a smaller proportion of urban residents with a select social profile may engage with new decision-making opportunities available, without a programme of activity to encourage political engagement and participation among more hard to reach groups.
 - Minimum standards for the provision of timely information should be set in place to facilitate engagement among older and more deprived residents. These standards should recognise that older and more deprived residents are less likely to have access to the internet at home. This is a pertinent issue for urban areas because of compositional differences in the population.
 - Community meetings, referendums and other opportunities to participate in the Big Society in urban areas should be structured around the specific needs of older people to ensure adequate representation. This may include planning local meetings with explicit consideration as to public transport timetables and the safety (or perception of safety) of residents in travelling to venues.

Introduction

The current policy landscape for developing homes and communities and providing local services is becoming increasingly dominated by two main tranches of policy . the Big Society and Localism. These new philosophies have followed some major contextual shifts including the financial crisis and recession, and the Spending Review, as well as the recent change in government. Both philosophies are revolved around the notion of disempowering central government and the transfer of power into the hands of ordinary people, either directly (as is perhaps more the case with the Big Society) or indirectly through decentralisation (as is perhaps more the case with Localism, although substantial overlap exists both in terms of the philosophy and execution). This paper reviews some of the main origins, principles and specific policies of both Localism and the Big Society, and questions the effects on older people, and particularly those in urban environments. In this paper, the focus is on whether the assumptions upon which the success of both the Big Society and Localism for older people in urban environments hinges does actually ring true in quantitative explorations of nationally representative data.

Run-up and Spending Review

Arguably, a major catalyst that led to both the Big Society and the Localism Bill becoming public policy was the recession and banking bailout beginning in 2008, and the fiscal crisis that followed. The recession needs little introduction. Initially caused by instability in the US sub-prime housing market and the recklessness of lenders high exposure to bad debt, the crisis quickly unfolded to envelop the major economies of the Western world. Banks, who had issued loans, particularly to higher-risk borrowers, were no longer able to rely on the money markets to substantiate these loans and many found themselves in a position to default on their debts and collapse (see Taylor 2009 for an overview), including several familiar names from the UK high street. The consequences of allowing large banks to collapse were deemed so severe to the economy that the UK government at the time responded through a bailout programme - the total cost of which is said to have reached £1.5 trillion (Telegraph 2011). This bailout was arguably the major contributory factor to the resulting fiscal crisis, where public spending outstripped government income (Berry & Sinclair, 2010). However, others emphasise that the fiscal debt was already present before the financial crisis hit, and that spending was greater than income from around 2001 (Smith 2010). What is clear is that the budget deficit became a key determinant of the 2010 election. While all parties generally agreed that the size of the deficit had to be reduced from the shortfall of £155 billion in 2009/10, they differed as to the level, target and timing of cuts (Kneale, Berry and Sinclair 2010). In May 2010, the Conservative party formed a majority partner in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats and outlined their way of reducing the size of the deficit at the end of 2010 in the Spending Review.

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The Spending Review outlined that across all government departments, savings were to be made, although some departments were hit particularly hard. For example, universities were to face a cut of 40% in the teaching budget, the social housing budget was to be cut by half, and the spending within the Department of Culture Media and Sport was to decline by 24%. However, some departments took severe cuts. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) took a particularly severe hit, with over half of the budget disappearing for the Communities arm and 27% disappearing from the Local Government arm (Treasury 2010). Health was protected to some extent, although was supposed to take a cut in real terms once some money had transferred to Local Authorities for social care (The Telegraph 2010), and while no direct cuts were implemented to health budgets, no provision was made for increased demand which nevertheless represents a cut in real terms. Many had expected the lives of older people to have been immediately disrupted as a result of the cuts and had expected that older people would have been disproportionately targeted; however, in fact, advocates of older people perceived the Spending Review as representing a fair deal for older people (Harrop 2010). While there were some areas of discontentment, for example the raising of the state pension age and the discontinuation of the Warm Front programme², representatives of older people's charities were generally satisfied with the short-term measures proposed (acknowledging that some cuts had to be made in the spirit of intergenerational fairness), if apprehensive about the long-term future.

The actual impact of the cuts that are beginning to emerge in 2011 may have altered this perception somewhat; cuts to Local Authority budgets that may have been expected to have been made in terms of efficiencies in staffing and cuts to new capital projects are actually beginning to affect front line services. Older people, being frequent consumers of Local Authority provided services, may be those who suffer most from cuts to services such as social care services, libraries, meals on wheels services, and many others. The argument that is now emerging is that cutting these services, while having a more minimal short-term effect, may have severe long-term implications in limiting the mobility and independence of older people, which in turn could have severe impacts in terms of raising social care budgets (for example Kneale & Sinclair 2011). This is coupled with what are emerging as real-term cuts in the order of 7% in social care budgets once the full impact of CLG cuts come into effect (Humphries, 2011). Furthermore, while healthcare in itself has been protected, the antecedent factors that predict good later life health such as good quality housing, good quality advice and information services, as well as the provision of localised public health and nutrition services, among others, are being cut; such measures could prove a costly false economy in the long-term that represents a move from more inexpensive preventative health strategies to more costly treatment strategies. These cuts are likely to impact older people across urban

² The Warm Front programme provided grants for introducing energy efficient measures such as insulation into homes. The current programme is scaled back, and will stop from 2013 when grants will be replaced by loans.

and rural areas, although due to differing lifestyles, service provision and sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics, we may expect this impact to materialise in different ways in urban areas compared to rural and suburban areas. Regardless of area of residence, the Big Society is argued by some (for example Smith 2010) to be one way in which the government hopes to mitigate the effect of these cuts, and we attempt to describe the Big Society in the following section.

Big Society

The term Big Society has been used across vastly different contexts. It may unsettle many Conservative voters to find that in 2004, a year before David Cameron had even assumed leadership of the party, the communist government in the People's Republic of China issued a drive for greater social protection under the slogan 'Big Society, Small Government' (Boychuk, 2007). Under this drive, the voluntary sector was to act as a bridge linking the government and the general public; in many ways, the more recent UK Big Society movement also replicates this aim, albeit from a vastly different ideological standpoint. In fact, the ideological origin of the Big Society movement in the UK predates this century, and stretches back to the left-leaning cooperatives and mutualised movements of the last century (Smith 2011). However, the phrase Big Society as used by politicians has really only been in existence since 2009 in the Conservative Party's paper 'Control Shift: Returning Power to Local Communities' (Stott 2011). Within the ethos of the Big Society in the UK, the aim has always been to 'redistribute power from officialdom to the people' (Smith, 2011 pp27). Specifically, this redistribution rests on three pillars (Stott 2011):

- 1) Public Sector Reform
- 2) Community Engagement
- 3) Mass engagement and philanthropy

Public services reform include greater roles for the voluntary and private sector to intervene and run services; community engagement will enable members of the public to join together and run services; and mass engagement and philanthropy includes using behavioural economics theory to encourage (nudge) people into volunteering on a regular basis. The recent basis for this tranche of policy is inextricably linked with the financial crisis and the budget deficit, which became a key battleground for the 2010 election (Smith 2010). The Big Society became part of the Conservative electoral manifesto, and a key advantage was that the Big Society itself was a cheap way of reducing public spending. However, later admissions by elected ministers have revealed that the Big Society would have been a cornerstone Conservative policy whether or not there had been a budget deficit (Lewis 2011), suggesting that the philosophy was ingrained deeper into the party's policy than simply as a response to a challenging fiscal environment. Critics of the Big Society have argued that the whole idea of the Big Society is an empty pledge brought about

to appease concerns about cuts to welfare budget (Smith 2010); others have highlighted that civic participation more widely was already enjoying something of a renaissance before the Big Society movement (Hilton et al., 2010), and others still have noted the confusion among the electorate as to what constitutes the Big Society (Stott 2011). However, proponents of the Big Society have persistently countered criticism through highlighting the potential strengthening of the social and moral fabric of the UK (Smith 2011).

The combination of all three Big Society pillars (reform of public services, community engagement, mass philanthropy) is demonstrative of a withdrawal of the state in helping to resolve problems facing the public, and instead an expectation that communities will join together to solve problems, facilitated by the state. Put another way, the state is now taking a step back to a certain degree from running services for people, and solely responding to the will of the people. Services will no longer be imposed on people unless they lobby, participate, and help to run them. For some older people, as we will discuss throughout this paper, this can theoretically and practically be problematic given their relative societal marginalisation and the ageism inherent within UK culture. In urban areas, which arguably hold a greater diversity in the characteristics and needs of people as well being more transient in nature, uniting differing groups also poses challenges not faced to the same extent as in rural and suburban areas. Being older and in an urban area may compound the challenges of negotiating the new political landscape, and this is the subject of this paper.

Localism

In essence, much of the Big Society movement can be viewed as a two stage process, beginning firstly with a process of decentralisation and a transfer of powers from central and regional structures to local structures, before the second stage of mass engagement and philanthropy. The Localism Bill is therefore at the heart of the Big Society movement and a key facilitator of this first stage of Big Society, and questionably perhaps, a philosophy in itself. Moreover, it is operationalized through a tangible set of policies contained within the Localism Bill.

