



# **CVS Rochdale** **Policy Briefing**

## **The Coalition: Programme for government**

Since the change to the new coalition government, the Prime Minister, David Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg have come together to put forward a programme for partnership government. The document called The Coalition: Our programme for government covers many issues affecting the country.

As voluntary organisations some of the changes in this document will affect the way we operate in the future. I have disseminated the document covering the points which I feel will affect voluntary, community, faith and third sector organisations. If you would like to see the full version of the document please go to the CVS Rochdale website [www.cvsr.org.uk](http://www.cvsr.org.uk) in the news section.

### **COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Government believes that it is time for a fundamental shift of power from Westminster to people. We will promote decentralisation and democratic engagement, and we will end the era of top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.

- We will promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups. This will include a review of local government finance.
- We will rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils, including giving councils new powers to stop 'garden grabbing'.

In the longer term, we will radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication *Open Source Planning*.

- We will abolish the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission and replace it with an efficient and democratically accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects.
- We will publish and present to Parliament a simple and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development and setting out national economic, environmental and social priorities.

- We will maintain the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other environmental protections, and create a new designation – similar to SSSIs – to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities.
- We will abolish the Government Office for London and consider the case for abolishing the remaining Government Offices.
- We will provide more protection against aggressive bailiffs and unreasonable charging orders, ensure that courts have the power to insist that repossession is always a last resort, and ban orders for sale on unsecured debts of less than £25,000.
- We will explore a range of measures to bring empty homes into use.
- We will promote shared ownership schemes and help social tenants and others to own or part-own their home.
- We will create new trusts that will make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people.
- We will phase out the ring-fencing of grants to local government and review the unfair Housing Revenue Account.
- We will freeze Council Tax in England for at least one year, and seek to freeze it for a further year, in partnership with local authorities.
- We will create directly elected mayors in the 12 largest English cities, subject to confirmatory referendums and full scrutiny by elected councillors.
- We will give councils a general power of competence.
- We will ban the use of powers in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) by councils, unless they are signed off by a magistrate and required for stopping serious crime.
- We will allow councils to return to the committee system, should they wish to.
- We will abolish the Standards Board regime.
- We will stop plans to force the regionalisation of the fire service.
- We will impose tougher rules to stop unfair competition by local authority newspapers.
- We will introduce new powers to help communities save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services.
- We will implement the Sustainable Communities Act, so that citizens know how taxpayers' money is spent in their area and have a greater say over how it is spent.
- We will provide incentives for local authorities to deliver sustainable development, including for new homes and businesses.
- We will double the maximum fine for under-age alcohol sales to £20,000.
- We will permit local councils to charge more for late-night licences to pay for additional policing.
- We will promote better recording of hate crimes against disabled, homosexual and transgender people, which are frequently not centrally recorded.
- We will introduce a system of temporary bans on new 'legal highs' while health issues are considered by independent experts. We will not permanently

ban a substance without receiving full advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.

## **CRIME AND POLICING**

The Government believes that we need radical action to reform our criminal justice system. We need police forces that have greater freedom from Ministerial control and are better able to deal with the crime and anti-social behaviour that blights people's lives, but which are much more accountable to the public they serve.

- We will reduce time-wasting bureaucracy that hampers police operations, and introduce better technology to make policing more effective while saving taxpayers' money.
- We will amend the health and safety laws that stand in the way of common sense policing.
- We will seek to spread information on which policing techniques and sentences are most effective at cutting crime across the Criminal Justice System.
- We will have a full review of the terms and conditions for police officer employment.
- We will introduce measures to make the police more accountable through oversight by a directly elected individual, who will be subject to strict checks and balances by locally elected representatives.
- We will oblige the police to publish detailed local crime data statistics every month, so the public can get proper information about crime in their neighbourhoods and hold the police to account for their performance.
- We will require police forces to hold regular 'beat meetings' so that residents can hold them to account.
- We will make hospitals share non-confidential information with the police so they know where gun and knife crime is happening and can target stop-and-search in gun and knife crime hot spots.
- We will give people greater legal protection to prevent crime and apprehend criminals.
- We will ensure that people have the protection that they need when they defend themselves against intruders.
- We will ban the sale of alcohol below cost price.
- We will review alcohol taxation and pricing to ensure it tackles binge drinking without unfairly penalising responsible drinkers, pubs and important local industries.
- We will overhaul the Licensing Act to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems.
- We will allow councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found to be persistently selling alcohol to children.
- We will double the maximum fine for under-age alcohol sales to £20,000.
- We will permit local councils to charge more for late-night licences to pay for additional policing.

