



## Localism Act

The Localism Act is one of the key pieces of legislation introduced by the Government. It is a radical shift of power from central government to local communities. The aim is to give power back to people and communities and create the conditions for Big Society. The briefings on this page give an overview of the Act and highlight some of the issues.

### [ACRE Briefing: the National Planning Policy Framework](#) (March 2012)

ACRE is pleased that government has recognised many of the issues raised by ACRE and other rural stakeholders. Although the NPPF retains its main thrust as a pro-growth planning framework, this is now tempered to avoid the more extreme outcomes that many commentators anticipated.

Whilst ACRE still has queries about how the NPPF will take effect on the ground, particularly in relation to neighbourhood plans, local plans and other plan documents, we believe that, compared to the original draft NPPF, this is a far more reasonable starting point from which to encourage communities to engage with the planning system.

### [ACRE Briefing: CLG Select Committee Report on the draft National Planning Policy Framework](#) (December 2011)

The publication of the draft NPPF during the summer created significant concerns as to how the ambiguity it created would affect local plans and planning decisions. Since then, the CLG Select Committee has examined the issues and has published its recommendations. ACRE's Briefing on the committee's report concludes that, should the recommendations be adopted by government, the final NPPF will re-establish a plan-led system in which local planning authorities, developers and communities should all have confidence.

### [ACRE Briefing: The draft National Planning Policy Framework](#) (September 2011)

The Government is committed to simplifying planning guidance which governs where and how development can take place. The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will replace all current national guidance and the draft is now out for consultation.

The draft NPPF has generated significant commentary from public, private and non-governmental bodies. This stems from its role in determining the balance between:

- driving forward housing and economic development
- protecting the environment and valued landscape
- funding the infrastructure that is essential to make development sustainable

In its consideration of sustainable development, government has focused the NPPF on a strategy for sustainable growth. This gives proportionately more weight to allowing development where no strong objections exist on the grounds of environmental protection or other valid reasons which have been justified in an 'up to date' local plan.

### [ACRE Briefing: Update on Neighbourhood Planning](#) (June 2011)

The Government claims Neighbourhood Plans will become the new building blocks of the planning system where communities have the power to grant planning permission if a local majority are in favour'. The process for developing Neighbourhood Plans will rely on active community involvement. Whereas the Localism Act sets out the framework for neighbourhood planning, the details are still in development within the Department for Communities and Local Government. This briefing covers relevant amendments to the Localism Act as it passed through Parliament, and current thinking on how Neighbourhood Plans might fit into the wider statutory planning system.

### [ACRE Briefing: Summary of the Localism Bill](#)

This briefing covers a number of proposals relevant to rural community action in the Localism Bill, published in December 2010. The Bill includes a wide range of measures that aim to give more power to local authorities but also more power to individual communities to determine how development takes place in their locality. Progress with the Bill can be followed at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localism.html> The Localism Act was granted Royal Assent on November 16th 2011. It retains most of the proposed measures of the Localism Bill.

### [ACRE Briefing: commentary Neighbourhood Plans](#)

The Localism Act's proposals on neighbourhood planning will provide a statutory framework through which Community Led Plans can achieve their aspirations. However, in trying to devise legislation that helps communities to do this, the Localism Act has struggled to provide simple and affordable mechanisms for delivery. this commentary discusses some of the issues.

### [ACRE Briefing: Assets of Community Value](#)

The Right to Buy, Assets of Community Value proposal simply allows a community, group or individual to 'list' a site which they consider to be delivering a valuable service or public facility. The government consultation on the [right to buy proposals](#) ended on 3rd May 2011. The ACRE response is on our consultations page.

## [ACRE Briefing: Community Right to Build Orders](#)

Under the Localism Act provisions, a Community Right to Build Order allows a local community group to bring forward a small development for one or more purposes, including new homes, businesses and community facilities, but it must be small scale in comparison to the size of settlement.

### Localism Act

More information on the Localism Act, including a plain English guide and the impact assessments can be found on the [Department for Communities and Local Government website](#).

The bill and explanatory notes to the relevant sections can be found on the [Parliament website](#).

### Community Rights Consultations

The Localism Act includes new rights for local communities, including the Community Right to Buy and the Community Right to Challenge.

**Community Right to Buy** - Under the Community Right to Buy important local amenities and buildings - such as old town halls, community halls or the last village shop or pub can be nominated for listing by the local authority as assets of community value. If listed assets come up for sale, communities will have extra time to prepare a bid to take them over, making it easier to keep much-loved assets in public use and part of local life. ACRE's response is on our [consultations page](#).

**Community Right to Challenge** - Under the Community Right to Challenge voluntary and community groups, parish councils and local authority staff will be able to challenge to take over the running of local public services.

These consultations closed on 3 May 2011

For more information visit the [Department for Communities and Local Government Website](#)



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