



# *The ResPublica Fringe*

*Comments and Articles from our conference partners*



*Autumn  
2010*

### About ResPublica

ResPublica was established in 2009 by Phillip Blond. We are a multi-disciplinary, non party-political research organisation, which combines cutting-edge analysis with practical impact to create bold solutions to enduring social and economic problems.

### Current Work

Our research combines a radical, civic philosophy with the latest insights in social policy analysis, economic modelling, behavioural economics, management theory, social psychology and technological innovation to produce original, implementable solutions across six major project areas: Economy, Welfare and Public Services, Environment, Children and Families, Security, and Civil Society and Social Innovation.

As a result, our research, publications, videos, web-based pieces, conferences and events, and blogs, gain traction with politicians of all sides, industry experts, print and broadcast media. To take one example, our work creating new mutual models for our public services that give front line professionals more power over the public services they deliver, was adopted as flagship policy by both major UK political parties and featured in several news and media outlets.

### ResPublica at Party Conferences 2010

Following the hugely successful launch of our 'Ownership State' report during party conference season in 2009, we look forward to a strong presence at all three party conferences this year.

ResPublica will be hosting over 20 events at Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative Conferences, which include a broad range of public fringe discussions addressing topical issues at the forefront of the policy debate. All our public fringes are free to attend and do not require advance registration. For more details go to:

[www.ResPublica.org.uk/events](http://www.ResPublica.org.uk/events)

## Contents

1. Foreword from Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica
2. Rory Stewart OBE, MP for Penrith and The Border, discusses *the Cumbrian experience of the Big Society*
3. *The Big Society already exists, we just need to enable people to reach it*, says Paul Twivy, CEO of The Big Society Network
4. Imran Hussain, Head of Policy, Rights and Advocacy at the Child Poverty Action Group, asks *Is the Coalition Meeting the Fairness Test?*
6. Geoff Mulgan, Commission Chair of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, on *Growing a More Civil Economy Through Civil Society*
8. *What role can the Big Society play in stimulating cultural philanthropy?* asks Colin Tweedy, Chief Executive of Arts and Business
9. *We're All In It (Together)*, says John Moulding, Director of Corporate Affairs at Provident Financial
10. Mark Pack, Associate Editor of Liberal Democrat Voice, explores *the key milestones to strengthening civil society and empowering individuals*
11. *The Big Society means teachers taking charge of their own professional development and being enabled to do so*, argues Philippa Cordingley, Chief Executive of the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education
12. **ResPublica Fringe Schedule at Party Conferences**
16. David Bull, Chief Executive of UNICEF-UK, on *Building Child-Friendly Communities*
18. *Now is the time for charities and social enterprises to innovate*, says Stephen Bubb, Chair of The Social Investment Business
19. *Social values are key stepping stones in addressing environmental and humanitarian challenges*, writes David Nussbaum, Chief Executive of WWF-UK
20. *Is the 'pro' vs. 'anti' European Opposition Out of Date?* asks Phillip Souta, Director of Business for New Europe
21. John Bangs, Former Head of Education at the NUT and Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education, looks to *the future for Teaching under the Coalition*
22. *Is affordable housing a crisis or an opportunity?* asks Dr Chris Handy, OBE, Chief Executive of The Accord Group
24. *Devolution can be played out to maximum impact by driving economic recovery through the core cities*, asserts Chris Murray, Director of The Core Cities Group
26. *Beyond Carbon*: David Green, Chief Executive of the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, on *Making the energy debate personal*

## Foreword

by Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica

It's hard to believe that this is ResPublica's first Party Conference season. It may have been less than one year since our launch last November, but in that time Britain has undergone a radical change – fundamentally challenging everything we thought we knew about the government, public sector and civil society.

The terms of debate are already changing and one term in particular, *Society*, has risen to the fore over the past year. Before its impact has even been felt, David Cameron's Big Society has successfully challenged everyone to change the way we think about society, reclaiming the public as something co-owned, active, innovative and problem-solving. This is a debate that ResPublica has sought to lead, placing the local, the associative, the responsible and the mutual at the heart of all of our policy work.

This is also a debate that we have been glad to see Nick Clegg's Liberal Society and David Miliband's Good Society embrace. More than anything, these are signals that an engaged and associative civil society has a role in every political tradition.

As a means to illustrate this important point, we have asked some of our guest speakers and event partners from our fringe programmes at Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative Party Conferences for their take on the opportunities and challenges that we face in attempting to realise a new civic settlement.

The essays that we have received show the breadth of this new debate. From Cumbria to our core cities, teachers to social enterprises, building a civil economy to building houses – a new civic settlement has the potential to touch every aspect of our lives. These authors, leaders and experts in their respective fields explore new opportunities for civil society to take the lead in restoring the environment, social trust, financial literacy and philanthropy, all the while reminding us not to lose sight of values such as fairness and bringing an end to child poverty.

We are delighted to have these organisations as our colleagues and friends, and to have so many of you join in the debate.

## Rory Stewart OBE, MP for Penrith and The Border, discusses the Cumbrian experience of the Big Society

The Prime Minister has now said repeatedly that Big Society is his passion and that he wants it to be his most lasting positive legacy. But what is 'Big Society'? Local government thinks it means more local government; businessmen: privatisation; charities: money for Charities and individualists hope it means less interference. While for cynics, 'Big Society' is simply a mask for Government cuts. Almost all assume that 'Big Society' will be a program: with a funding stream, universal rules, a hierarchy of officials and standard procedures. But these views are mistaken.

The approach in my Cumbrian constituency is not big, but local and particular. It is about decentralisation but without giving more power to county councils. It is not necessarily about charities or even the private sector, (both as capable of manufacturing jargon as any government bureaucracy). Nor is it about atomised individuals allowed to do whatever they want. It's about collective action. We have more common land in Cumbria than anywhere in Britain, stronger co-ops and mutualised banks; we support everything from the Air Ambulance to Mountain Rescue. These are not undertaken by grand philanthropists: they are about collective endeavour, in planning, financing, building, maintaining and supporting.

The people we work with are mostly unpaid, elected parish councillors: locals who in their own patch know more, care more, and are more likely to find creative and informed solutions than outsiders.

When they consult they do so energetically, comprehensively. They live among their 'clients.' David, who leads the Lyvennet project, is not protected by a call centre from suggestions and complaints: they come straight over his garden fence. Such people are unlikely to spend their own money on stupid or wasteful projects; they can build efficiently; they have a direct interest in maintaining their assets.

Government has an important role but it is about contributing a public asset (such as access to the fibre-optic cable in a school for community broadband) rather than cash; political support rather than instruction; a loan not a grant. The aim is not to 'cut' but to let community create things, which government would struggle to deliver on its own.

All our projects – from building good affordable housing or generating renewable energy (in Crosby Ravensworth) or taking over a community center (which is our project in Kirkby Stephen) or rolling out broadband across the fells of Cumbria – should involve a democratic body, such as an elected parish council. And if community bodies are given more power, they should also learn to take the larger public view and consider the consequences of their decisions for the neighbours. Big Society requires local democracy in the broadest and most generous sense.

Cumbrian Big Society is not the only answer to our nation's ills. But if we set communities free; many services now threatened could be saved; projects which now look impossible – such as superfast rural broadband – could happen quickly. The value of what we create may go beyond service delivery and liberate a community's imagination and pride.

