

No Nonsense Guide to Localism

Dave Chapman
Locality



Locality

Locality is the leading nationwide network of settlements, development trusts, social action centres and community enterprises.





Locality was formed through the merger of bassac and the Development Trusts Association, two leading networks of community owned and led organisations.



We believe that every community is a place of possibility.

Locality Members

Community led - by local people, meeting the many needs of a community.

Driving social change - bringing about changes to make communities fairer and more inclusive.

Committed to community enterprise - earning income for community benefit, not for private profit and aiming for long-term sustainability.

Developing assets - maximising community assets: people, land and buildings

Independent - working in partnership but accountable to the local community and free to determine their own objectives.



Locality membership

- Over 700 members across the UK
- Members have a combined income of £325m of which £172m is earned income
- £660 million community owned assets
- Employ 5,500 staff and engage 20,000 volunteers



Changes at the National Level

- Localism
- Education reform
- Health reform
- Big Society?
- plus other initiatives ...

Localism

Royal assent on 15th
Nov 2011

Seeks to shift power
away from central
government to local
people



Main Measures

1. New freedoms and flexibilities for local government
2. New rights and powers for communities and individuals
3. Reform of the planning system
4. Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

Local Government Freedoms and Flexibilities

General power of competence

Gives local authorities the legal capacity to do anything that an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited

Abolition of Standards Board

Clarifying rules on predetermination

Making it clear that it is proper for councillors to play an active part in local discussions

Directly elected Mayors

Opportunity for every city to have an elected Mayor

- referendums in 2012 with elections in 2013 for areas voting in favour

New Rights

Right to Challenge

The right for VCOs, Parish Councils and local authority employees to express and interest in running a public service

Right to Bid

Local authorities will need to keep a list of assets of community value. When they come up for sale or change of ownership community groups will have the right to develop a bid

Referendums

Local people will have the power to initiate local referendums

Right to approve or veto excessive council tax rises

Limits set by central government. If local authority proposes limit above that set by central government then they will need to hold a referendum

Planning system reform

Abolition of regional strategies

Neighbourhood planning

Allows communities to come together to develop a neighbourhood plan

Community Right to Build

As part of neighbourhood planning allows communities to bring forward development proposals. If meet minimum criteria and gain support through local referendum then can go ahead without traditional planning application

Planning system reform

Requirement for developers to consult

Strengthening enforcement rules

Strengthening powers to tackle abuses such as misleading planning applications

Community Infrastructure Levy

Some monies raised to go to neighbourhoods where development takes place and monies raised to be more flexibly used

Planning system reform

Reform of local plans

Limiting the discretion of planning inspectors to insert their own words into local plans

Duty to co-operate

Requires local authorities and other public bodies to work together on planning issues - partly to replace loss of regional strategies

Nationally significant infrastructure

Abolition of Infrastructure Planning Commission and restoration of decision making responsibility to ministers for nationally significant infrastructure projects (train lines, power station etc)

Reform to housing decision making

Social Housing Tenure

Reform of lifetime tenancies

Social Housing Allocations

Local authority freedom to set their own policies about who should qualify to go onto waiting lists for social housing in their area

Homelessness legislation

To allow provision of private rented accommodation - to prevent people acquiring social housing for life.

Reform to housing decision making

Council Housing Finance

Councils keep the rent collected locally to use it to maintain social homes

National Home Swap

Social Housing Regulation

To allow tenants to hold landlords to account. One Ombudsman - Independent Housing Ombudsman

Educational reform

(Royal Assent on 15th November 2011)

- Abolishes a number of quangos: e.g. the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) (the relevant functions of the QCDA to be transferred to the Secretary of State).
- Makes changes to the arrangements for setting up new school: introduces a presumption that when local authorities set up new schools they will be *Academies* (including free schools).
- Free schools

Health Reform

(Royal Assent 27th March 2012)

- Plans to reform the way health is commissioned by 2013
- New NHS Board, removal of PCT and GPs and clinicians given more responsibility over budgets

Best Value Guidance

(Aug 11)

- All LAs and other ‘Best Value Bodies’
- Need to consider economic, environmental and social value (not just price)
- No disproportionate cuts to the VCS
- 3 months notice of any cut to VCS and beneficiaries
- A chance to put forward ‘options on how to reshape the service or project’
- If no compliance - judicial review is an option

Sustainable Communities Act

Puts people at the heart of reversing community decline and promoting sustainability (small shops, independent stores, fire stations, police stations, etc.)

- Local council opts in to use the act
- They must **consult and reach agreement** with local people about the ideas they put forward to government
- Upon receiving proposal government decides whether to implement or not (6 months)
- Government can be challenged on decision to reject a proposal

Islington - retention of local business rates - generating additional funds for local services and local projects that promote growth and regeneration of local areas



Other Changes

Work Programme

- The major new payment-for-results welfare-to-work programme that launched throughout Great Britain in June 2011.
- It replaces previous programmes such as the New Deals, Employment Zones and Flexible New Deal
- Prime contractor model
- Eighteen different Prime providers are delivering 40 contracts across 18 areas of the country (two from the voluntary sector, one from the public sector).

So...

In 28 months its all change

And now we have a new
team



Is the direction of travel clear?

Where are we?



Or can we do something different and redress the balance?

