

Social Research Association Summer Event 5 July 2011

Shaping research to support the front line

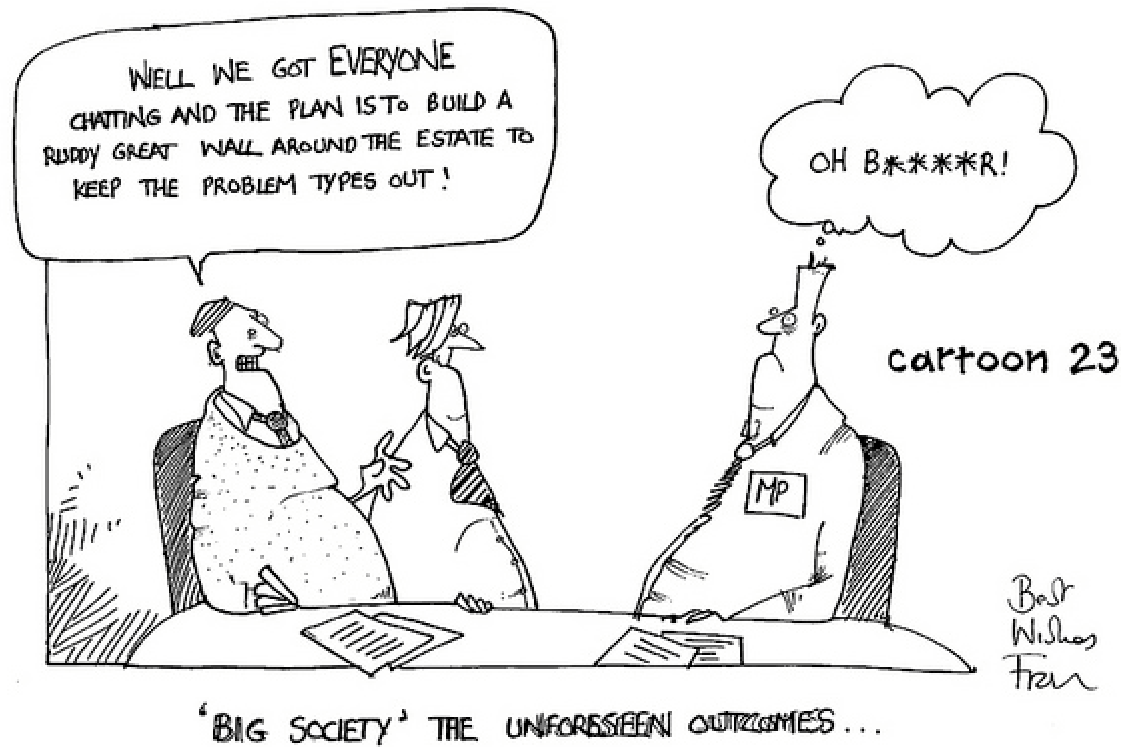
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take part, take pride



Another perspective



Big Society unplugged cartoon 23, by Fran

Contents

- London Borough of Sutton as a vanguard authority - what the Big Society means to us
- The local authority research agenda
- New opportunities
- Key research themes