*Rory Stewart MP will be speaking further on the Cumbrian experience at ResPublica's first fringe event of Conservative Party Conference at 5.15pm, Sunday 3rd October in the ResPublica Marquee, open to all conference delegates.*

## The Big Society already exists, we just need to enable people to reach it, says Paul Twivy, CEO of The Big Society Network

Our societal issues are more complex but also more resolvable than is usually portrayed. Consider this paradox.

On the one hand, we have record levels of social isolation amongst old and young alike with 7 million people living on their own in England and Wales alone. 97% of neighbourhoods have become more fragmented since 1971. Average life expectancy varies between the richest and the poorest by 14 years and the richest 10% of the population are 100 times as wealthy as the poorest 10%.

Our general level of social trust has almost halved since the late 1950's despite the fact that so much else has improved. 61% of us don't feel able to affect local decisions. Only 1 in 33 of us attend public meetings. Only a quarter of us take part in any kind of regular, formal volunteering.

Yet many of us as disempowered, angry and disenchanted citizens, sit with a "Berlin Wall" in front of us. On the other side of this "Berlin Wall" are an estimated 900,000 to 1 million community groups, 1 for every 6 citizens; 238,000 social entrepreneurs, many of them brave, persistent, 1-10 person charities born out of anger and passion, fighting the toughest problems on our doorsteps, only 1% of whom get any kind of formal funding. Imagine if we made it even 3%.

- We need to smash down this Berlin Wall so that all of us can firstly see the extraordinary diversity and energy of civic society, of social enterprise and community groups.
- We then need to create a brilliant filtering and guiding mechanism by which people can find or create the right groups and enterprises for them, in their local areas, using the starting-point of their own needs, issues, talents and passions.
- We need to make The Big Society practical and within reach.
- We need to bring people with us in small steps that get larger and more confident with time.

Maslow famously developed a Hierarchy of Needs. I would like to introduce a similar principle in relation to Citizens: the Ladder of Citizenship.

A small number of people go from being unengaged citizens to tackling an overt problem by setting up an organisation. Thank God they do. For most people, they will start with something much more modest. They might help a neighbour for the first time. They might help organise or take part in a Big Lunch as a million people did this July. They might use their mobile or a public kiosk to spontaneously register a problem, a saving, an idea and send it to their local authority. They might join a hobby-based group like Stitch n' Bitch or a football club. From there they might then decide, with that group of neighbours or hobbyists, to save the local post office or start a group for elderly people in a building lent by the local council.

One activity, one baby step gets people to cross the line from unengaged to engaged. It is best that we never mention The Big Society but that millions of people cross that line millions of times. Then in three years we will turn round and find ourselves in The Big Society rather than just talking about it.

*Join ResPublica, the Big Society Network and Business in the Community in celebrating the Big Society and its key players at the 'The Big Society Party' on the opening night of Conservative conference, from 8.30pm on Sunday 3rd October in the ResPublica Marquee.*

## Imran Hussain, Head of Policy, Rights and Advocacy at the Child Poverty Action Group, asks Is the Coalition Meeting the Fairness Test?

*“Politics too often gets lost in either tribalism or economic and statistical debates, abstracted to the point that moral aspiration is forgotten and systems or ideology take over.”*

A transformation has occurred in the Conservative party with major speeches from David Cameron on social justice and the commitment to end child poverty by 2020. Iain Duncan Smith has driven the agenda with analysis and ideas from the Centre for Social Justice. Party activists rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in to social action projects in their communities. Now ResPublica is influencing the party with fresh ideas and a strong moral dimension.

The Coalition did the right thing declaring ‘fairness’ a defining theme and key political test for the coalition. But the Institute for Fiscal Studies’ independent analysis shows cuts will hit the poorest hardest, so we must regrettably conclude the Coalition is falling short. Ministers must redress this in the spending review and next year’s child poverty strategy for the fairness test to be met.

There is an economic imperative for fairness and it is a dangerous error to assume we cannot afford it while cutting the deficit. Joseph Rowntree Foundation research suggests high levels of child poverty in Britain cost the economy about £25 billion each year from social and economic consequences. We must reduce this cost to help reduce the deficit, reduce spending pressures, increase economic participation and create the circumstances for sustained economic growth.

We must also recognise the economic role of poor families as consumers. Unlike the wealthiest, their cash does not quickly leave the UK economy through overseas trips, investments or being tied up in capital. They spend it immediately in their local businesses on the things their children need. They are customers our small and medium businesses need to survive. Every pound they spend is in active circulation a long time, benefiting a succession of businesses and their employees.

Beyond the economic arguments, we have been impressed that Phillip Blond and ResPublica have revived the conservative tradition’s moral imperative towards ending poverty. Our higher moral values and aspirations must not be subjugated to market forces without restraint. Politics too often gets lost in either tribalism or economic and statistical debates, abstracted to the point that moral aspiration is forgotten and systems or ideology take over. We should more often seek as our foundation the shared moral beliefs about the kind of society we want to live in and the ethic of care towards others that should be part of its fabric.

At CPAG we believe the moral dimension is crucial to current debates on fairness and poverty. We live in a society increasingly segregated along economic lines. Do any of us really want to live somewhere characterised by how disconnected our lives are from each other?

Iain Duncan Smith’s work, has long addressed concern that some of the poorest are no longer integrated with the mainstream of British society. We should also recall that another Conservative hero, Adam Smith, was one of the earliest to focus on relative poverty. He described poverty as to be without “whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for a credible person, even of the lowest order, to be without.” CPAG shares Smith’s concern about lack of material resources, which leave people outside the mainstream with the danger of passing a deepening isolation, alienation and resentment on to the next generation.

We need to think about those at the top too. It is ironic that when some conservatives oppose multiculturalism, they overlook the economic multiculturalism that has opened up in our society. We don’t wish to punish success in our country. But we cannot let success lead to a refusal to integrate with the mainstream of British society either. That is why inequality and social inclusion, at both ends of the income spectrum, is so crucial to passing the fairness test and creating the good society.

*ResPublica is co-hosting a public fringe series with the Fabian Society, CentreForum, the Child Poverty Action Group and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation at all three party conferences. Join us at Liberal Democrat conference, 8.15pm on Saturday 18th September, at Labour Party Conference 1pm on Monday 27th September, or at Conservative Party from 6.55pm on Sunday 3rd October.*

*“It is ironic that when some conservatives oppose multiculturalism, they overlook the economic multiculturalism that has opened up in our society.”*

## Geoff Mulgan, Commission Chair of the Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, on Growing a More Civil Economy Through Civil Society

Earlier this year, my fellow Commissioners and I completed an ambitious Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland with the launch of Making Good Society, the Commission's final report. Supported by the Carnegie UK Trust, the Commission was tasked with identifying how civil society organisations - including voluntary and community organisations, faith-based organisations, trade unions, cooperatives and mutuals - could address the triple crises of our time: those of political trust, the economy and the environment.

Our research showed that right across the UK and Ireland the daily life of civil society activity is thriving by almost any measure, driven by people's enthusiasms, frustrations and altruism. But we also showed that civil society is less than it could be. For a century or more it has been pushed to the margins by big business and big government which have claimed the lion's share of resources and power. Civil society has been paid lip service, but generally neglected. And it has lost ground in areas it was once strong, including the financial industry.

Because our work coincided with the economic crisis our attention turned ever more to the question of how to build not just civil society but also a civil economy. Civil society organisations have a long history of economic activity. In some cases they became linchpins of local and regional economies, as did building societies, which at one time dominated the supply of mortgages for home ownership. Figures like Robert Owen also showed how social businesses could be highly productive as well as responsible.