At the time of writing, the Localism Bill looks certain to become a reality - having received its first and second hearing in the House of Commons it is now being heard in the Committee stage where amendments can be made before being given a third hearing and passing from the House of Commons to the House of Lords for debate. The Bill contains policies emblematic of the move towards a Big Society through increased level of mass philanthropy as well as a more general move towards decentralisation. It contains a number of proposed changes that confer greater rights onto community voluntary groups and individuals in running services, hold their Local Authority to account, and planning and developing housing and neighbourhoods. The contents of the Bill appear intent on inspiring social engagement and action

through a series of measures that transfer power away from central and regional structures, and grant new powers, into the hands of people. While the Bill clearly outlines which parts of local policy can be influenced by the public (Localism Bill 2010), what the Bill doesn't do at this stage is to outline exactly how local people will become engaged in their local area in the event that this doesn't happen organically.

In Table 1, below we outline the major changes proposed in the Localism Bill (see Kneale & Sinclair 2011 for a discussion with specific reference to neighbourhoods and community design). While none of the elements are explicitly detrimental for older people, and allowing all people a greater choice and say in what goes on in their neighbourhood can only be a positive move, three questions remain in terms of the access and equitable outcome of the Bill for older people³.

- 1) firstly, do older people have access to (cross-generational) networks to enable them to access and share information on decisions occurring in their areas?
- 2) secondly, will people exhibit interpersonal trust and fairness to make decisions in a fair and equitable manner?
- 3) thirdly, are older people sufficiently engaged within local structures to be able to act for themselves?

These questions represent domains that sociologists may term social or cultural capital (for example Bourdieu 1986; Beaudoin & Thorson 2004). Many older people are likely to have substantial levels of social capital. However, high levels of pensioner poverty; deteriorating health, mobility or mental capacity; or low levels of cross-generational interaction are challenges that older people may face in maintaining their social capital as they age. As a result of decreasing social capital, and potentially the (inadvertent) exclusionary practices of younger people (Burchardt et al 2002); older people may become detached from their communities and wider society. There is a concern that the Localism Bill could empower those who already occupy an advantaged societal position (Kneale & Sinclair 2011); in the next section we discuss why this might be a particular concern for older people in urban areas before moving to present the results of our empirical analyses.

³ Similar questions have also been raised elsewhere, see Lloyd 2008b.

Table 1: Proposed changes contained in the Localism Bill (see notes)

Action	Description
Changes to Local Authority Structures and Management	
Giving councils a general power of competence	This allows Local Authorities including some parish councils - the right to do "anything apart from that which is specifically prohibited". This may allow Local Authorities to be run more like businesses, potentially more efficiently. The Bill allows Local Authorities to run some non-statutory services for commercial purposes, and exercise powers even if these do not necessarily benefit all residents (p14, s4b,4c). However, Local Authorities will still be bound by previous legislation governing the services that should be provided free of charge at point of delivery.
Instigation of Local Referendums on any local issue	People will be able to trigger referendums on any local issue, including council tax, police and fire service rises provided they exceed a set limit. Referendums will only be held from petitions that include 5% of the local electorate. The government believes that this is a key step to empowering local people. However, the Local Authority is not bound to take any steps reflecting the result of the referendum.
Giving voluntary and community groups the right to challenge local authorities over their services	This bill provides a community right to challenge. The community right to challenge allows voluntary groups, individual staff from Local Authorities, or groups of individuals who operate as charities the right to challenge Local Authorities on the running of services. Voluntary groups, social enterprises, parish councils and others will be able to express an interest in taking over council-run services - the local authority will have to consider and respond to these challenges, although not necessarily relinquish control. It could prompt a bidding exercise in which the group could then compete. Services could, for example, include running community centres, social care services or improving transport links. Unlike some of the non-statutory services provided by Local Authorities themselves, these services could not be run as businesses. any surplus is expected to be directed back into the service.
Giving voluntary and community groups the right bid for local assets	Similar to the right to challenge local groups will be given the opportunity to bid for Local Assets when an opportunity arises, such as a proposed change of ownership. Local assets include, for example, shops, pubs, parks, and nurseries; Local Authorities will be required to draw up a list of assets in their area. Local groups will be given additional time and support in drawing up plans on how to run and finance local assets, to establish a more level playing field between local voluntary groups and the commercial sector. This additional support, however, would not guarantee a successful bid.
Housing	
Provide for a new form of flexible tenure for social housing tenants	This essentially signals the end of council homes for life and will be replaced by fixed-term tenure agreements.
Amend the way in which a social tenant can make a complaint about their landlord	The Localism Bill includes changes to the way complaints are made and dealt with in social housing. The current two separate ombudsmen (the Local Government Ombudsman and the Independent Housing Ombudsman) will merge to form the Independent Housing Ombudsman.
Housing targets	Housing targets to build an additional three million homes by 2020 are being scrapped, as part of the scrapping of Regional Spatial Strategies.
Planning	
Abolish Regional Spatial Strategies	Regional Spatial Strategies represented a mapping out of future development in GORs, and provided a strategic direction. Some individual Regional Spatial Strategies incorporated demographic change into developments, although others made scant reference.
Amend the Community Infrastructure Levy	This part of the Localism bill extends a levy on developers when they build new homes and businesses. This levy helps to build infrastructure developments and maintain existing developments, and was originally introduced in 2008. In the Localism Bill, the levy will be able to contribute to existing infrastructure developments, and will give Local Authorities greater power in the rate of the levy imposed. In addition, it will give local people a greater say on what the levy is actually spent.
Provide for neighbourhood development plans, which would be approved if they received 50% of the votes cast in a referendum	The Localism bill will introduce neighbourhood development plans. These will allow communities (on a Local Parish Council Basis) to directly influence the location of homes and businesses, even dictating what they should look like. Provided a neighbourhood development plan is in line with the National Planning Framework the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements; local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority, then the local authority will bring it into force.
Provide for neighbourhood development orders to allow communities to approve development without requiring normal planning consent	As part of neighbourhood planning, the Bill will give groups of local people the ability to bring forward small developments.

Notes: References include CLG (2011a), CLG (2011b) Localism Bill (2010). The contents of this table represent the original Bill and do not account for subsequent changes made at committee stage.

Research Questions, Methodology and Data

Older people and community participation in urban areas: Research Questions

Urban areas are home to the most ethnically and socially diverse populations of older people. Meeting the complex and diverse needs of older people in urban areas is a challenge for policy makers. Urban areas are home to great levels of inequality, be this income inequality or otherwise; for example London is home to some of the lowest levels of life expectancy (80.5 years for females in Newham), as well as the highest (89 years for females in Kensington and Chelsea) (Office for National Statistics 2009). In fact, some studies have estimated that over two-thirds of older people in urban environments are deprived in some way (Scharf, Phillipson & Smith 2005), be this in terms of material poverty (for example lacking heating or a telephone), social relations (for example low level of social interaction with family or friends), civic participation, or neighbourhood exclusion (neighbourhood perceptions and fear of crime). Other studies have speculated that levels of social exclusion in British urban environments may be substantially higher than in other contexts (Scharf & de Jong Gierveld, 2008). In our own results, presented later, we find that older people in urban areas appear to be substantially more deprived on a number of socioeconomic and socio-demographic variables.

Few studies, however, have examined the impact that the different characteristics of older urban and rural people, and the more structural differences between urban and rural areas, may have in terms of social relations and community engagement. These differences are likely to be crucial in assessing how the Big Society and Localism could operate for older people in urban areas, and may highlight particular measures that may have to be taken in order to facilitate success. The extant anecdotal evidence suggests that community involvement and engagement is generally lower in urban areas (Mohnen et al. 2011, Greiner et al. 2004), although where such work has taken place in urban areas, it is generally found to benefit residents more so than in rural areas (in terms of individual health) (Mohnen et al. 2011). These are issues of interest in this paper, which addresses the following research questions:

- How do the socioeconomic and socio-demographic characteristics of older people in urban areas differ from those in rural and other areas?
- How does the structure and accessibility of social networks of older people in urban areas differ from those in rural and other areas?

- Do urban areas differ from rural areas in terms of political and intergenerational attitudes? What are the implications for older people?
- Do urban areas differ from rural areas in terms of community engagement and participation? What are the implications for older people?
- How could the differences in social capital between urban and rural areas impact the success of the Big Society and the Localism Bill?

