Neo-localism – rediscovering the nation

Wednesday 11 October, 2017

Independent think-tank Localis has today issued a collection of essays from leading political experts and analysts exploring themes of place, identity and national renewal in the context of the political uncertainty unleashed by Brexit and the outcome of June's general election.

Entitled **'Neo-localism – rediscovering the nation'** the collection includes contributions from Philip Collins, chief leader writer and columnist for The Times, The Guardian newspaper's political columnist Rafael Behr, constitutional expert Professor Vernon Bogdanor, Claire Fox, director for the Institute for Ideas and Ryan Shorthouse, director of the think-tank Bright Blue.

Introducing the essay collection, **secretary of state for communities and local government, the Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid** said: "In this era of unprecedented connectivity, an increasing number of voters see politicians as more and more disconnected from 'real life'.

"We've seen the results in polls, elections and referenda around the world; here in Britain, the simple yet understandable desire to "take back control" was made abundantly clear in the summer of 2016.

"This matters because, as Liam Booth-Smith argues in the introduction to this excellent collection of essays, the political process forms part of a golden thread that runs through us all, helping to hold the nation together. Allow that thread to fray, and the consequences won't just be lower turnouts at elections. It could damage – even destroy – cohesion at every level of society.

"Preventing that from happening is a task that should occupy all of us in government and, as this paper shows, the best place to start the fightback is at the local level."

Localis chief executive, Liam Booth-Smith said: "When taken as a whole this collection says a great deal about where Localis is heading intellectually, becoming a think-tank which focuses on the idea of 'place' and why it matters to politics and policy.

"Brexit means the shedding of one identity, that of EU member, but it also means the rediscovering of some old ones."

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Notes to Editors:

The essay collection **'Neo-localism – rediscovering the nation'** can be downloaded here:

Essay contributors

- Liam Booth-Smith, Chief Executive of the think tank Localis – **What is neo-localism?**
- Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea – **Why place matters**
- Adrian Harvey, novelist and writer – **Why beauty matters**
- Rafael Behr, political columnist at The Guardian – **When does solidarity occur?**
- Ryan Shorthouse is Director of the think tank Bright Blue – **Is the local, liberal?**
- Vernon Bogdanor, Professor of Government at King's College, London – **The case for new power**
- Philip Collins, Chief Leader Writer and Columnist at The Times – **The identity of a city**
- Dan Hitchens, Deputy Editor of The Catholic Herald – **Can there be a civil society without faith?**
- Claire Fox, Director of the Institute of Ideas – **The incivility of civic language**

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About Localis

Who we are

We are an independent, cross-party, leading not-for-profit think tank that was established in 2001. Our work promotes neo-localist ideas through research, events and commentary, covering a range of local and national domestic policy issues.

Neo-localism

Our research and policy programme is guided by the concept of neo-localism.

Neo-localism is about giving places and people more control over the effects of globalisation. It is positive about promoting economic prosperity, but also enhancing other aspects of people's lives such as family and culture. It is not anti-globalisation, but wants to bend the mainstream of social and economic policy so that place is put at the centre of political thinking.

In particular our work is focused on four areas:

Reshaping our economy. How places can take control of their economies and drive local growth.
Culture, tradition and beauty. Crafting policy to help our heritage, physical environment and cultural life continue to enrich our lives.
Reforming public services. Ideas to help save the public services and institutions upon which many in society depend.
Improving family life. Fresh thinking to ensure the UK remains one of the most family-friendly places in the world.

What we do

We publish research throughout the year, from extensive reports to shorter pamphlets, on a diverse range of policy areas.

We run a broad events programme, including roundtable discussions, panel events and an extensive party conference programme.

We also run a membership network of local authorities and corporate fellows.

www.localis.org.uk

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