But economists and policy-makers lost touch with the need to ensure that there is pluralism in the economy. Too many building societies were privatised; too many assumed that the plc is the only viable model for business, even as the cooperative sectors and social enterprise sectors, both worth well over £20bn, thrived.

In Making Good Society we argue that a thriving civil economy needs many of the same types of foundation as a thriving democracy. Democracy depends on constitutional and accountable political institutions supported by political parties, an independent judiciary, a free press, impartial law, civic bodies, and an involved citizenry sustain democracy in a civil society. The parallel institutions of a civil

economy include accountable corporations or enterprises supported by engaged shareowners and their accountable representatives; independent monitors; credible standards; and vigilant and active civil society associations participating in the marketplace. Unfortunately many of these are missing in the economy - and the crisis was another reminder of just how weak structures of accountability, scrutiny and challenge are.

To remedy this situation we advocated a wide range of practical measures, including increased transparency and accountability of financial institutions through mandatory reporting on the social and environmental impacts of investments and how voting powers are exercised. We advocated mandatory lending disclosure, as championed by the Better Banking Campaign, and argued that the large public holdings in banks have brought an unparalleled opportunity to restructure financial services so they better serve society. We also made the case for stronger scrutiny and pressure, citing examples such as FairPensions, which mobilises the silent millions of ordinary investors, including people with savings and pensions, to ensure that their future income is derived from companies that operate responsibly and sustainably. We also argued that the £billions of civil society's own investment assets (perhaps as much as £200bn) should also be used to grow responsible and social investment.

So far all the talk of the Big Society has not been connected to a coherent longer-term direction of economic change. Yet one of the few things we can be certain of is that over the next few decades the sectors that grow most will be ones with a strong social dimension - such as health, care and green industries.

ResPublica will be co-hosting a public fringe series with Making Good Society, supported by the Carnegie UK Trust on Tuesday 21st September, 6.15pm at the Liberal Democrat conference, and at 8.30am on Wednesday 6th October in the ResPublica Marquee at Conservative conference.

*“Large public holdings in banks have brought an unparalleled opportunity to restructure financial services so they better serve society.”*

*“The daily life of civil society activity is thriving by almost any measure, driven by people's enthusiasms, frustrations and altruism.”*



## What role can the Big Society play in stimulating cultural philanthropy? asks Colin Tweedy, Chief Executive of Arts and Business

“If the Big Society means we aspire to create more civilised places where humanity prevails, and the individual spirit thrives, then artistic and cultural activity is not just indispensable, it must sit at the core, and national and local government must work together in one cause, “  
-Sir Andrew Motion – 15th July 2010

At the end of October we will have a clear idea of the funding cuts facing the arts. Whilst the arts cannot compete as priorities as can the health service or the defence budget we must not lose sight that they play an important role in civilising our society and in reflecting the progress – or failure to progress – of mankind. Recent figures by Arts & Business highlight the need for further private sector investment into the arts to cover these cuts. 70% of arts organisations see private investment as more important to them during the next three years. Indeed building social, cultural as well as financial capital are the endgames of private sector giving and more specifically individual philanthropy. Arts organisations are great community assets and place-makers, able to platform, represent and reflect the community whilst creating opportunities for urban acupuncture – or targeted interventions to create social change. They do this by providing opportunities for commercial venture, volunteering and channelling individuals back to education and vocational placements.

Whether the Princes Medal for Arts Philanthropy (recognising major giving), the Cultural Champions programme (platforming regional giving), our Board governance programme, Boardbank, or the Young People on Boards programme, Arts & Business stimulates and celebrates cultural giving and activism – that is volunteering time, skills and passion – to the arts and to wider community.

Up and down the land individuals like Desna Greenhow have been supporting the arts for many years. During her five year involvement with the Watts Gallery in Guildford one of her achievements has been to outreach to the local community to undertake an oral archive of who were involved with the Watts family. Terence O'Rourke has been one of the most significant donors to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, founding the “Conductor's Circle” as well as working on the business and fundraising strategy for the orchestra.

As a direct response to the imminent wave of cuts, Arts & Business published the Private Sector Policy for the Arts. This builds and expands upon the work we have been conducting for some 34 years. One of the areas we have developed is a new challenge fund scheme - the Big Arts Give – designed to stimulate individual philanthropy for the arts. In partnership with UK philanthropist Alec Reed and his Big Give initiative, the Big Arts Give will dramatically reanimate individual cultural philanthropy in this period of economic difficulty with the aim to raise at least £3million for the arts by Christmas 2010.

By taking part in the challenge fund, the participants will develop relationships with new givers, stimulate their board and trustees and leverage new funding: £1 from an online donor is matched pound for pound. We are pleased to have developed the fund so that every £1 invested by Arts & Business will help generate at least £7 of new cultural wealth through the Big Arts Give – for the arts and for the wider community.

*ResPublica will be co-hosting a private breakfast roundtable (by invitation only) with Arts and Business at the Conservative Party Conference to discuss these issues further.*

## We're All In It (Together), says John Moulding, Director of Corporate Affairs at Provident Financial

Do mathematicians always make the best financial decisions? Do affluent consumers always get the lowest rate? Do people on low incomes always fail to choose the smartest way to buy something they need?

Because we're human, sometimes we aren't capable of getting these things right, sometimes crooks take advantage of us, and sometimes, we just can't be bothered struggling to understand complicated stuff. For the well-off, going overdrawn is annoying but manageable. For someone watching every penny, it can be a disaster. There is too often an insulting assumption that because someone has a low income, they will have a correspondingly low IQ and will automatically make bad financial decisions. In fact, people on low incomes are often the canniest money managers. They do not have the spare cash to shrug off the annoying 'insufficient funds fee' and so they take care not to expose themselves to financial shocks in the first place.

The reality is that there is no group in society, mathematicians included, which would not benefit from help in negotiating the often complicated world of finance.

For people at risk of financial exclusion, the need is all the more pressing to ensure they know what is on offer and how best to choose the best route for their particular circumstances. Not necessarily because they are any worse at making the right decisions, but because the consequences can be more severe should things go wrong. The first step is to ensure there is appropriate regulation to stop the crooks and encourage a transparent and fair market. Then what? Then it is up to all of us to create the conditions which will make financial choices as simple and fair as possible, even when, inevitably, there will be complex features to consider.

It is also necessary to have effective help for people who get into difficulties.

Most people with money problems have not been feckless or extravagant. Life events trigger financial problems through redundancy, illness or divorce and there will always be a need for good advice when things go awry. But who should provide the financial education, the debt advice, the access to credit for all incomes? All of us. The OFT recently reviewed 'High Cost Credit' looking at services such as payday lending, home credit and pawnbroking. The OFT concluded that these markets worked reasonably well and suggested some improvements. Rate caps – a regularly suggested solution to high APRs – were rejected because they were more likely to increase financial exclusion.

What the OFT did say was that rather than intervening in individual markets “more radical approaches which are beyond the OFT's remit would be required if the Government or others wanted to tackle the wider social, economic and financial context in which high-cost credit markets exist”.

The primary problem is not financial, it is societal. We should not try to knee-jerk our way to solutions by 'fixing' what the newspapers describe as scandal but which are in fact symptoms of bigger issues facing us all.

*ResPublica will be co-hosting a public fringe event with the Money Advice Trust and Provident Financial at the Liberal Democrat Party Conference entitled, 'A Nation in the Red? Can the new politics boost financial health?' at the Holiday Inn Express on Monday 20th September at 8pm.*

## Mark Pack, Associate Editor of Liberal Democrat Voice, explores the key milestones to strengthening civil society and empowering individuals

Both a successful market economy and a healthy democracy require individuals from all walks of life to feel they have the power to change the future. The belief that you can make a success of your own business, that your firm can innovate and that existing suppliers are not locked in to permanent dominance creates the vibrancy which generates wealth in a market economy. The optimism that your voice can count and your actions can alter your community gives life to a democracy, making it more than a token intermittent meeting of pencil and paper in the polling booth.