Data and Methods

Here, we use data from two sweeps of the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSAS: 2008, 2009) to investigate our research questions. Each sweep of BSAS represents a depiction of the attitudes of a representative cross-section of the population from around Great Britain on a range of social issues current to the time. This may include attitudes towards health, immigration, politics, and social welfare to name a few (see Stafford 2009 for a more detailed overview). Unlike many other large scale surveys, the BSAS is not longitudinal in design, although in terms of our research questions, BSAS holds two key advantages. Firstly, very few publically available and nationally representative datasets hold indicators of residence that could be used to analyse specific problems in urban areas that are made available to researchers. Although many surveys may hold information on the district or Local Authority of residence, which could be used as a proxy for analysing urban (and rural) effects, this does hold the obvious risk of miscategorising urban and rural areas. An exception is the Millennium Cohort Study, which does contain an urban rural indicator, although, holds information for young children and their parents only. The BSAS, however, categorises respondents based on local population density into four groups (discussed later). The second advantage of the BSAS for this study is the wide breadth of attitudinal and behavioural data, particularly on civic participation, that are contained within the sweeps.

Within each sweep of data collection, all respondents to the BSAS answer questions on socioeconomic and socio-demographic characteristics as well as some attitudinal variables; however, 3 (2009) or 4 (2008) versions of the questionnaire are randomly assigned to respondents so that the bulk of attitudinal and behavioural information is only asked to some of the total respondents. As we are interested in a particular subset of the population - older people in urban areas - this does compromise our sample size significantly, particularly if we only employ listwise deletion as a strategy to deal with missing data in our responses. Instead we use multiple imputation as a strategy to mitigate the effects of missing data (see Royston 2004). For the 2009 sweep, we create two imputation sets: i) one set where the effect of missing data was minimal and included the main socioeconomic and sociodemographic variables as well as a few attitudinal variables and ii) a set where we imputed a larger number of variables that only featured in some of our sweeps; for this latter dataset, we cut around a third of the total respondents that were not asked any of our questions of

interest in order to facilitate the imputation process, and so that no variable had over 35% missingness. All data from the 2009 sweep will be marked as either set A (n=3,341) or set B (n=2,261) to reflect the imputation strategy used. For the 2008 sweep, we used two multiple imputation models and created two different datasets of similar size set A (n=3,310) or set B (n=3,243). Given that the versions of the questionnaire were randomly assigned in both years, we are confident that the data satisfies the Missing at Random assumption . the basis for multiple imputation. In each imputation model, we created 20 replicate sets, as is the general consensus (STATA 2009). We checked the imputed results against the original data and also examined the models we constructed in terms of direction and size of coefficients, and found consistency between the imputed and original datasets.

Methods and Definitions

To address our research questions, we use weighted univariate and bivariate analysis as well as constructing weighted OLS models and binary, multinomial and ordinal logistic regression models (using the weight provided in the dataset, which reflects the socio-demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the area as well as the respondent probability of selection within households). In validating our models, for example performing the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness of fit test, we were often unable to run the test on data that was both weighted and multiply imputed, and where this was the case we only ran the test on individual replicate sets.

We also supplement our analyses using National Statistics census and other data. We use the National Statistics definitions of urban, town and fringe, and village and isolated dwelling and match these to census (2001) and other more recent data. Unlike the BSAS data that covers the whole of Great Britain, the National Statistics data we use covers England and Wales only.

Our characterisation of urban residents is based on the population density of their postcode district. This population density is divided into quartiles in the data that we characterise below:

Table 2: Socioeconomic and Socio-demographic characteristics by age and residence (see notes)

0-2.79 persons per hectare (pph)	Rural
2.79-15.43 pph	Village
15.43-34.30 pph	Small Town/Suburb
34.31-304.55 pph	City, Urban area

Our characterisation based on population density also is not entirely without issue. For example, the ward of Farringdon located in the City of London Local Authority had a population of 1.88 pph and is therefore classed as rural according to the

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definition above. This is due to the low proportion of residential properties and a high proportion of commercial properties in the ward. The new National Statistics definitions of residence are based both on contiguity as well as population size (see Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2009) and resolve these issues. Nevertheless, the example noted represents only a very small minority of cases, and we are confident that our definitions of urban and rural represent a good proxy for testing urban and rural differences. Our definition of older people, for the purposes of this paper, represents all respondents aged 65 and over. We refer to all those under the age of 65 as working age, or occasionally younger people, in the text, although often our descriptive tables we show the results for older people and the population as a whole for parsimony.

Results

Socioeconomic and Socio-demographic characteristics

We show in table 3 that the urban dwellers in our BSAS sample tend to have a more disadvantaged social profile than those in rural areas. They are more likely to be dependent on either the private rented or social rented sectors for housing, to belong to the lowest income groups, to report fair/bad or very bad health, and the least likely to be in the highest social classes. Conversely, those in urban areas also appear to be slightly better educated in terms of possessing a degree. Demographically, those in urban areas tend to live in households with fewer children and are among the least likely to be married.

Less than one-in-twenty older people (aged 65+) in urban areas had a household income of £44,000 or above, compared to one-in-ten in rural areas; similarly while only a quarter of older people had an income below £15,000 in rural areas, this rose to almost half (46%) in urban areas. Similar results were found when household income was examined by population density among the whole sample, with those in urban areas having lower incomes than those in rural areas; we also examined urban-rural differences using model-based household income estimates for wards available from the ONS and discovered a similar trend. A number of factors may account for this pattern; for example household income and not equivalised household income is presented in table 3; table 3 also shows that urban areas have higher levels of unmarried (possibly single) people than rural areas⁴. Alternatively, among older people, a higher household income may facilitate movement from less desirable urban areas to more desirable rural and semi-rural retirement communities. Whatever the case may be, only one-in-ten older urban dwellers are estimated to have a household income over £26,000 compared to almost a third of rural

⁴ Furthermore, table 2 presents grouped income; if mean income was presented the pattern may change due to some urban residents having exceptionally high incomes. However, this suggests an advantage of the grouped variable.

residents; furthermore a relationship between urban residence and lower income for older people is maintained even after accounting for marital status. Older urban dwellers are also more likely to reside in social housing than older people in less populated areas and are more likely to have a lower health status. However, the relationship between residence and highest qualification exhibits a different trend, with those in urban areas more likely to possess either degree level qualifications or no qualifications, suggestive of some degree of inequality in the characteristics of urban populations. Perhaps unsurprisingly, older people in both urban and rural areas were less likely to report good health and were less likely to possess degree level qualifications than working age (under 65) people.

These differences are significant as lower income is correlated with several outcomes across the lifecourse (for example Easterlin 2001; Lynch et al 2000), although evidence on the association between income and community participation is mixed in the literature (Griffin & Hesketh, 2009; Perkins, Brown & Taylor 1996). Living in social housing has been found to negatively predict community participation in some studies (for example Perkins, Brown & Taylor 1996), although this was in the US context; while there is also mixed evidence on the impact of health and education on social participation (Griffin & Hesketh, 2009; Gjonça et al 2010). Theoretically, a lower income among older people could hamper community participation and engagement through limiting the resources available to access and travel to volunteering opportunities; for working age people, lower income may also influence community participation in a similar way, but may also serve as an additional proxy for working longer or more unsociable hours. If social housing tenure and low educational level represent markers of low income then the relationship between these indicators and community participation may operate in a similar way, although educational level may also independently be an indicator of social capital. Poor health could also limit one's ability to engage with and access the wider community. All of these factors (as well others in table 3) may predict community participation, and we use these as controlling factors in models examining the effect of urban residence on some of the key assumptions underpinning the Localism Bill.

Table 3: Socioeconomic and Socio-demographic characteristics by age and residence (see notes)