- We will promote better recording of hate crimes against disabled, homosexual and transgender people, which are frequently not centrally recorded.
- We will introduce a system of temporary bans on new 'legal highs' while health issues are considered by independent experts. We will not permanently ban a substance without receiving full advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.
- We will review the operation of the Extradition Act – and the US/UK extradition treaty – to make sure it is even-handed.

### **CULTURE, OLYMPICS, MEDIA AND SPORT**

The Government believes that a vibrant cultural, media and sporting sector is crucial for our well-being and quality of life. We need to promote excellence in these fields, with government funding used where appropriate to encourage philanthropic and corporate investment.

- We will enable partnerships between local newspapers, radio and television stations to promote a strong and diverse local media industry.
- We will maintain free entry to national museums and galleries, and give national museums greater freedoms.
- We will examine the case for moving to a 'gross profits tax' system for the National Lottery, and reform the National Lottery so that more money goes into sport, the arts and heritage.
- We will use cash in dormant betting accounts to improve local sports facilities and support sports clubs.
- We will encourage the reform of football governance rules to support the co-operative ownership of football clubs by supporters.
- We will support the creation of an annual Olympic-style schools sport event to encourage competitive sport in schools, and we will seek to protect school playing fields.
- We will cut red tape to encourage the performance of more live music.
- We will introduce measures to ensure the rapid roll-out of superfast broadband across the country. We will ensure that BT and other infrastructure providers allow the use of their assets to deliver such broadband, and we will seek to introduce superfast broadband in remote areas at the same time as in more populated areas. If necessary, we will consider using the part of the TV licence fee that is supporting the digital switchover to fund broadband in areas that the market alone will not reach.
- We will make modest cuts of £6 billion to non-front-line services within the financial year 2010/11, subject to advice from the Treasury and the Bank of England on their feasibility and advisability. A proportion of these savings can be used to support jobs.

### **ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Government believes that climate change is one of the gravest threats we face, and that urgent action at home and abroad is required. We need to use a

wide range of levers to cut carbon emissions, decarbonise the economy and support the creation of new green jobs and technologies. We will implement a full programme of measures to fulfil our joint ambitions for a low carbon and eco-friendly economy.

- We will push for the EU to demonstrate leadership in tackling international climate change, including by supporting an increase in the EU emission reduction target to 30% by 2020.
- We will seek to increase the target for energy from renewable sources, subject to the advice of the Climate Change Committee.
- We will establish a smart grid and roll out smart meters.
- We will create a green investment bank.
- We will retain energy performance certificates while scrapping HIPs.

Through our 'Green Deal', we will encourage home energy efficiency improvements paid for by savings from energy bills. We will also take measures to improve energy efficiency in businesses and public sector buildings. We will reduce central government carbon emissions by 10% within 12 months.

- We will give an Annual Energy Statement to Parliament to set strategic energy policy and guide investment.
- We will encourage community-owned renewable energy schemes where local people benefit from the power produced. We will also allow communities that host renewable energy projects to keep the additional business rates they generate.
- As part of the creation of a green investment bank, we will create green financial products to provide individuals with opportunities to invest in the infrastructure needed to support the new green economy.

## **ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

The Government believes that we need to protect the environment for future generations, make our economy more environmentally sustainable, and improve our quality of life and well-being. We also believe that much more needs to be done to support the farming industry, protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable food production.

- We will introduce measures to make the import or possession of illegal timber a criminal offence.
- We will introduce measures to protect wildlife and promote green spaces and wildlife corridors in order to halt the loss of habitats and restore biodiversity.
- We will launch a national tree planting campaign.
- We will work towards full compliance with European Air Quality standards.
- We will take forward the findings of the Pitt Review to improve our flood defences, and prevent unnecessary building in areas of high flood risk.
- We will work towards a 'zero waste' economy, encourage councils to pay people to recycle, and work to reduce littering.
- We will investigate ways to share with livestock keepers the responsibility for preparing for and dealing with outbreaks of disease.

- We will create a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system.

## **EQUALITIES**

The Government believes that there are many barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities in Britain today, with too many children held back because of their social background, and too many people of all ages held back because of their gender, race, religion or sexuality. We need concerted government action to tear down these barriers and help to build a fairer society.