Our economy and our democracy therefore present us with a common challenge – to tackle that lack of confidence in your own ability to alter the future which suffocates far too many communities and far too many parts of society. Removing that malaise requires a mix of many policies, only a few of which I highlight in this piece.

One of the most important is improving education in people's early years. Those formative early years leave intellectual and psychological marks that can be very hard to shift in later years. It is a tough question for government, because so much of the evidence shows that what matters above all is the commitment of parents to their children. That is a deeply private and personal affair which the state can only touch the edges of. Nick Clegg's commitment to the Pupil Premium to channel extra funds to help educate the most disadvantaged children is one example of the exceptions to that where the government can take effective action.

A second strand is the sort of political reform the coalition government has embarked on, devolving power from Westminster to local councils, to the Scottish Executive and offering a referendum in Wales. Going too far is the worst sort of insular political elitism – one of the two houses of Parliament still completely locking out the public from electing its members. It shows a fantastic contempt for the public that when MPs are booted out at a general election, how does the political establishment react? By giving a good number of those defeated MPs a seat for life in Parliament courtesy of the Lords.

A third strand is – or should be – tackling the elitist insularity in the commercial sector. Whether it is the deeply lopsided rules that give the favoured company directors a huge head-start in elections or the widespread use of “commercial confidentiality” clauses to keep scrutiny at bay, what would cause outrage if tried by a politician is far too often par for the course by those who like to look down on politicians.

Tying the different strands together needs to be a stronger sense of how people can successfully work together, because so often the collective voice has the strength and skill to succeed where lone individuals are thwarted. Whether it is the Community Politics of the Liberal Democrats or the Big Society of the Conservatives, success will come not from seeing voluntary collective action as an excuse for cost cutting but as a means to a vibrant and successful country.

*Mark Pack will be speaking at 'Growing a Civil Economy Through Civil Society', a ResPublica public fringe event co-hosted with Making Good Society and supported by the Carnegie UK Trust, at 6.15pm on Tuesday 21st September.*

## The Big Society means teachers taking charge of their own professional development and being enabled to do so, argues Philippa Cordingley, Chief Executive of the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education

With the government's new education agenda comes substantial freedoms from central prescription and freedoms to innovate. Such freedoms, like all entitlements, bring responsibilities. In this case the responsibility for making significantly more professional judgements about what to teach, to whom, and how. What's going to ensure that all these decisions actually improve things?

Teachers will want to rise to the challenge but need time to recover from so many years of intensive help. What's needed to kick start and drive improvement is a vision for the future of the profession with continuing professional learning at its centre. CUREE's reviews of the international evidence reveal a substantial, coherent picture of the kinds of professional development that make a difference to both teachers' and students' learning.

Teachers need access to evidence about what does and doesn't work in different contexts and why, to ensure their investment in the serious effort needed to change practice is likely to be effective and efficient. This means teachers valuing, identifying and using specialist expertise to both focus their efforts and to provide a full and accurate picture of the demands that changes will make in relation to what they know and can do already.

They need to test out new approaches rigorously, with good evidence about both how far what they are doing works out in the way they intend, and what it means for pupils' learning. Doing this in partnership with other teachers encourages them to persevere when the going gets tough.

They need chance to learn about teaching and learning from structured observation rather than classroom tourism and through the lens of the specific learning improvements they are seeking for their pupils. This kind of professional development doesn't happen by accident and can't be provided by outsiders – even though external specialists have a small part to play. It makes big demands and pays even bigger rewards. It's part of the day job, an ongoing process rather than an occasional side show. And doing it this way pays dividends because pupils see evidence of the importance of lifelong learning reinforced on a daily basis.

But this isn't how professional development has been managed or understood. So teachers and schools need to raise their own expectations about what CPD can and should involve and providers need to respond by offering:

- access to evidence about what works, why – so teachers can choose what's effective and efficient for their pupils;
- frameworks for evaluating the different schemes, strategies, tools and approaches that the market offers teachers on a daily basis; and
- ways of focussing development through the collection and interpretation of evidence about its effects on pupils.

When markets are immature and money scarce there is a serious risk that cheap will be confused with good value. A Government vision for the profession with development at its heart is key to realising the full potential of its broader agenda for change.

*ResPublica and CUREE will be co-hosting a public fringe event, 'The Future for Teaching: Responsibility or Regulation' at 5.15pm on Monday 4th October in the ResPublica Marquee at Conservative Party conference.*





Saturday, 18 September (Suite 1, Jury's Inn)

	<b>"The Poverty Challenge: Is the Coalition delivering on Fairness?"</b> Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Sarah Teather MP, Minister of State for Children and Families Tim Horton, Fabian Society Paul Marshall, co-author of The Orange Book, Centre Forum (Chair) Imran Hussain, Child Poverty Action Group
20.00 - 21.15	

Monday, 20 September (Holiday Inn Express Britannia 2)

	<b>"A nation in the Red: Can the new politics boost financial health?"</b> David Laws MP (TBC) Ian Swales, MP for Redcar Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Joanna Elson, Chief Executive, Money Advice Trust John Moulding, Director of Corporate Affairs, Provident Financial Group
20.00 - 21.15	

Tuesday, 21 September (Holiday Inn Express Britannia 2)

13.00 - 14.00	<b>"The Big Society and the legacy of Joe Grimond"</b> Rt. Hon. Lord Paddy Ashdown Martin Kettle, Associate Editor of The Guardian (Chair) Prof. David Hall-Matthews, Chair, Social Liberal Forum Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica
18.15 - 19.30	<b>"Growing a civil economy through civil society"</b> David Heath MP, Deputy Leader of The House of Commons Rt. Hon. Baroness Shirley Williams Mark Pack, Associate Editor, Lib Dem Voice Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Geoff Mulgan, Chair of the Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society and Director of the Young Foundation Martyn Evans, Chief Executive, Carnegie UK Trust Neil Sherlock, Commissioner of the Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society and Head of Public Policy for KPMG (Chair)

(See opposite page for venue map.)



Monday, 27 September (Conference Hall, Manchester Town Hall)

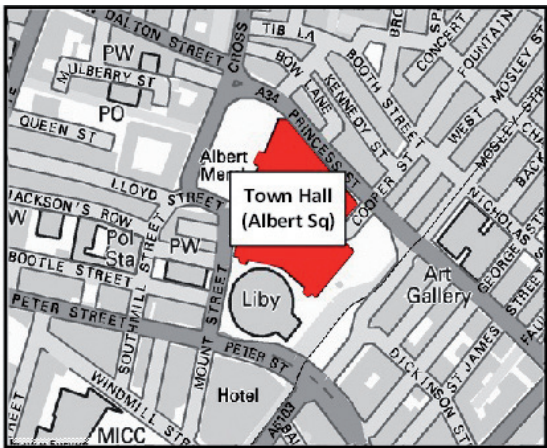
13.00 - 14.30	<b>"The Poverty Challenge: Is the Coalition delivering on Fairness?"</b> Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Kate Green MP Imran Hussain, Child Poverty Action Group
---------------	---

TBA	<b>Jump Starting Green Jobs</b> (private policy roundtable by invitation only)
-----	---