	All ages					Older People (65+)				
	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All areas	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All areas
Mean Age	51.2 yrs	47.7 yrs	46.0 yrs	45.6 yrs	42.3 yrs	73.1 yrs	73.4 yrs	74.1 yrs	73.4 yrs	73.5 yrs
Sex										
Male	48.7%	50.1%	49.2%	46.9%	48.8%	42.6%	47.3%	43.9%	41.2%	43.9%
Female	51.3%	49.9%	50.8%	53.1%	51.2%	57.4%	52.7%	56.1%	58.8%	56.1%
Tenure										
Owner Occupied	79.8%	75.3%	73.1%	56.0%	70.5%	87.3%	81.9%	75.4%	71.6%	78.9%
Social Housing	10.0%	14.5%	17.3%	24.1%	17.0%	8.9%	16.2%	20.8%	25.5%	18.0%
Privately Rented	10.2%	10.2%	9.5%	19.9%	12.5%	3.9%	1.9%	3.7%	2.9%	3.0%
Income Group										
<£15,000	14.3%	19.7%	22.1%	26.0%	21.0%	25.0%	36.4%	41.4%	45.9%	37.5%
<£26,000	27.4%	30.2%	27.1%	28.9%	28.4%	43.5%	45.5%	39.2%	43.7%	42.9%
<£44,000	26.4%	21.9%	24.0%	23.0%	23.6%	21.6%	11.0%	11.9%	6.9%	12.6%
£44,000+	31.9%	28.1%	26.8%	22.1%	26.9%	9.8%	7.2%	7.5%	3.5%	7.0%
Marital Status										
Married	73.4%	65.4%	59.8%	54.8%	62.5%	65.1%	61.7%	54.9%	54.1%	58.8%
Was Married	15.3%	15.6%	16.5%	18.7%	16.6%	28.6%	36.0%	38.9%	41.2%	36.4%
Always Single	11.3%	19.0%	23.7%	26.5%	20.9%	6.2%	2.4%	6.2%	4.7%	4.8%
Respondent Social Class										
SC I & II	44.1%	36.4%	32.5%	36.4%	43.2%	44.8%	33.2%	29.2%	26.4%	33.6%
SC III	37.3%	40.5%	46.3%	40.2%	39.2%	33.4%	41.7%	50.4%	53.8%	45.6%
SC IV, V & Other	18.5%	23.1%	21.3%	23.4%	17.6%	21.8%	25.1%	20.4%	19.8%	20.8%
Highest Qualification										
Degree/ Higher Degree	20.6%	16.3%	18.6%	24.9%	20.0%	13.3%	9.5%	8.6%	6.6%	9.4%
A-Levels (NVQ L2/3)	33.3%	31.6%	27.9%	24.1%	28.9%	22.6%	11.6%	9.9%	18.2%	15.1%
GCSE (NVQ L1/2)	28.5%	30.2%	30.9%	27.2%	29.3%	21.4%	20.5%	16.0%	18.0%	18.9%
No Qualifications	17.7%	21.9%	22.6%	23.8%	21.9%	42.6%	58.4%	65.5%	57.2%	56.6%
Self-rated health										
Very good	40.0%	41.4%	39.5%	34.0%	38.7%	33.8%	31.0%	32.7%	27.5%	31.3%
Fairly good	43.2%	39.0%	39.4%	42.3%	40.7%	49.3%	44.4%	39.9%	46.0%	44.6%
Fair/Bad/Very Bad	16.8%	19.6%	21.1%	23.7%	20.6%	16.9%	24.6%	27.4%	26.5%	24.1%
Number of children under 16 in household	0.54	0.49	0.45	0.44	0.48	0	0	0	0	0

Notes: 2009 data set A (n total sample=3,341; n older sample=774), weighted estimates
 PD: Population Density; pph: Persons per hectare

Access to Social Networks and Intergenerational Networks

Table 4 shows that older people in urban areas appear to access local services and new media through significantly different means compared to older people in less populated areas. Those in urban areas are significantly less likely to have access to the internet at home than those in rural or suburban areas, are more likely to be dependent on public transport to reach local shops and services, and are more likely to report that there are areas within a mile of their home that they are afraid to walk through. While these findings are not necessarily novel, they do highlight the necessity of the changes proposed in the Localism Bill to be sympathetic to the way that older people may access information and services. For example, two fifths of older people in urban areas report having the internet at home compared to almost half of those in rural areas; these levels in both urban and rural areas are significantly lower for older people compared to the population as a whole. In addition, these figures do not necessarily correspond to internet usage per se, and in fact, the proportion who reported internet usage was substantially lower than the proportion who reported internet access⁵. Changes proposed by Local Authorities as part of the Localism Bill and Spending review have included the closure of public libraries, where the internet is usually freely available (The Guardian 2011). These results suggest that such measures will have a disproportionate effect on the urban old. Even if voluntary groups were to take the mantle in running libraries, this would not be a guarantee that all the services, including internet access, would be retained.

Changes to planning, development and local services contained within the Bill will extend the opportunities for people to participate in key decision-making processes. However, there is no guidance within the Bill as to the way information on opportunities to participate and the outcome of decisions is communicated to the public. These results suggest that the internet is generally not suitable as the sole means of communication for older people. Should some of the decision-making processes, on planning for example, take the format of public meetings, these results suggest that in order to facilitate the representation of older people in urban settings, that meetings should be scheduled around public transport timetables and with consideration of safety and access (reflective of the inaccessibility of some areas for older urban residents). However, in its current form, the Bill contains no safeguards to ensure that older people can technologically or physically participate in decision-making processes (Kneale & Sinclair 2011), and these results highlight the need to consider the needs of older people in urban areas in particular.

⁵ Internet access represent therefore represents potential and not actual access and usage. This indicates that a substantial group of older people resident in homes with internet access do not have sufficient computer literacy to use this resource.

Table 4: Social and Intergenerational characteristics by age and residence (see notes)

	All ages					Older People (65+)				
	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All Areas	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All Areas
Access to Internet at home*										
No	21.2%	19.1%	22.5%	24.8%	21.9%	47.7%	47.8%	64.3%	60.3%	55.2%
Yes	78.8%	80.9%	77.5%	75.2%	78.1%	52.3%	52.2%	35.7%	39.7%	44.8%
Do you ever look after grandchildren under 16 years?*										
No grandchildren under 16	72.4%	74.5%	78.2%	79.2%	76.4%	45.2%	37.8%	44.2%	44.6%	42.8%
Yes	17.2%	17.8%	14.2%	11.1%	14.9%	27.9%	39.2%	29.3%	23.9%	30.4%
No	10.4%	7.7%	7.6%	9.7%	27.0%	23.0%	26.5%	31.5%	26.8%	
Are there areas within a mile that you're afraid to go?*										
No	74.3%	66.1%	60.2%	50.9%	61.9%	66.6%	59.4%	49.8%	39.1%	53.3%
Yes	25.7%	33.9%	39.8%	49.1%	38.1%	33.4%	40.6%	50.2%	60.9%	46.7%
Main form of accessing shops and services***										
Walk/Bike	27.1%	35.3%	39.7%	52.7%	39.7%	28.8%	27.2%	31.7%	32.9%	30.0%
Private Transport	69.5%	57.2%	51.9%	37.7%	52.8%	63.3%	57.4%	49.8%	43.6%	53.8%
Public Transport	3.4%	7.5%	8.5%	9.5%	7.5%	7.9%	15.4%	18.6%	23.5%	16.2%
How often chat with people aged 10-15 yrs?***										
Every day/ Almost every day	24.2%	25.6%	27.7%	24.1%	25.5%	16.5%	19.4%	12.8%	14.5%	16.0%
At least once a week	32.9%	31.2%	31.9%	33.8%	32.3%	32.0%	25.7%	37.5%	35.0%	32.0%
At least once a month	18.0%	15.8%	14.0%	15.4%	15.6%	19.6%	16.9%	15.5%	10.2%	15.6%
Less often or never	25.0%	27.4%	26.4%	26.7%	26.5%	31.9%	38.1%	34.3%	40.3%	36.2%

*2009 Set A (n=3,341 full sample; n=774 older sample) **2009 Set B (n=2,261 full sample; n=537 older sample) ***2008 (n=3,310 full sample; n=761 older sample). Percentages reflect weighted estimates on a multiply imputed dataset.

When we test the effect of residence on having the internet at home (Table 5), the urban-rural differences disappear with the addition of controlling factors. Much of the urban-rural effect in actuality appears to be due to the higher levels of deprivation experienced by older urban people. Nevertheless, the bivariate results alone confirm that older people in urban areas as a whole may access information differently. When we examine the mode of transport upon which older people are dependent to access local shops and services, an urban-rural effect persists. The results for model 1 (table 5) represent exponentiated relative risk ratios, and show that the relative risk⁶ of being dependent on public transport compared to private transport (the

⁶ Risk here represents a statistical term, not a subjective term.

baseline outcome) is over 4 times higher for older people in urban environments compared to those in rural environments. Similarly, the odds of an older urban resident reporting that there were areas within a mile that were unsafe to negotiate were over three times higher than for of an older rural resident (model 3). Both of these results highlight that older urban residents may be more restricted in their ability to participate than their rural counterparts; while these patterns generally hold for people of all ages, they are accentuated among the older urban population.