- We will promote equal pay and take a range of measures to end discrimination in the workplace.
- We will extend the right to request flexible working to all employees, consulting with business on how best to do so.
- We will undertake a fair pay review in the public sector to implement our proposed '20 times' pay multiple.
- We will look to promote gender equality on the boards of listed companies.
- We will promote improved community relations and opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, including by providing internships for underrepresented minorities in every Whitehall department and funding a targeted national enterprise mentoring scheme for BAME people who want to start a business.
- We will stop the deportation of asylum seekers who have had to leave particular countries because their sexual orientation or gender identification puts them at proven risk of imprisonment, torture or execution.

## **FAMILIES AND CHILDREN**

The Government believes that strong and stable families of all kinds are the bedrock of a strong and stable society. That is why we need to make our society more family friendly, and to take action to protect children from excessive commercialisation and premature sexualisation.

- We will maintain the goal of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020.
- We will reform the administration of tax credits to reduce fraud and overpayments.
- We will bring forward plans to reduce the couple penalty in the tax credit system as we make savings from our welfare reform plans.
- We support the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children, and we want that support to be provided by a diverse range of providers, with a greater gender balance in the early years workforce.
- We will take Sure Start back to its original purpose of early intervention, increase its focus on the neediest families, and better involve organisations with a track record of supporting families. We will investigate ways of ensuring that providers are paid in part by the results they achieve.
- We will refocus funding from Sure Start peripatetic outreach services, and from the Department of Health budget, to pay for 4,200 extra Sure Start health visitors.

- We will investigate a new approach to helping families with multiple problems.
- We will review the criminal records and vetting and barring regime and scale it back to common sense levels.
- We will crack down on irresponsible advertising and marketing, especially to children. We will also take steps to tackle the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood.
- We will encourage shared parenting from the earliest stages of pregnancy – including the promotion of a system of flexible parental leave.
- We will put funding for relationship support on a stable, long-term footing, and make sure that couples are given greater encouragement to use existing relationship support.
- We will conduct a comprehensive review of family law in order to increase the use of mediation when couples do break up, and to look at how best to provide greater access rights to non-resident parents and grandparents

### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

The Government believes that we need action to promote public health, and encourage behaviour change to help people live healthier lives. We need an ambitious strategy to prevent ill-health which harnesses innovative techniques to help people take responsibility for their own health.

- We will give local communities greater control over public health budgets with payment by the outcomes they achieve in improving the health of local residents.
- We will give GPs greater incentives to tackle public health problems.
- We will investigate ways of improving access to preventative healthcare for those in disadvantaged areas to help tackle health inequalities.
- We will ensure greater access to talking therapies to reduce long-term costs for the NHS.

### **SOCIAL ACTION**

The Government believes that the innovation and enthusiasm of civil society is essential in tackling the social, economic and political challenges that the UK faces today. We will take action to support and encourage social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another.

- We will support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises, and enable these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services.
- We will give public sector workers a new right to form employee-owned co-operatives and bid to take over the services they deliver. This will empower millions of public sector workers to become their own boss and help them to deliver better services.

- We will train a new generation of community organisers and support the creation of neighbourhood groups across the UK, especially in the most deprived areas.
- We will take a range of measures to encourage charitable giving and philanthropy.
- We will introduce National Citizen Service. The initial flagship project will provide a programme for 16 year olds to give them a chance to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities.
- We will use funds from dormant bank accounts to establish a 'Big Society Bank', which will provide new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprises and other non-governmental bodies.
- We will take a range of measures to encourage volunteering and involvement in social action, including launching a national day to celebrate and encourage social action, and make regular community service an element of civil service staff appraisals.

### **SOCIAL CARE AND DISABILITY**

The Government believes that people needing care deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. We understand the urgency of reforming the system of social care to provide much more control to individuals and their carers, and to ease the cost burden that they and their families face.

- We will establish a commission on long-term care, to report within a year. The commission will consider a range of ideas, including both a voluntary insurance scheme to protect the assets of those who go into residential care, and a partnership scheme as proposed by Derek Wanless.
- We will break down barriers between health and social care funding to incentivise preventative action.
- We will extend the greater roll-out of personal budgets to give people and their carers more control and purchasing power.
- We will use direct payments to carers and better community-based provision to improve access to respite care.
- We will reform Access to Work, so disabled people can apply for jobs with funding already secured for any adaptations and equipment they will need.