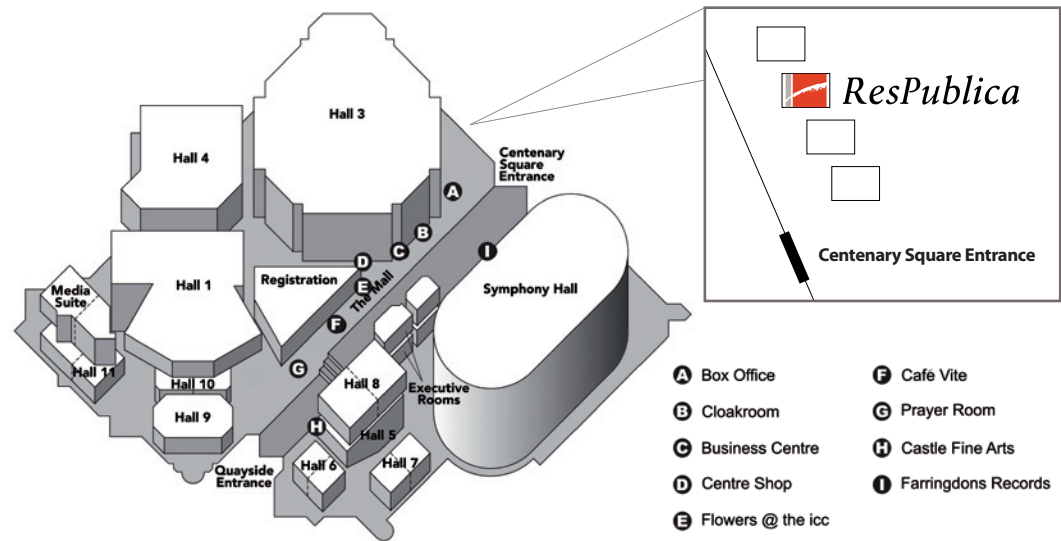
Manchester Town Hall (Labour conference)

All fringe events will be held at:

Manchester Town Hall  
Albert Square  
M2 5DB Manchester



The ResPublica Marquee, The ICC Birmingham (Conservative conference)



Liverpool ACC (Liberal Democrat conference)

From Sunday to Tuesday all fringe events will be held at:

The Holiday Inn Express, Britannia Room 2, Albert Docks, L3 4AD Liverpool



© Crown copyright and database rights 2010 Ordnance Survey.



Sunday, 3 October

17.15 - 18.45	<b>"The Big Society and Cumbria: A Rural Case Study"</b> Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister of State for Decentralisation and Planning Lord Nat Wei, Government Advisor on The Big Society Rory Stewart OBE, MP for Penrith and The Border (Chair) Matthew Parris, The Times
18.55 - 20.15	<b>"The Poverty Challenge: Is the coalition committed to fairness?"</b> Lord Freud, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Welfare Reform Sunder Katwala, General Secretary, Fabian Society Paul Mason, Economics Editor, BBC Newsnight Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Alison Garnham, Chief Executive, Child Poverty Action Group (Chair) Nancy Kelley, Co-Director of Policy and Research, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
20.30 - Late	<b>The Big Society Party</b> Join us on the opening night of the party conference to celebrate the 'Big Society' and the partnerships that flourish within it. The reception includes host speeches and delicious refreshments throughout the evening.



Monday, 4 October

12.30 - 14.00	<b>"Who's afraid of electoral reform?"</b> Mark Harper MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Constitutional and Political Reform David Alexander, Former Adviser to John Howard (Former Australian PM) Michael Brown, political commentator for The Independent and Former Conservative MP for Brigg and Cleethorpes Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Carina Trimmingham, Campaigns Director, Electoral Reform Society (Chair)
17.15 - 18.30	<b>"The future for teaching: responsibility or regulation?"</b> Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools (Invited) Gerard Kelly, Editor, Times Educational Supplement (Chair) John Bangs, Visiting Professor at The Institute of Education and Former Head of Education at the NUT Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Phillippa Cordingley, Chief Executive, CUREE
18.30 - 20.00	<b>"Taking ownership; unleashing the power of the professionals"</b> Andrew Lansley MP, Secretary of State for Health Lord Nat Wei, Government Advisor on The Big Society Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Ali Parsa, Managing Partner, Circle Health Partnership
20.30 - 22.00	<b>"The incredible economics of localism and the illusion of scale"</b> <i>In conversation with:</i> John Seddon, leading public sector management thinker Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica

(Conservative conference schedule cont.)

Tuesday, 5 October

8.30 - 10.00	<b>"Moving environmental and development debates beyond carbon"</b> Zac Goldsmith, MP for Richmond Park Martin Kirk, Head of UK Campaigns, Oxfam David Nussbaum, Chief Executive, WWF-UK Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica (Chair) David Green OBE, Chief Executive, UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy
12.30 - 14.00	<b>"Driving Recovery: A new partnership between core cities and government"</b> Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister of State for Decentralisation and Planning Councillor Mike Whitby, Leader of Birmingham City Council Andrew Bounds, Northern Correspondent, Financial Times (Chair) Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Chris Murray, Director, Core Cities
17.15 - 18.30	<b>"Europe: Changing the terms of debate"</b> Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Minister of State for Europe Rt Hon David Davis, MP for Haltemprice and Howden Malcolm Harbour, MEP for West Midlands James Crabtree, Managing Editor, Prospect Magazine (Chair) Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Roland Rudd, Chairman, Business for New Europe
18.30 - 20.00	<b>"How can the Big Society help to end child poverty?"</b> Maria Miller MP, Under Secretary of State for Work and Pensions David Powell, Local Authority Officer, Dorset County Council Molly Foster, resident in Dorset, a child friendly community (aged 13) Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica David Bull, Executive Director, UNICEF-UK (Chair)
20.30 - 22.00	<b>"Reinventing Investment and Commissioning": Launch of a ResPublica/Social Investment Business Report</b> David Burrowes, MP for Enfield Southgate and PPS to Francis Maude MP Asheem Singh, Deputy Director, ResPublica Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica (Chair) Stephen Bubb, Chair, The Social Investment Business and Chief Executive, ACEVO Helen Hughes, National Adviser to Local Government Improvement and Development Agency

Wednesday, 6 October

8.30 - 10.00	<b>"Growing a civil economy through civil society"</b> Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society Anthony Browne, London Mayoral Policy Director for Economic Development Geoff Mulghan, Chair of the Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society and Director of the Young Foundation Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Neil Sherlock, Commissioner of the Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society and Head of Public Policy for KPMG (Chair)
12.30 - 14.00	<b>"After Social Housing: The Future of Social Housing Landlords"</b> Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Minister of State for Housing and Local Government (Invited) David Orr, Chief Executive, National Housing Federation Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica Chris Handy OBE, Group Chief Executive, Accord Housing (Chair)

All events are held inside the ResPublica marquee, by the Centenary Square entrance to the ICC (see map p13).

## David Bull, Chief Executive of UNICEF-UK, on Building Child-Friendly Communities

Twenty-one years ago, governments worldwide promised all children the same rights by adopting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These rights are based on what a child needs to survive, grow, participate and fulfil their potential.

The Conservative Government of the time ratified the CRC in 1991 and in 1998 the Labour Government promised to eradicate child poverty in the UK by 2020. Despite this, the number of children living in poverty has actually increased; today around 3.9million children in the UK live in poverty.

Growing up in poverty has profound impacts on the wellbeing of children, having a detrimental impact on their rights such as the right to education or to be healthy, and preventing them from escaping poverty.

