

Getting the Localism Bill right



The Localism Bill is currently going through Parliament and is expected to become law from April 2012. It will put in place legal tools to support “localism”.

**Will it be your vision
of localism?**

**This leaflet outlines six areas in
the Bill that shape the
Government's vision for
localism...**



What do you think?



What does your MP think?



**How can we support a balanced
and genuinely local vision of
localism that benefits local people
and the local voluntary,
community, faith and social
enterprise sector (VCSE)?**



**What principles should underpin a
local vision of localism?**

1

The provisions to support **Neighbourhood planning** (ss.96-101) should put more decision-making power into the hands of local people.

Will the concerns of one neighbourhood or community override the concerns of others? How will BME groups, disabled people, travellers, or refugees be engaged?

What resources will be invested into relevant local voluntary and community sector groups to build up their expertise and confidence?

Principle 1: “That Localism is open and inclusive for all local people” Do you agree?



2

Repeal of “duties relating to the promotion of democracy” (s.27), and the possible repeal of the ‘duty to involve’ (as part of the Best Value consultation) will undermine local understanding of what’s happening and how councils are making decisions.

Will publishing expenditure online be sufficient, on its own, to allow greater local ownership and scrutiny of public services? Is being able to review decisions, on its own, an effective way to influence local decisions?

Principle 2: “Communities should have a say in making decisions that affect them.” Do you agree?

3 The **Community Right to Challenge** (ss. 66-70 of the Bill) will give groups the chance to request that services purchased by local authorities be re-tendered.

BUT: Who will end up running these services? Will this effectively mean outsourcing council contracts to large-scale providers with little sense of what's local?

Principle 3: “Local services should be shaped by and accountable to local communities.” Do you agree?



4 The **weakening of the duty to support the homeless** (ss. 124-125) purports to free up councils. Alongside the end of ring-fenced *Supporting People* funds this may severely diminish a significant part of the welfare safety net at a very risky time for many families.

Do we want a localism that is just about me and mine?

Principle 4: “That Localism promotes a caring and broad sense of community.” Do you agree?

5 The **Community Right to Bid for Community Assets** (ss. 71-88) will give groups more time to come together and raise funds to buy publicly-owned community assets.

Will this help your community?

Would a ‘community right to try...’ running a community asset be a better way to bring groups together, develop a realistic business model, and consider the risk?

Principle 5: “That the assets of the state are owned on behalf of our communities.” Do you agree?



6 The **duty to cooperate** (s.90) outlines the ways in which local authorities should work together, particularly around planning.

There have been suggestions that this draft duty needs to be further strengthened.

Should there be a legal driver to get Local Enterprise Partnerships and sub-regions working together on other areas, like economic growth? Should local authorities cooperate on social and environmental issues too?

Principle 6: “That Localism builds local strength without becoming solely inward-looking”. Do you agree?

To find your MP:

<http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

or read the latest version of the bill:

<http://bit.ly/i70Amy>

To discuss issues relating to Localism and the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in the North West contact:

Warren Escadale,
Policy & Research Manager, VSNW

policy@vsnw.org.uk

07950 162815

or

[http://www.vsnw.org.uk/
activities/localism](http://www.vsnw.org.uk/activities/localism)

VSNW
St Thomas Centre
Ardwick Green North
Manchester
M12 6FZ
Tel: 0161 276 9300
Email: policy@vsnw.org.uk
Web: <http://www.vsnw.org.uk>