Table 5: Social and Intergenerational characteristics by residence among older people (65+)

	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]
Model 1: Main form of accessing shops and services^{\$\$\$}		
<i>Walk/bike vs Public Transport (base)</i>		
Village (vs Rural (base category))	1.044 [0.646,1.688]	0.985 [0.600,1.615]
Suburban/Town (vs Rural (base category))	1.400 [0.845,2.319]	1.190 [0.707,2.003]
City/Urban (vs Rural (base category))	1.665 [0.992,2.793]	1.397 [0.822,2.373]
<i>Private Transport vs Public Transport (base)</i>		
Village (vs Rural (base category))	2.148 [*] [1.124,4.107]	2.319 [*] [1.181,4.553]
Suburban/Town (vs Rural (base category))	2.983 ^{**} [1.525,5.834]	3.271 ^{***} [1.620,6.605]
City/Urban (vs Rural (base category))	4.315 ^{***} [2.229,8.355]	4.254 ^{***} [2.023,8.947]
<i>N</i>	761	761
	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]
Model 2: Access to Internet at home^s		
Village (vs Rural (base category))	0.994 [0.648,1.524]	1.492 [0.900,2.474]
Suburban/Town (vs Rural (base category))	0.505 ^{**} [0.324,0.786]	0.764 [0.458,1.276]
City/Urban (vs Rural (base category))	0.599 [*] [0.373,0.962]	1.027 [0.586,1.799]
<i>N</i>	774	774
	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]
Model 3: Are there areas within a mile that you're afraid to go? ^{ss}		
Village (vs Rural (base category))	1.366 [0.752,2.479]	1.517 [0.803,2.867]
Suburban/Town (vs Rural (base category))	2.022 [*] [1.045,3.913]	2.086 [*] [1.036,4.202]
City/Urban (vs Rural (base category))	3.144 ^{**} [1.537,6.430]	3.309 ^{**} [1.519,7.208]
<i>N</i>	537	537

Notes: Coefficients Model 1 represent Relative Risk Ratios from a multinomial logistics regression model while coefficients in Models 2 and 3 represent odds ratios from binary logistic regression models. #See table 2 for list of controls. Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets. [§]2009 Set A (n=3,341 full sample; n=774 older sample) ^{§§}2009 Set B (n=2,261 full sample; n=537 older sample) ^{§§§}2008 (n=3,310 full sample; n=761 older sample). Models reflect weighted estimates on a multiply imputed dataset. BS $p < 0.08$ * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4 also shows that there is little relationship between residence and intergenerational contact between older people and children, although there may still be differences in intergenerational contact between older people and young adults (this information is not collected in the BSAS). Intergenerational networks are likely to be important to the success of the Localism Bill as they represent a further measure of community cohesion, and represent a way of accessing and contributing to information. Some minor differences appear to exist between contact with grandchildren and residence, with older people in urban areas less likely to have grandchildren, and among those with grandchildren, being less likely to look after these. However, these results are generally not statistically significant.

Inter-personal, Intergenerational and Political Trust and Orientation

Intergenerational trust and cooperation are key to the success of the Localism Bill to ensure that the needs of both young and old are considered in decision-making processes, while political trust and interest among local people is needed to ensure adequate and representative participation. Measuring these elements is problematic, and in this paper we can only rely on proxy indicators of these measures, some of which may be better estimators of our constructs than others. In particular, our indicators of intergenerational cooperation examine traditional values (as a proxy for attitudes of older people on younger) and attitudes of younger people on older people in the workplace and older people's benefits (as a proxy for the attitudes of younger people on older people's issues). While the limitations of these indicators as measures of intergenerational trust and cooperation is discussed in the final section, nevertheless, Table 6 shows a number of differences by residence in political orientation and intergenerational trust among our BSAS sample. Generally, we see that residents in urban areas appear to be less interested in politics as a whole, and while older people in urban areas appear to view the younger generation with some scepticism, younger people (below 65 years) appear sympathetic to both the financial circumstances of older people and the role of older people in the workforce. However, not all of our indicators are statistically significantly associated with urban or rural residence, and we describe the results for those that are below.

Table 6: Interpersonal and Political Trust characteristics by age and residence (see notes)

	All ages					Older People (65+)				
	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All Areas	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All Areas
Intergenerational and Interpersonal Trust and Orientation: Perceptions of Younger People										
Young People don't have enough respect for British values*										
Agree Strongly	23.6%	25.7%	26.7%	26.7%	25.8%	27.9%	36.1%	29.3%	29.3%	30.6%
Agree	51.4%	52.2%	50.7%	50.6%	51.2%	47.4%	48.7%	54.9%	60.2%	52.8%
Neither agree or disagree/ disagree	25.0%	22.1%	22.7%	22.7%	23.0%	24.6%	15.1%	15.9%	10.5%	16.3%
Most young people are responsible and well behaved***										
Agree/agree strongly	61.6%	56.5%	56.0%	51.4%	55.9%	67.0%	61.6%	61.8%	56.7%	61.7%
Neither agree or disagree	15.7%	16.4%	16.9%	20.3%	17.4%	11.8%	17.0%	11.8%	20.6%	15.5%
Disagree/disagree strongly	22.7%	27.1%	27.1%	28.3%	26.7%	21.1%	21.4%	26.3%	22.7%	22.8%
Intergenerational and Interpersonal Trust and Orientation: Perceptions of Older People										
Employers should not make special allowances for older people*										
Strongly agree/ Agree	29.0%	27.4%	22.9%	23.2%	25.2%	32.8%	31.5%	36.8%	35.5%	34.2%
Neither agree or disagree	27.2%	25.2%	26.7%	27.2%	26.5%	26.8%	24.9%	16.8%	19.0%	21.7%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	43.8%	47.4%	50.4%	49.6%	48.2%	40.4%	43.6%	46.5%	45.5%	44.1%
Older people should be encouraged to retire early to reduce unemployment*										
Strongly agree/ Agree	15.1%	13.9%	15.5%	19.3%	16.0%	15.9%	19.6%	24.4%	27.8%	22.0%
Neither agree or disagree	20.1%	22.6%	20.7%	23.4%	21.8%	16.9%	23.7%	15.5%	15.5%	18.1%
Disagree	50.6%	50.5%	50.9%	45.4%	49.3%	52.7%	43.5%	52.7%	43.1%	48.0%
Strongly disagree	14.2%	13.1%	12.8%	11.9%	12.9%	14.5%	13.2%	7.4%	13.5%	12.0%
Should the government spend more or less on benefits for retired people?***										
Spend much more	10.2%	15.6%	15.4%	18.5%	15.4%	16.9%	20.5%	22.6%	27.2%	21.7%
Spend more	59.8%	57.7%	58.6%	57.1%	58.1%	53.0%	52.2%	52.1%	53.3%	52.6%
Spend about the same	30.0%	26.7%	26.0%	24.4%	26.4%	30.1%	27.2%	25.2%	19.5%	25.7%
Is a pensioner living only on the state pension and other state retirement benefits really poor?***										
Has enough/ more than enough	25.6%	23.9%	20.1%	20.2%	22.2%	27.9%	29.5%	22.9%	26.3%	26.9%
Is hard up	60.9%	63.8%	63.2%	63.4%	63.0%	60.2%	60.2%	58.5%	53.5%	58.3%
Is really poor	13.5%	12.3%	16.7%	16.4%	14.7%	11.9%	10.3%	18.6%	20.2%	14.8%
Political Trust, Orientation and Interest										
How much interest do you have in politics?***										
A great deal or quite a lot	36.4%	32.1%	28.2%	28.4%	30.7%	47.8%	38.4%	37.1%	36.8%	39.7%
Some	36.7%	36.4%	35.1%	32.1%	34.9%	34.6%	34.0%	31.3%	28.3%	32.0%
Not much or none at all	26.8%	31.6%	36.8%	39.5%	34.3%	17.6%	27.5%	31.7%	34.9%	28.3%

How much do you trust the government to place the needs of the nation above own political party?*										
Always or most of the time	16.2%	16.3%	17.5%	23.2%	18.4%	19.4%	15.5%	18.5%	16.6%	17.5%
Some of the time	44.1%	44.2%	43.0%	39.6%	42.6%	41.8%	41.3%	41.8%	36.7%	40.4%
Almost never or never	39.7%	39.4%	39.5%	37.2%	38.9%	38.8%	43.3%	39.7%	46.7%	42.1%
Major public services ought to be state ownership?*										
Strongly Agree/Agree	38.4%	39.9%	43.3%	41.0%	40.9%	41.3%	45.7%	42.6%	42.5%	43.1%
Neither Agree or Disagree	33.8%	36.0%	35.8%	39.5%	36.4%	29.4%	25.1%	32.8%	33.4%	30.2%
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	27.8%	24.1%	20.8%	19.6%	22.6%	29.3%	29.2%	24.6%	24.1%	26.7%

*2009 Set A (n=3,341 full sample; n=774 older sample) **2009 Set B (n=2,261 full sample; n=537 older sample) ***2008 Set B (n=3,243 full sample; n=786 older sample). Percentages reflect weighted estimates on a multiply imputed dataset.

Descriptively, we see very few urban-rural differences in the perception that young people do not respect British values among the sample as a whole. However, when we examine differences among older people alone, a trend emerges indicating the older people in urban areas are more likely to agree or agree strongly that young people do not have respect for British values. This relationship holds even after accounting for the different socioeconomic and socio-demographic characteristics of older people in urban areas. Using a simplified variable, we find that those in urban areas are over twice as likely to agree or strongly agree that young people do not respect British values as older people in rural areas (table 7). A similar trend appears when older people in urban areas are asked about the behaviour of young people, although this is not significant in bivariate or multivariate models.

Based on a question asking whether employers should (not) make allowances for older people, younger people (under 65) in urban areas conversely appear to welcome participation of older people, particularly in the work place. Those in urban areas were around 25% less likely to agree that employers should not make allowance for older people, which retained borderline statistical significance with the introduction of controlling factors ($p < 0.08$). Similarly, working age people in urban areas were also more sympathetic towards the poverty facing older people. Working age people in urban areas were almost twice as likely to feel that the government should spend much more on state benefits for retired people, suggesting that working age people were aware of some of the issues facing older people (table 7). However, a slightly different (opposing) trend appears when working age people are asked about whether older people should be asked to retire to reduce unemployment, although this was not a statistically significant difference based on residence in bivariate or multivariate models. While not tantamount to evidence of urban-rural differences in intergenerational cooperation in themselves, these results still suggest that working age people in urban areas generally appear to see a more

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active role for older people, certainly in the workplace, and are more aware of issues of poverty facing older people, than their rural counterparts⁷.