The effects of child poverty are estimated to cost the UK £25 billion each year and without urgent action, the number of children living in poverty in the UK will increase as more families struggle to cope with the economic crisis. In 2008, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that the UK Government must do more to address its unacceptably high rates of child poverty.

At UNICEF UK, we believe that action can be taken in every locality to support children and families to help ensure that no child misses out on the entitlements they were promised in the CRC 21 years ago.

UNICEF UK's Child Friendly Communities programme aims to improve the fulfilment of children's rights and child wellbeing in the UK, therefore helping to tackle both the root causes and the effects of child poverty in a number of ways.

A child rights-based approach, applied in a Child Friendly Community, focuses on the most vulnerable and marginalised children and families as it seeks to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and ensure resources are targeted to those that need them most.

In a Child Friendly Community children, young people, families, civil society, local government and other public service providers work together to build a better, stronger and more resilient community. Services and communities will be based on a common set of principles, where all children are entitled to dignity, freedom, a voice, safety and equality, regardless of their background or circumstances. Early pilot work demonstrates improved co-operation between schools, local authorities and health services through shared values and a common approach.

A Child Friendly Community is one where children, young people and their families have a say in decisions that affect them, leading to more effective services and improved outcomes. Parents are supported to be effective parents, with the information that they need when they need it, an understanding of their responsibilities as parents and the support they need to do this crucial role well. With better understanding of rights, children and adults understand that they have responsibilities to respect the rights of others.

A child rights-based approach enables communities and young people to know the minimum standards that they are entitled to and hold public services to account. Through child rights-based planning and commissioning, root causes are identified with community involvement, leading to more effective prevention and early intervention.

Evidence from UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award demonstrates that applying the ethos of the CRC to the life of the school community can have a profound effect in schools, leading to improved engagement in learning, attendance and relationships.

Recent research by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and confirm that applying a rights-based approach in communities and to public services can significantly improve outcomes. Joseph Rowntree Foundation research also found that a human rights framework can make a positive contribution to strategies to combat poverty.

UNICEF UK is currently piloting Child Friendly Communities in partnership with thirteen local authorities across the UK.

UNICEF UK believes that children in poverty are being denied their rights. This is wrong. We are working to put it right.

ResPublica will be co-hosting an event with UNICEF-UK at the Conservative Party Conference entitled, 'How Can the Big Society Help End Child Poverty' at 6.30pm on Tuesday 5th October in the ResPublica Marquee.

*"A child rights-based approach enables communities and young people to know the minimum standards that they are entitled to and hold public services to account."*

*"Through child rights-based planning and commissioning, root causes are identified with community involvement."*



## Now is the time for charities and social enterprises to innovate, says Stephen Bubb, Chair of The Social Investment Business

The Government is clear it wants charities, community groups and social enterprises to deliver more public services. This is an historic opportunity.

Since the war, charities have tended to be marginalised to the fringes of public service delivery; to dealing with the most 'difficult to reach'. However, the last decade has seen some gradual but welcome change. More formalised contracts recognise the unique contribution that the sector can bring to the delivery of services as diverse as reducing reoffending, improving health outcomes and employment creation.

And in the five months since the general election, we have seen an extraordinary increase in political and media interest in the role of the sector and the nature of the relationship between the sector, society and the state. Yet this is set against the gloomy backdrop of the challenging economic landscape. Cuts to the public funding that many charities and community groups depend upon could damage civil society. At the very time charities and social enterprises are being called upon to deliver more for the communities and individuals they support, the funding available to them is being reduced.

Yet even in these challenging times there are opportunities for the sector to expand its role -delivering services in a way that is both more cost effective and closer to citizens, and attracting new investment. The question is how barriers to increased involvement can be overcome.

In recent years there has been much debate, and some progress, on minimising these barriers. However, discussion has tended to focus on the 'demand side', ie. ensuring that public sector commissioning doesn't discriminate inadvertently against the sector, such as issues of full cost recovery or contract length.

This progress has been valuable, but increasingly important is the need to identify what could be done by the sector itself to improve its ability to bid for, win and deliver such contracts - the 'supply side' of the equation. As budgetary pressures facing local and national commissioners accelerate the move towards fewer larger contracts, contracts may increasingly be outside the reach of any one single charity or social enterprise.

To address this, the sector should, with support from commissioners, organise itself so that organisations can successfully bid for these larger contracts. The experience of bodies such as the Third Sector Consortium, 3SC, which brings together charities of all sizes to bid for large contracts, while retaining individual charities' expertise and ethos, is valuable. 3SC became one of the largest providers for the DWP's Future Jobs Fund, enabling very small community groups to employ one or two young people. Consortia models like this are highly replicable and could work nationally in areas such as health and social care, education and justice as well as locally.

The real challenge at this time of economic constraint is translating positive 'noises' about an expanded delivery role for the sector into action. To achieve this, and so continue to protect the excluded and vulnerable and advocate for citizens to build healthier communities and a stronger society, the sector will need to do what it has always done - draw upon its ability to innovate. This is at the heart of a Bigger Society. It is down to us in the sector to deliver it and down to the state to support us in doing so.

*ResPublica will be co-hosting a public fringe event with The Social Investment Business at the Conservative Party Conference entitled, 'Reinventing Investment and Commissioning' in the ResPublica Marquee, 8.30pm on Tuesday 5th October.*

## Social values are key stepping stones in addressing environmental and humanitarian challenges, writes David Nussbaum, Chief Executive of WWF-UK

Whatever the recent successes that government, business, and NGOs may be able to claim in helping society to tackle environmental and humanitarian challenges, it seems that current responses are incommensurate with the profound scale of these problems. The responses of each of these sectors seem to rely heavily upon a set of issue-specific tactics that may contribute little to the emergence of the systemic and durable solutions which are needed: indeed, some of these tactics may actually contribute to undermining prospects for action at a systemic level.

WWF-UK has been working with a diverse array of other non-governmental organisations, and social scientists, to begin to marshal the evidence that public concern about environmental and humanitarian issues is dependent, in significant part, upon the extent to which society holds particular values to be important. We have also begun to examine the processes which lead some values to come to the fore in society.

It is increasingly evident that, if today's environmental and humanitarian challenges are to be met, it will be because some long-held (but insufficiently esteemed) values are championed, while the primacy of many other values which are now prominent – at least in Western industrialized society - is diminished. Only then will we be able to anticipate the emergence of widespread public acceptance of (and active demand for) more proportional action.

The values that must be championed – values which are commonly held and which can be brought to the fore – include empathy towards those that are facing the effects of humanitarian and environmental crises; prioritizing shared interest above the pursuit of short-term self-interest; concern for future generations; and recognition that human prosperity resides in relationships – both with one another and with the natural world. Undoubtedly these are values that have been weakened – and often even derided – within in modern culture.

They are not, for example, values that are fostered by treating people as if they are, above all else, consumers. But they are values that have an ancient and noble history within Western thinking – not least conservative philosophy – and they still fundamentally inform much public debate. They are there to be activated and strengthened.

If this is to be achieved, it will be as a result of concerted effort on the part of government, business, and NGOs. The role of government will be particularly important, because there is good evidence that both government communications, and government policy, serve to help bring particular values to the fore, and to suppress others. This is something upon which important parts of both the political left and right can find common cause. Those values which underpin people's motivation to support action to address environmental and humanitarian problems are also values that many in the Conservative Party hold dear. It is here that the work of organisations like ResPublica becomes crucially important in helping to identify some of the ways in which these values can be articulated and strengthened through people's experience of government communications and public policy.

