Editorial

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Welcome to the fourth issue of the 10th volume of *British Politics*. The first contribution for this issue comes from Chris Rogers, and examines the idea of ‘the local’. In this, the author shows how a variety of public policy measures based around ideas of localism have been guided primarily by notions of efficiency and competition, and have served to recreate capitalist relations with limited social gains. On a related theme, our second original article comes from Werner Bonefeld and examines the Conservative Party’s pursuit of the ‘Big Society’. Set in the context of neo-liberal ideas about the nature of society, the paper maintains that the Big Society project offers a critique of existing social relations and amounts to a political practice predicated upon the strong state.

Our third contribution, from Patrick Diamond, explores the use of depoliticised state management techniques by New Labour in the area of public service reform. The author argues that the shift towards depoliticisation was tempered by structural trends reinforcing a politicised model of state management via the dynamics of the Westminster system, and that the analysis of policy processes needs to account for both politicised and depoliticised elements. Following this, our fourth original article comes from David Toke and HelleØrsted Neilsen and examines the issue of policy styles through a comparative analysis of renewable energy consultations in the United Kingdom and Denmark. The paper argues that decision making in both cases takes place through policy communities, but highlights a number of substantial differences in the patterns of consultation themselves.

This article is followed by two shorter contributions that each deal with similar themes. The first of these, from David Marsh and Brendan McCaffrie, critically examines issues around policy style, networks and governance. The second, from Paul Cairney and Grant Jordan, explores the process of policy consultation, set within a broader discussion of policy theory and the policy communities literature. The issue is completed with two pieces for our *Forward Thinking* section. The first, from Stuart Fox, considers the problem of declining turnout for young people in Britain, disputing the idea that this reflects a loss of faith in British democracy driven by controversial political events, such as the invasion of Iraq and the expenses scandal. The second contribution, from Christopher Kirkland,

analyses the origins of the 2007 financial crisis and links this to the policies of Thatcherism in the 1980s.

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