



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

## **Big Society Update - Localism Bill**

Following agreement by both Houses on the text of the Bill it received Royal Assent on 15 November. **The Bill is now an Act of Parliament (law).** The Localism Act, grants new rights to communities to bid for land and run local authority services.

The legislation will require local authorities to maintain lists of 'assets for community value'. If one of these assets is up for sale, the local authority must allow a suspension of six months on the sale of the asset, so that local groups have time to put together a bid to take it over for a community benefit.

The provisions relating to councils include:

- Giving councils a general power of competence
- Allowing councils to choose to return to the committee system of governance and allowing for referendums for elected mayors in certain authorities
- Abolishing the Standards Board regime and the model code of conduct, and introducing local accountability and a criminal offence of deliberate failure to declare a personal interest in a matter
- Giving residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases
- Allowing councils more discretion over business rate relief
- Providing new powers to help save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and giving voluntary and community groups the right to challenge local authorities over their services.

The housing provisions will:

- Abolish the requirement to have a Home Improvement Pack
- Reform the Housing Revenue Account system
- Provide for a new form of flexible tenure for social housing tenants
- Allow local authorities to discharge their duties to homeless people by using private rented accommodation
- Give local authorities the power to limit who can apply for social housing within their areas
- Abolish the Tenant Services Authority and provides for a transfer of functions to the Homes and Communities Agency
- Amend the way in which a social tenant can make a complaint about their landlord
- Improve the ability of social tenants to move to different areas.

The planning and regeneration provisions will:

- Abolish Regional Spatial Strategies
- Abolish the Infrastructure Planning Commission and return to a position where the Secretary of State takes the final decision on major infrastructure proposals of national importance

[Full version of the Localism Act 2011](#)



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