Finally, we examined differences by urban and rural residence on self-rated political interest. Urban residents were much more likely to report political disinterest across all age groups, although in the main, older people exhibited greater political interest than their younger counterparts. Using ordinal logistic regression and a five class likert scale variable reflecting political interest, those in urban areas were significantly more likely to express a higher level of disinterest than those in rural areas (around a 50% elevated odds of expressing increasing disinterest). This effect achieved borderline significance among those aged 65 years and over. However, in both cases, the association was subsumed by socioeconomic and socio-demographic controlling variables, and those with more disadvantaged characteristics also had lower political interest; this finding is also consistent with other studies (Ferragina, Tomlinson & Walker 2011). As discussed earlier, despite the fact that this may not necessarily be a true urban-rural distinction, it does nevertheless highlight the challenge in engaging the urban population as a whole. Furthermore, it does reinforce earlier concerns echoed in the introduction, and elsewhere in the literature, that factors that reflect personal disadvantage may also predict lower political interest, and potentially political engagement (see also Kneale & Sinclair 2011). In the context of Localism, this is potentially damaging in that those who are less interested in politics may lose out. While older people are generally more interested in politics than working age people, table 6 shows that in bivariate terms, older people in urban areas show around the same degree of interest in politics as working age people in rural areas. There were no consistent significant differences in political trust by residence.

⁷ We also reduced our working age sample to examine urban-rural differences for those under 40, and found the same trends.

Table 7: Interpersonal and Political Trust associations by age and residence (see notes)

	Young people don't respect traditional British values (agree or strongly agree) [§] 65+ Sample		Employers should not make allowances for older people (agree or strongly agree) [§] Working Age Sample		Government should spend more or less on retirement benefits (spend much more) ^{§§§} Working Age Sample		How much interest do you have in politics? (Likert scale: A great deal, quite a lot, some, not much, none)			
	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]	Older people (65+) ^{§§}		Working Age (16-64) ^{§§}	
							Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]
Village (vs Rural (base category))	1.831 [*]	1.432	0.928	0.961	1.184	1.253	1.469	1.299	1.195	1.020
	[1.019,3.288]	[0.789,2.602]	[0.685,1.257]	[0.708,1.303]	[0.882,1.588]	[0.931,1.687]	[0.838,2.575]	[0.741,2.280]	[0.911,1.567]	[0.765,1.362]
Suburban/Town (vs Rural (base category))	1.731	1.320	0.635 ^{**}	0.670 [*]	1.208	1.278	1.639	1.290	1.481 [*]	1.173
	[0.960,3.121]	[0.707,2.465]	[0.457,0.882]	[0.480,0.935]	[0.885,1.647]	[0.934,1.747]	[0.965,2.782]	[0.731,2.278]	[1.060,2.069]	[0.802,1.716]
City/Urban (vs Rural (base category))	2.784 ^{**}	2.158 [*]	0.665 [*]	0.728 BS	1.263	1.447 [*]	1.779 BS	1.531	1.547 [*]	1.157
	[1.500,5.167]	[1.125,4.139]	[0.475,0.931]	[0.511,1.038]	[0.932,1.711]	[1.058,1.979]	[0.961,3.293]	[0.784,2.989]	[1.076,2.224]	[0.781,1.714]
N	774	774	2567	2567	2457	2457	537	537	2261	2261
	Notes: Binary Logistic Model		Notes: Binary Logistic Model		Notes: Binary Logistic Model		Notes: Ordinal Logistic Model			

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients (odds ratio in binary logistic model and ordinal logistic model; odds in ordinal logistic model represent odds of being in a successively higher (more politically disinterested) category); 95% confidence intervals in brackets. [§]2009 Set A (n=3,341 full sample; n=774 older sample) ^{§§}2009 Set B (n=2,261 full sample; n=537 older sample) ^{§§§}2008 Set B (n=3,243 full sample; n=786 older sample). Models reflect weighted estimates on a multiply imputed dataset. BS $p < 0.08$ * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ #See table 2 for list of controls.

Community and Political Engagement

Table 8: Community and Political Engagement by age and residence (see notes)

	All ages					Older People (65+)				
	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All Areas	PD: 0-2.78 pph (Rural)	PD: 2.79-15.43 pph (Village)	PD: 15.43-34.40 pph (Small Town/ Sub-urban)	PD: 34.40-304.55 pph (City, Urban)	All Areas
How many times volunteered in the past 12 month?										
None	64.6%	69.3%	67.6%	67.4%	67.5%	67.1%	70.4%	72.9%	74.0%	71.0%
Less than once a month	21.4%	18.0%	20.9%	21.0%	20.1%	13.6%	9.7%	11.2%	11.1%	11.3%
More than once a month	14.0%	12.7%	11.4%	11.6%	12.3%	19.3%	19.8%	15.9%	14.9%	17.7%
Have you worked on a community project in the past 12 month?										
No	89.1%	90.8%	92.6%	90.1%	90.7%	89.1%	92.4%	94.1%	92.4%	92.1%
Yes	10.9%	9.2%	7.4%	9.9%	9.2%	10.9%	7.6%	5.9%	7.6%	7.9%
How often do you talk about politics with family and friends?										
Daily or weekly	44.4%	43.2%	41.6%	44.8%	43.4%	38.2%	40.0%	37.0%	36.0%	38.0%
Roughly monthly	11.2%	10.4%	12.9%	11.8%	11.5%	9.1%	6.4%	6.1%	7.9%	7.3%
Seldom or never	44.4%	46.4%	45.6%	43.4%	45.0%	52.7%	53.6%	56.9%	56.1%	54.7%
How often do you vote in local elections?										
All	41.1%	35.0%	33.4%	33.2%	35.2%	64.3%	58.7%	56.3%	58.9%	59.4%
Most	17.3%	14.9%	16.9%	14.2%	15.6%	15.2%	16.6%	19.4%	15.2%	16.6%
Some or a few	19.6%	20.9%	23.5%	24.5%	22.3%	10.9%	14.8%	16.2%	16.2%	14.6%
None	22.1%	29.2%	26.1%	28.2%	26.9%	9.6%	9.9%	8.0%	9.7%	9.3%

2008 (n=3,310 full sample; n=761 older sample). Percentages reflect weighted estimates on a multiply imputed dataset.

In general, there were few distinctions between urban and rural older people in their community and political engagement behaviours. Older people were less likely to have reported some form of volunteering in the previous twelve months than working age people; while in these data, older people as a whole have a higher mean number of episodes of volunteering in the past twelve months, this is largely due to a few individuals with exceptionally high rates of episodes of volunteering. Furthermore, older people in more urban areas appeared less likely to report any volunteering in the past twelve months than older people in rural areas, based on descriptive analyses. However, these urban-rural differences were not statistically significant. A similar, insignificant, trend was observed when examining participation in a community project, with urban older people slightly less likely than their rural counterparts to have participated.

Despite higher levels of political interest observed earlier, older people were actually less likely to frequently discuss politics with family and friends than younger people. This may be a reflection of the relatively weaker social networks of older people that were not detected in

earlier analyses. The changes proposed in the Localism Bill could help to engage older people and strengthen their social networks through community engagement. If older people are interested in politics but don't have the social networks to help share their views, then the implementation of the Big Society could help this. However, the recent policies emblematic of the Big Society have lacked detail on how those with weaker social networks and social capital will become engaged and enabled to share their views. These analyses suggest that there may be something of an untapped potential for older people to reengage should new localised decision making structures facilitate this. Furthermore, this is not an observation restricted to older people in urban environments, given that no significant difference between older people in urban and rural areas in reports of discussing politics was found. This potential is also reflected in the greater propensity of older people to vote in local elections. After accounting for a number of socioeconomic and socio-demographic characteristics, older people aged 65 and above were almost four times more likely to vote in local elections than working age people (model 3, table 9).

When examining voting behaviour, an urban-rural difference did exist. In an unadjusted model simply looking at urban-rural residence as a predictor of voting behaviour among people of all ages, those in urban areas were around 30% less likely to vote in all or most local elections than those in rural areas. Although this was not a difference apparent among older people specifically, a failure to engage residents of all ages in local politics in urban areas will present a challenge to the success of the Big Society and Localism movements. Perhaps of even greater concern for policy-makers is that the effect is largely subsumed once socioeconomic differences are accounted for, suggesting that much of the effect observed was driven by the compositional differences between urban and rural areas (see table 2). Whether the policies included in the Localism Bill itself will help to reengage residents with local issues is a matter for debate; however, crucially, there is no detail within the Bill on the measures that will be taken to engage with hard-to-reach and marginalised groups. This is something we also explore in the concluding results section.