*ResPublica will be co-hosting a public breakfast fringe with WWF and Oxfam and supported by the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy at the Conservative Party Conference entitled, 'Moving Environmental and Development debates beyond carbon' at 8.30am on Tuesday 5th October in the ResPublica Marquee.*

## Is the 'pro' vs. 'anti' European Opposition Out of Date? asks Phillip Souta, Director of Business for New Europe

Debate about Europe in the UK makes senior politicians on the continent roll their eyes. Here, we are divided into "pro" and "anti" Europeans by a large part of the media. Many so-called "anti" Europeans would prefer to be described as Euro-sceptics, lest they be mistaken as xenophobes, or even worse – irrational. For most business leaders, however, this dichotomy is irrelevant. They tend to take the view that we're in the EU, we're not going to leave, and it's up to the government to push it in the best direction for business.

The way we talk about the EU through the worn "pro versus anti" language damages our credibility, damages our ability to define our objectives, and ultimately damages our ability to achieve them.

First, there is credibility. Talk to staff in the European Commission and they will tell you that EU related controversy in the UK tends to be ignored in Brussels and other member states until it crosses the Channel.

Stories about the pay of officials and suggestions that the EU is looking to ban the sale of products by the dozen are seen as flowing from our uniquely "sceptic" island culture. The "UK is the UK", they shrug, much in the same way that Conservative press officers say "Boris is Boris", but with less affection. Any criticism, however reasonable, emanating from the UK tends to be treated like a story about straight bananas. This is one of the reasons why valid criticism of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), for example, gains little traction.

Then there is the stultifying effect this has on what we talk about. The focus on the tabloid means that reasoned debate about what we need to get out of Europe rarely gets out of boardrooms and think-tanks and into the mainstream. Of course many MPs find it easy to focus on the trivia - it resonates with their constituents. They know that a more nuanced approach might bore or even worse anger voters. One can see this at the highest level, with British Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries often sounding very defensive on Europe.

This hobbles our ability to get what we want. The tone of the debate kills off serious discussion, and the lack of serious discussion leaves us without a positive agenda. The lack of a positive agenda leaves us in the reactive, defensive posture.

If we leave behind the Manichean pro versus anti language, we can change the terms of the debate from first principles. The UK can lead Europe on defence, on the single market and on climate change. Political capital flows from such good leadership, and we would feel engaged, not put-upon. In fact, several other Member States are crying out for our leadership as stalwarts against protectionism and defenders of the values of the Single Market.

So how to achieve that? The government must avoid EU-bashing and focus on talking about what we can achieve through it. To the surprise of many, that is what the coalition is doing. They have ditched the commitment to claw back powers and decided to focus, for example, on the single market. They must have the courage to continue.

*ResPublica will be co-hosting a public fringe event with Business for New Europe and supported by AVIVA at the Conservative Party Conference entitled, 'Europe: Changing the Terms of Debate', 5.15 pm on Tuesday 5th October in the ResPublica Marquee.*

## John Bangs, Former Head of Education at the NUT and Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education, looks to the Future for Teaching under the Coalition

Irrespective of the Academies Bill, the major issue for the Coalition Government should be addressing seems to be as yet unrecognised and unaddressed. While there is much rhetoric about teacher liberation, what strategy does the new Government have for the future of the teaching profession?

Michael Gove's recent speech to the National College contained positive references to the importance of robust research on pedagogy and the need to develop a culture of professional development. Yet, there has been little input from Government about how teachers should be supported in their learning and self-confidence.

Internationally, there have been major developments in thinking about where teachers ought to be going. The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) asked the right questions about the relationship between teacher performance, self-efficacy, professional development and initial training. It underscores the fact that we know what works for teachers. Teachers want feedback, but not in a climate of threat. The forthcoming Education Bill should be an opportunity for the Government to say that it understands and recognises that teachers must own their own learning.

The ResPublica/CUREE meeting at the Conservative Party Conference should trigger a debate about where we go with the teaching profession. Set out below are some initial ideas.

- Any Masters programme should be linked to an entitlement to a sabbatical for experienced teachers and not imposed on teachers fresh out of initial teacher training.
- As part of the National Professional Development Strategy, teachers should be able to choose their training (CPD), receive a one-term sabbatical every seven years, and receive an annual funded CPD entitlement.
- One effect of the axing of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies will be to break up a vital body of knowledge about teaching and learning. There needs to be established a pedagogic bank of the best practice in school classrooms.
- No evidence exists that performance-related pay raises standards. Its main contribution has been to bureaucratise appraisal and pay progression. Instead, the Scottish Chartered Teacher model, which is based on professional development, should be explored.
- International ideas need looking into, such as the Finnish model of university-run training schools, where teachers are university employees responsible for the theory and practice of training.
- All teachers should be consulted on whether they want a professional council. Linked to this should be a chief education advisor drawn from the profession at the heart of Government, an idea that Pauline Perry and Stephen Dorrell proposed in their review of public services for the Conservatives.

Despite the success of reforms, such as planning and preparation time in primary schools, there is damaging evidence on school workforce reform. School Workforce Reform has not reduced workload; standards have been undermined as a result of the misuse of support staff and disempowering managerialism in schools has increased. All workforce reform must be reviewed.

In short, schools and young people cannot be successful if teachers' views, self-confidence and learning are not at the heart of education – even in these straitened financial times.

*John Bangs will be exploring these ideas further at our public fringe event, 'The Future for Teaching: Responsibility or Regulation' at 5.15pm on Monday 4th October in the ResPublica Marquee at Conservative Party conference.*



## Is affordable housing a crisis or an opportunity? Asks Dr Chris Handy, OBE, Chief Executive of The Accord Group

Affordable housing is at a crossroads – what is needed in the future with this important part of the housing offer and how does it fit into a Big Society?

There are four big challenges: welfare reform; public expenditure limitations on building of new housing; lack of financial liquidity for the mortgage markets for aspiring home owners; and tenure security and choice.

People in affordable housing are highly dependent on welfare benefits. About a third of tenants are in work and economically active. Of the substantial proportion who are not in work, the vast majority are beyond working age, dementia sufferers, people with learning disabilities and mental health issues and other vulnerable groups. The residue, probably around 8-12%, includes single parent families, individuals who are more vulnerable to job loss due to recession and those who have low skills sets and the long term unemployed.

It is clear welfare reform will undoubtedly have a significant impact. It is also clear that welfare reform is needed. The rising costs are unaffordable and the approach needs radical overhaul to enable people to make a more active contribution to society and the economy and play a part in the Big Society. In addition, can residents co-produce the housing service, delivering more of it themselves as happens with housing co-operatives, thus creating a shift from the professional housing service to a people led and run housing service? Housing cooperatives have better performance than other social housing providers (Bringing Democracy Home report).<sup>1</sup> Can this sector be scaled up to play a much more significant and mainstream role?

There is a role for affordable housing providers to proactively facilitate training, jobs and enterprise. And there are many good examples where this is already happening, but they are examples. The response needs to be scaled up. Housing associations can act as catalysts, can use their purchasing power to encourage enterprise and work in collaborative partnerships to assist tenants and their families in developing job-ready skills.

Less funding will be available for future building, despite growing needs and demand. Evidence suggests that building 100,000 homes per year creates 228,000 direct construction jobs and another 228,000 indirect jobs related the construction industry and the supply chain. So there is a boost to jobs, a reduction in benefit costs, tax revenues grow and the pressure on public sector borrowing is reduced. There is also a positive impact on the growth of GDP and most importantly economic confidence. The lag between investment and economic impact is short.<sup>2</sup> So can housing associations help stimulate the construction industry with less funding? It's a big challenge. Certainly it cannot be met without any help from government but it is a challenge the sector needs to rise to meet by sweating equity more, building non-traditional housing for market sale and rent and intermediate rent and of course building affordable homes for people in need.