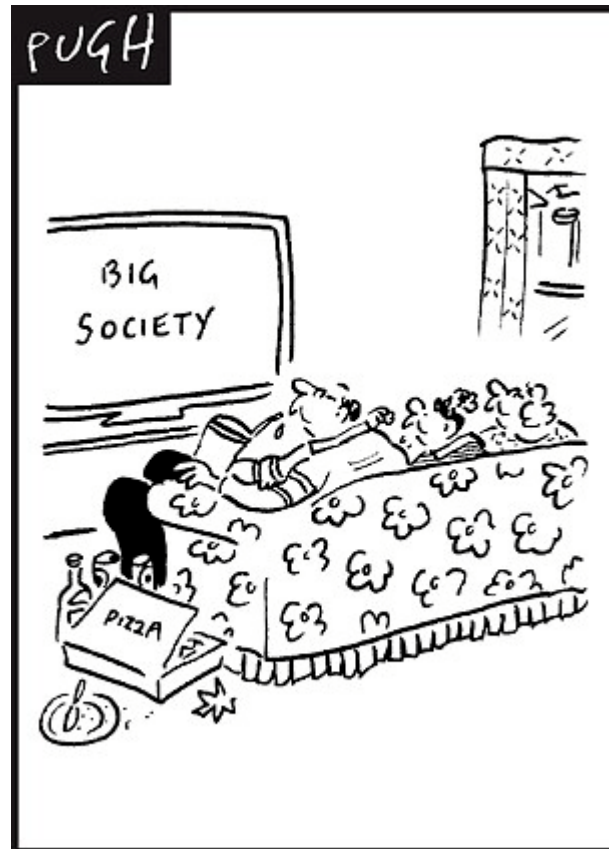
London Borough of Sutton

- South West London suburb, population 185,000 and growing
- Liberal Democrat since 1986 with increased majority at the last elections
- Known for work on sustainability, One Planet living, high-performing schools and behaviour change
- Areas of wealth and deprivation
- People say they want to get more involved



North London	East London	South London	West London	Central London
1 Barnet	5 Redbridge	15 Bromley	21 Hammersmith & Fulham	27 Camden
2 Enfield	6 Barking & Dagenham	16 Croydon	22 Hounslow	28 Islington
3 Haringey	7 Havering	17 Sutton	23 Ealing	29 City of Westminster
4 Waltham Forest	8 Hackney	18 Merton	24 Hillingdon	30 Kensington & Chelsea
	9 City of London	19 Kingston Upon Thames	25 Harrow	31 Wandsworth
	10 Tower Hamlets	20 Richmond Upon Thames	26 Brent	32 Lambeth
	11 Newham			33 Southwark
	12 Lewisham			
	13 Greenwich			
	14 Bexley			

But do they really?



What the Big Society means?

- Authentic to the London Borough of Sutton - our mission is to create a borough in which we can all take part, and take pride.
- Big Society during a time of austerity – particularly challenging but direct link to the transformation of our services
- None of our work is about starting from scratch, or about delivering new sets of services
- Six themes :
 - behaviour change
 - devolving decision-making to lowest possible level
 - closer collaboration with/between voluntary and private sectors
 - cutting red tape
 - new models of service delivery
 - openness and transparency

Hackbridge Sustainable Suburb

- Development of the Hackbridge Community Forum to support community place shaping champions
- The creation of a community-led River Wandle restoration project
- Encouraging community involvement in land management



Sutton Life Centre

Citizenship

Provision of innovatively delivered, thought provoking experiences

Web

Deliver a new website



Education

Provide young people with high quality education and training

Reach

Reach out to London and the South East counties

Health choice through integration

- Would like early adoption of public health responsibilities and targeted public health campaigns
 - Development of a shadow Health and Wellbeing Board



- Would like early development of new healthwatch and local GP user groups to develop patient engagement and patient voice opportunities

Enabling Smarter Travel Choices

Sutton will look to build on the productive relationship it developed with TfL through the delivery of Smarter Travel Sutton (STS)

Improved travel choices through better infrastructure and greater accountability



To give people greater responsibility for how their roads, cycling routes, buses and trains are organised

Objective - TfL and Boroughs working to deliver schemes more efficiently and give residents a stronger voice in the development and implementation of transport schemes

How can our residents support the Big Society?

- Daily activity: connect with neighbours on and off-line, join local time banks and other means of local association -Friends and Parks Groups, local committees
- One-off activity: take part in local events such as Take Part Take Pride, give feedback on key issues, participate locally -based on areas of interest
- Long-term commitments: join or set up a group, develop new social enterprise activity, become a charity trustee, a councillor or school governor
- Share your ideas – don't keep them in your back pocket

State of local authority research

- Fragmented approaches across council departments and money is tight – will research funding win an argument with a library ...
- Focus more on providing statistics to central government departments than our residents
- Lack of qualitative skills
- Collaboration is under-developed

New opportunities?

- Recognising the role of customer insight as a key research tool
- Learning from the front line
- Developing more collaborative approaches
- Residents as co-producers
- Building evaluation into projects at the start – Smarter Travel Sutton
- Embedding commissioning

Future research agendas?

- How is the community leadership role for local councillors developing in response to the Big Society?
- What are the motivations for resident involvement and how can local authorities create the conditions locally?
- What is actual role of social media and how can that be evaluated?
- What is the impact of openness of date on perceptions of trust and accountability?
- What is the relationship between employee engagement and cutting red tape
- How can the impact of research be increased for busy practitioners?

To find out more



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