Table 9: Local election voting behaviour by age and residence – does respondent vote in all or most local elections (see notes)

	Model 1: Voted in All or Most Local Elections (older people only)		Model 2: Voted in All or Most Local Elections (working age only)		Model 3: Voted in All or Most Local Elections (all people)	
	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model [#]
Village (vs Rural (base category))	0.778 [0.406,1.488]	0.827 [0.426,1.607]	0.719 [0.513,1.009]	0.741 [0.520,1.056]	0.711 [*] [0.521,0.970]	0.752 [0.537,1.054]
Suburban/Town (vs Rural (base category))	0.801 [0.353,1.813]	0.860 [0.361,2.050]	0.746 [0.553,1.005]	0.829 [0.603,1.142]	0.724 [*] [0.546,0.960]	0.841 [0.618,1.144]
City/Urban (vs Rural (base category))	0.729 [0.377,1.409]	0.832 [0.411,1.682]	0.690 [*] [0.514,0.926]	0.821 [0.597,1.130]	0.644 ^{**} [0.494,0.839]	0.827 [0.617,1.108]
Aged 65+	-	-	-	-	3.841 ^{***} [3.098,4.762]	4.170 ^{***} [3.210,5.416]
<i>N</i>	761	761	2549	2549	3310	3310

Notes: a=bivariate model only; b=full multivariate model. Exponentiated coefficients (odds ratio in binary logistic model); 95% confidence intervals in brackets. 2008 (n=3,310 full sample; n=761 older sample). Model estimates reflect weighted estimates on a multiply imputed dataset. BS $p < 0.08$ ^{*} $p < 0.05$, ^{**} $p < 0.01$, ^{***} $p < 0.001$ [#]See table 2 for list of controls.

Wider implications of the Big Society and the Localism Bill

Some of the wider implications of our exploration of the impact if the Localism Bill and Big Society on older people in urban areas highlight the challenges in engaging more deprived and marginalised populations in local politics and volunteering opportunities. This was identified previously as an α -factor school of politics (Kneale & Sinclair 2011, p20), where decisions would rest on the popular vote. The analyses presented in Table 10 support this concern though highlight that the popular vote could be largely swayed by the viewpoints of more advantaged sections of society. Not only do advantaged groups appear more likely to engage with local politics, they are also more likely to report greater levels of community engagement through volunteering. Put another way, the evidence in Table 10 suggests that more advantaged people will take a greater share of responsibility for making and implementing decisions than their less advantaged neighbours. Many of those who have newly retired (baby-boomers) are in a relatively advantaged position compared to both younger and older people (post 75 years), although this is not the case for all (for example Lusardi & Mitchell 2007). We also tested whether the effect of being older either mitigated or accentuated some of the effects of low education or tenure through introducing interaction terms into our models, but these were insignificant. Overall, we see that in table 10, after controlling for socioeconomic, socio-demographic and health differences, older people are more likely to vote in local elections, and slightly more likely to volunteer, the latter finding seemingly contradicting earlier findings in Table 8. However, this is after holding constant the effects of health and socioeconomic status, both of which are factors that differ substantially between the older and working age population (table 3)⁸.

While in this paper we are mainly concerned about the impact of the Big Society and Localism on older people in urban areas, the evidence suggests that subgroups within the older population . specifically educationally and economically disadvantaged older people . may be

⁸ Our measures of socioeconomic status reflect housing tenure, income and education. It should be noted that many older people are likely to be advantaged in terms of housing equity or saving, although these factors that are not accounted for in these analyses.

at greatest risk of losing out through the Localism Bill and Big Society, in the absence of a clear engagement strategy. While we are cautious to emphasise that this is the status quo, and that one impact of the Localism Bill could be to change the social profile of those who volunteer and vote locally, this is also unlikely to happen without adopting more of a guided localism framework. Whatever the case may be, Table 10 demonstrates that those of all ages who are resident in social housing are around half as likely to vote in local elections and around twenty-five per cent less likely to volunteer than those in owner occupied housing, while those with no qualifications are around half as likely to vote in local elections and over sixty per cent less likely to volunteer than those with degree level qualifications.

Table 10: Local election voting and volunteering behaviour by selected characteristics (see notes)

	Voted in All or Most Local Elections	Ever volunteered in previous 12 months
Population Density (Baseline category: Rural)		
Village	0.752 [0.537,1.054]	0.803 [0.589,1.094]
Suburban/Town	0.841 [0.618,1.144]	0.876 [0.669,1.148]
City/Urban	0.827 [0.617,1.108]	0.836 [0.600,1.166]
Household Income (Baseline category: <£15,000)		
£15,000-£25,999	0.979 [0.724,1.325]	1.122 [0.847,1.488]
£26,000-£43,999	0.848 [0.561,1.282]	1.221 [0.889,1.677]
>£44,000	1.019 [0.708,1.465]	1.223 [0.838,1.784]
Highest Social Class (Baseline Category: Social Class I & II)		
Social Class III	0.929 [0.734,1.176]	0.860 [0.648,1.143]
Social Class IV, V, Army & Unemployed	0.901 [0.640,1.268]	0.899 [0.596,1.357]
Number of resident children 0-15	1.061 [0.955,1.180]	1.211 ^{**} [1.064,1.378]
Marital Status (Baseline: Married)		
Was Married	0.846 [0.666,1.074]	1.259 [0.964,1.643]
Always single	0.414 ^{***} [0.311,0.551]	1.325 [0.951,1.847]
Housing Tenure (Baseline Category: Owner Occupied)		
Social Housing	0.549 ^{***} [0.396,0.761]	0.743 ^{BS} [0.535,1.031]
Privately Rented Housing	0.466 ^{***} [0.332,0.653]	0.872 [0.549,1.383]
Highest Qualification (Baseline Category: Degree Qualification)		
A-Level, other further ed qualification	0.736 [0.519,1.044]	0.832 [0.589,1.177]
GCSE etc	0.544 ^{***} [0.378,0.781]	0.569 [*] [0.364,0.890]
No Qualifications	0.536 ^{***} [0.371,0.774]	0.332 [0.206,0.535]
Female (baseline: male)	0.961 [0.784,1.178]	1.119 [0.882,1.420]
65 yrs+ (baseline working age)	4.170 ^{***} [3.210,5.416]	1.481 [*] [1.045,2.097]
Self-rated health (Baseline category: very good health)		
Fairly good health	0.949 [0.769,1.171]	0.974 [0.775,1.224]
Not good/ Poor Health	0.870 [0.671,1.128]	0.729 [*] [0.557,0.955]
<i>N</i>	3310	3310

Exponentiated coefficients (odds ratio in binary logistic model); 95% confidence intervals in brackets. 2008 (n=3,310 full sample). Model estimates reflect weighted estimates on a multiply imputed dataset. BS $p < 0.08$ * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ #See table 2 for list of controls.

Summary and Discussion

Summary of findings

In this paper we have critically examined evidence from the British Social Attitudes Survey to inform our discussion on the impact of the Big Society and Localism Bill on older people living in urban environments. This investigation is driven by concerns that some of the main facilitators of success of both tranches of policies; namely: that (i) people have access to (intergenerational) social networks, (ii) that people exhibit interpersonal and political trust, and (iii) that people actively engage in community and political structures; may differ among urban and rural populations, which in turn may have a differential impact on older people in urban environments. Here, we find some limited evidence to suggest that these policies could work for older people in urban environments, but also contradictory evidence to suggest that these policies could be less successful for older people in urban environments than their rural counterparts. Moreover, our analyses ostensibly supports arguments that more disadvantaged people, regardless of age and residence, currently show lower levels of local political and community engagement, and under the Big Society ethos, are at greater risk of losing out.

Older people in urban areas were more likely to state that they felt disconnected from young people in some way, or that they felt young people were societally disconnected, than older people in rural areas. Conversely, working age people in urban areas were more likely to perceive older people as needing greater financial support from the state, a possible reflection of their own financial situation. Further work is needed to examine the dynamics of this relationship. These findings suggest that the detachment that older people perceive from the working age generation may not necessarily be reciprocated. Interestingly, these urban differences appeared to be true differences between urban and rural areas that were not a residue of compositional socioeconomic differences, unlike many other findings contained in this research.