There is potential for joint partnerships with private developers to share risk and reward using different models of development. And in addition the third big issue needs to be addressed in finding solutions to tackle availability of mortgages and deposits for aspiring home owners. And creating more choice through mutual ownership solutions creating a new offer similar to other parts of Europe and Scandinavia! Helping build more homes, rekindling the construction industry and providing solutions for aspiring owners will all help to create a recovery of the housing market.

Finally, there is much political interest in security of tenure. Should people have more limited right? This is a political judgement. But we have to be aware of unintended consequences. If people who get a new job and have to within a timescale seek housing elsewhere, will this inevitably mean that affordable housing schemes simply house those who are dependent on welfare? Perhaps a solution here is to have mobility of tenure status – if a person gets work and can afford to buy their tenure, status changes to that of shared ownership by virtue of increased monthly payments meeting mortgage costs as well as rent, staircasing up to full ownership over a period of time. In this way an affordable housing scheme keeps its economically active people, creates varied tenure and people can begin to create the personal wealth associated with property ownership.

*ResPublica will be co-hosting a public fringe event with the Accord Housing Group at Conservative Party Conference entitled, 'After Social Housing- The Future of Social Housing Landlords' at 12.30pm on Wednesday 6th October in the ResPublica Marquee.*

*“The sector needs to meet these challenges by sweating equity more, building non-traditional housing for market sale and rent and intermediate rent and building affordable homes for people in need.”*

*“Can residents co-produce the housing service as happens with housing co-operatives, thus creating a shift from the professional housing service to a people led and run housing service?”*

<sup>1</sup> See Commission for Cooperative and Mutual Housing. Bringing Democracy Home, 2009

<sup>2</sup> See Savills, The Case for Housing, Spring/Summer 2010.

## Devolution can be played out to maximum impact by driving economic recovery through the core cities, asserts Chris Murray, Director of The Core Cities Group

Some mistakenly think that Core Cities Group was an invention of Government. It wasn't. It's an independent group of local authorities working together to improve their economies bottom up. In fact, it's localism in action.

The Group is a cross-party network with 15 years track record of partnership between England's eight largest city economies outside London: Birmingham; Bristol; Leeds; Liverpool; Manchester; Newcastle; Nottingham; and Sheffield.

These cities drive local and underpin national economies. Collectively, their wider urban areas are home to 16 million people and deliver 27% of the country's economy – more than London. Over the last decade our cities have greatly improved productivity and delivered large scale urban renewal, but we know we can deliver more, given the freedom to do so.

There is overwhelming evidence that large urban areas that have more devolved financial controls are more economically competitive, across and beyond the EU. The OECD average for locally raised finance through taxation is 55%. In the UK this is just 17%, with local authorities in direct control of only about 5% of all taxation – Council Tax. This leaves our cities less able to enhance their competitiveness, which disadvantages the country's economic recovery.

We don't see growth as a zero-sum game to be played out within a command and control economy. We all need the South East to remain successful, but the nation is a polycentric economic system that has under-utilised capacity. In short, UK PLC needs all its major cities to be firing on all cylinders, and that can't happen while Whitehall controls the strings.

That's why we welcome the devolutionary thrust of the new Government's policies and why we want to work with them to ensure that they get the greatest return on public investment for the economy and communities.

Our recent report, 'Core Cities Driving Recovery: a New Partnership with a New Government', sets out some independent economic forecasts for our cities showing a worst and best case scenario for jobs and private sector growth. The difference between the two is stark. In Core City areas alone the best case produced:

- 752,500 more jobs;
- 98,500 fewer unemployed;
- £492million savings in welfare benefits per annum; and
- £33.5bn more GVA.

But getting to that best case will not be easy. It requires large scale change: improved infrastructure; better skills in the labour market; and enhanced sustainability, building the foundations for private sector growth.

We understand the need to do more with less and want to use the finance we will have more flexibly, to create private sector growth whilst supporting the most vulnerable, but we also need access to new financial instruments. This includes Accelerated Development Zones, a form of Tax Increment Financing based on allowing places to reinvest a proportion of the business rate into infrastructure development.

A massive opportunity exists for our cities, the Government and ultimately the economy. It turns on real devolution of real powers. The mood music is right, but the devil is in the detail. For Core Cities, with 27% of the economy at stake, we have to get this right.

ResPublica and Core Cities will co-host a public fringe event at the Conservative Party Conference entitled, 'Driving Recovery- A New Partnership Between Core Cities and Government' at 12.30pm on Tuesday 5th October in the ResPublica Marquee.

*“Large urban areas that have more devolved financial controls are more economically competitive, across and beyond the EU.”*

*“The best case scenario requires large scale change: improved infrastructure; better skills in the labour market; and enhanced sustainability.”*

## Beyond Carbon: David Green, Chief Executive of the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, on making the energy debate personal

As a society we have, for the most part, been passive users of energy. We turn on the lights, turn up the heater, and fill up the petrol tank when we need to. In many cases, prices seem to make little real difference to most consumers. We don't need to think about where the energy is coming from, or what electricity might really cost when we use it.

Yet in the coming decades we know that increasing demands on our energy supplies, price pressures, concerns about energy security and the need for reductions in greenhouse emissions will need to drive significant changes in the way we use energy and interact with our energy systems.

Changes will occur - but it is not yet clear in what way or what form it will come. We may give up control of power hungry appliances and heating systems in our home through the development of smart networks – or we may protest that others know how we use our energy. We may well see increased levels of renewable generation - or more communities may object to localised energy supply. We may see more electric vehicles - or we may object to the more sophisticated power infrastructure that this could bring.

All that is certain is that change will occur - and that the prospect of change in the energy sector is again attracting cross party political support.

This creates significant opportunities for new ways of approaching how consumers engage with energy. Entire communities can take control and form new institutions that shift the balance of power to consumers – from passive to active producers and users with direct control of their low carbon energy future.

An active consumer can now go beyond just changing their energy supplier to actually investing in their own local energy efficiency or renewable energy project. This keeps resources local and is as targeted for local economies as any other form of community reinvestment. Community empowerment will be key.

How will this play out on the ground? We might join together and negotiate a bulk deal on solar PV or water heating systems on our roofs. We could do the same for cavity wall insulation. We might band together to call for community recharging points for electric cars, and nudge each other to turn off energy-hungry appliances when prices are cheaper.

To get there we need a new generation of activist. Ones who see that the way we all use energy is part of the agenda for local community action. The tools to do this exist – we just need the political drive to move this forward. We need to provide easy access to good quality information, advice about how communities can act and attractive packages of support measures. Policies need to be well targeted– yet flexible enough to deal with different circumstances. Policies also need to be as relevant for less well-off neighbourhoods as they are for more well-resourced communities, which are often first to act.

I welcome the vision that ResPublica is bringing to this debate – and hope that through this fringe discussion we can, together, build a new generation of *powerful communities*.

*David Green OBE will be speaking at our public fringe event at the Conservative Party Conference co-hosted with WWF and Oxfam and supported by the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, 'Moving environmental and development debates beyond carbon' at 8.30am on Tuesday 5th October in the ResPublica Marquee.*

*ResPublica is privileged to be working with the following partners at party conferences:*



[www.respublica.org.uk](http://www.respublica.org.uk)

# The ResPublica Fringe

*Comments and Articles from our conference partners*

*Autumn  
2010*