Older urban residents, as well as urban residents of all ages, were found to exhibit significantly lower levels of interest in political issues than rural residents; however, this effect largely disappeared once socioeconomic and socio-demographic differences were accounted for. Similarly, older people in urban areas were less likely to have the internet at home than older rural residents, although this effect was also driven largely by compositional differences between urban and rural populations. Although no differences were detected among older urban compared to older rural residents specifically, differences in voting behaviour in local elections were found between urban and rural residents of all ages, which attenuated to insignificance once controlling factors were inserted into models. Older people in urban areas were significantly more likely to report dependence on public transport, and to report that there were nearby areas which they considered unsafe, even after accounting for several controlling variables. Both transport and safety were identified as possible restrictions on the ability of older urban residents to engage with political structures and to play a more active part in the Big Society in addition to other problems older people in the community may face including poorer health. Many of our findings reflect wider concerns about the ability of more deprived people to participate in decision making structures, and to lobby for the services upon which

they may be reliant to continue. Our final set of results examined voting and volunteering behaviour among the population as a whole, and suggested that those with low educational qualifications and those in social housing were the least likely to exhibit these behaviours. Although older people as a whole were found to be more likely to vote in local elections and slightly more likely to volunteer than working age people after controlling for a range of characteristics, we remain concerned about how groups within the older population will fare under the Big Society and Localism, particularly those who may be less well off. All of the results summarised above are caveated by the limitations we outline below.

Limitations

In this research, some of our main limitations are shared with many other studies reliant on secondary data analysis. One of the main caveats to assert is that all the findings contained within the report represent statistical associations - we do not claim that any of the identified trends are causal in nature. A further major limitation is that the study was largely governed by the availability of relevant data in the BSAS. Although many variables ideal for this research are available in BSAS, some indicators were lacking; for example an indicator of dialogue with young adults among older people (and vice versa), and not just dialogue with children, would have been very valuable for a more robust investigation of intergenerational contact. Similarly, there were also measurement issues in terms of the validity of the construct with the indicators for intergenerational cooperation. Even those variables that did appear to be a more direct measurement of the concept, such as political interest were not without issue, in latter case it is questionable whether respondents considered local politics when answering. While the questionable validity of our indicators in some cases is a limitation of our findings, and one that is encountered widely in secondary analyses, it does not detract from our intention in this paper which was simply to highlight and discuss some potential challenges that Localism presents for older people in urban environments, and to provide indicative evidence to support our arguments. The study design of BSAS was generally not problematic, and we were mostly able to work with an adequate sample size aided by multiple imputation techniques, although we also deliberately kept the models relatively simple given that the sample size was generally adequate, but not large. However, in constructing multiple imputation models, some smaller categories were combined, which may have led to the analysis overlooking some nuances in trends.

While BSAS did offer an adequate sample size overall, we were not able to look at trends within specific groups such as Black and Minority Ethnic people (11% of the sample reported belonging to an ethnic group that was not White European, although no single group accounted for more than 2% of the sample) or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender people (around 0.5% reported being part of a same-sex household, although no question on sexual orientation was included). These groups, within the older population as well as people among of all ages, may be at particular risk of disenfranchisement through the Localism Bill. We also did not look for trends within the older population . grouping together all those ages 65 and over may overlook differences for example between baby boomers and the oldest old; this may be possible in further analysis. Finally, we were not able to examine issues that may be unique to certain urban areas . for example depopulation occurring in some major cities (for

example Couch and Cocks 2011), or other social problems that may be mainly confined to certain large cities, and the impact that this may have on residents in the context of the Big Society and Localism. Similarly, we were also unable to examine some of the specific problems that older people face, for example dramatically increased levels of dementia (Bamford 2011, p11), in the context of the Big Society and Localism, and how this may vary by residence.

Finally, the research also highlighted the inadequacy of many nationally representative studies in their failure to interview people in communal establishments. For older people this presents a particular problem in accessing the views of those in nursing and residential homes as well as other institutional settings. While BSAS and other studies are seemingly representative of the population, given that around one-in-twenty older people are resident in communal establishments (Office for National Statistics 2010), the representativeness of these studies in terms of older people may be compromised. Additionally, the BSAS is one of few to include an indicator to examine urban-rural differences as standard in releases. Although it may be possible to investigate such differences in other studies, this is often not without obtaining special access. Despite an extensive list of caveats and limitations, we do not feel that these detract from the recommendations made in the concluding section.

Discussion and Recommendations

In this paper we outlined the Government's philosophy to devolve a number of powers in terms of the running of local services and planning and developing neighbourhoods to individuals and local groups through the Big Society as well as through changes announced as part of the Localism Bill. This has been under the auspice of giving power back into public hands, although the success of doing so depends somewhat on the existence of social (intergenerational) networks, interpersonal and intergenerational trust, as well as substantial community and political engagement. If we take the example contained within the Localism Bill on the community right to challenge, this gives local voluntary groups and individuals the right to challenge Local Authorities on the running of services, including allowing Local Authorities the right to relinquish control. What is not clear within the Bill is how this will remain equitable among more disenfranchised communities. The results presented earlier suggest that because urban areas have greater numbers of socioeconomically disadvantaged people with lower rates of community engagement, that decisions taken such as the community right to challenge, seemingly on behalf of local people, may actually represent the will of a smaller minority of people than is the case within rural areas. This also applies to older urban residents who are more socioeconomically disadvantaged than their rural counterparts. We also reviewed other evidence that suggested that older people in urban areas were more disengaged from younger people than is the case in rural areas, and that older urban residents may face structural issues in accessing the opportunities presented by the Big Society that are not faced by rural residents.

Based on our earlier discussions and analyses we make the following recommendations:

- The results suggest that while older people as a whole have relatively high levels of political and community engagement, those in urban areas often have higher rates of political and community disengagement than their rural counterparts. This appears to be

correlated with a more disadvantaged social profile. We are concerned that these lower levels of political and community engagement exhibited by older urban residents and those with disadvantaged characteristics may mean that their needs will be overlooked. We would call for the forthcoming National Planning Framework, the only remaining centralised planning structure by which Local Neighbourhood Development Plans will have to abide (see table 1), to explicitly require that local plans incorporate the development homes and communities reflective of demographic change, including the provision of affordable older people's housing.

- In order to facilitate the success of the Big Society policy-makers should focus on ways in which to strengthen interpersonal, intergenerational, and multigenerational networks, particularly in urban areas. This could take place through the creation of inclusive spaces or developing inclusive activities (see Lloyd, 2008), or a number of other means⁹. In this report, levels of intergenerational discordance appeared significantly higher among urban older people than their rural counterparts. Without adopting a more guided approach to the Big Society and Localism, the results in this report suggest that the perceptions and needs of young and old may lead to further conflict.
- Many of the changes included as part of the Big Society and Localism Bill represent a withdrawal of the state, which will increasingly only respond to the will of the people. People are therefore expected to engage with local politics if they are to ensure that services and neighbourhoods reflect their wishes. However, our analyses show that people who exhibit higher levels of socioeconomic deprivation (low qualifications and living in social housing) are also less likely to be interested in politics, or to vote in local elections. These are characteristics common to older people and those in urban areas. Despite age positively predicting political engagement, we are concerned that deprived older people, as well as working age people more generally, will become increasingly marginalised through a failure to engage politically. Localism may well be one way to stimulate political engagement, although provision needs to be made to ensure that decisions reflect the diversity of the electorate. This may include validating only those decisions and referendums that largely reflect (within a relatively wide margin of error for pragmatic reasons), the make-up of the area based on one or two socioeconomic or socio-demographic characteristics. For example, housing tenure is collected regularly in the census, and can be considered a proxy measurement for socioeconomic status in some cases (for example Lupton et al 2009), and could be considered fixed to some extent over time (certainly in terms of social housing versus other housing tenures). If the electorate need to prove residence in order to participate in local votes or referendums, then the composition of the vote in terms of housing tenure, for example, may be easy to ascertain, and could also be used as a further validation that the decisions taken reflect the whole spectrum of the electorate. Similarly, age could be used as a validating criteria. Certainly, validating the composition of the electorate is likely to be a more amenable measure than others such as imposing a mandatory

⁹ ILC-UK are currently undertaking a review and evaluation of work to help foster intergenerational work among the LGBT community, the results of which should be published in Summer 2011.

voting system, given that there is no information available as yet on the number of referendums on various issues that are expected to take place.

- The Localism Bill should include provision to respond to the different levels of existing community volunteering among more socioeconomically disadvantaged people. Given that people in urban areas are more likely to fall into disadvantaged categories than those in rural areas, on aggregate a smaller proportion of urban residents with a select social profile may engage with new volunteering opportunities available, without a programme of activity to encourage community engagement among more hard to reach groups.
- Similarly, the Localism Bill should include provision to respond to the different levels of existing political interest and engagement among more socioeconomically disadvantaged people. Given that people in urban areas are more likely to fall into disadvantaged categories than those in rural areas, on aggregate a smaller proportion of urban residents with a select social profile may engage with new decision-making opportunities available, without a programme of activity to encourage political engagement and participation among more hard to reach groups.
- Minimum standards for the provision of timely information should be set in place to facilitate engagement among older and more deprived residents. These standards should recognise that older and more deprived residents are less likely to have access to the internet at home. This is a pertinent issue for urban areas because of compositional differences in the population.
- Community meetings, referendums and other opportunities to participate in the Big Society in urban areas should be structured around the specific needs of older people to ensure adequate representation. This may include planning local meetings with explicit consideration as to public transport timetables and the safety (or perception of safety) of residents in travelling to venues.

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