

Policy

Giving people more power over what happens in their neighbourhood

From:

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Issue

For too long communities have not had a big enough say in what happens in their local area – whether it be about what happens to local amenities, how local services are delivered, or how new development is planned.

Actions

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is taking action to give local communities new rights. These rights will give community, voluntary and charity groups the opportunity to take the initiative when it comes to how local public services are run and planning decisions are made.

We are offering support to groups who want to use these new rights – providing information, funding and simple guidance called [‘you’ve got the power’](#) to help them navigate and exercise the rights.

Community Right to Bid

The Community Right to Bid will give community groups the right to prepare and bid to buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them. It came into effect on 21 September 2012.

Community Right to Challenge

The Community Right to Challenge allows voluntary and community groups, charities, parish councils and local authority staff to bid to run a local authority service where they believe they can do so differently and better. This may be the whole service or part of a service. It came into force on 27 June 2012.

Neighbourhood planning

New [neighbourhood planning](#) measures allow communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans. They came into force on 6 April 2012.

Community Right to Build

The Community Right to Build allows local communities to propose small-scale, site-specific, community-led developments. It came into force on 6 April 2012.

Community Right to Reclaim Land

The [Community Right to Reclaim Land](#) helps communities to improve their local area by giving them the right to ask that under-used or unused land owned by public bodies is brought back into beneficial use.

Design support for communities

We're supporting an industry-led review to help in putting together a cross-sector package of design support for communities.

Our Place!

The [Our Place! programme](#) (formerly 'neighbourhood community budgets') gives communities the opportunity to take control of dealing with local issues in their area.

Barrier Busting website

In December 2010, the government launched the [barrier busting website](#). The website is designed to help individuals, community groups, and town and parish local councils to tell government about any central barriers, unnecessary bureaucracy or burdens that might be stopping them from achieving improvements to their neighbourhood.

Background

In the [coalition agreement](#) the government outlined its plans to:

- promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups
- radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live

The Localism Bill was introduced to Parliament on 13 December 2010, and was given Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, becoming an Act.

Impact

Community Rights will benefit communities across the country, giving them more power to shape local development and services. We carried out impact assessments on the [Community Right to Challenge](#), [Community Right to Bid](#) and on [neighbourhood plans and the Community Right to Build](#).

These looked at the effects of the rights on organisations such as local councils, parish councils, neighbourhood forums, local planning authorities and other local public bodies.

Bills and legislation

Community Rights are enshrined in law by the Localism Act 2011. The Community Right to Build is part of the [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations](#).

Secondary legislation was required to bring the Community Right to Challenge into force:

- The Community Right to Challenge (Fire and Rescue Authorities and Rejection of Expressions of Interest) (England) Regulations 2012
- The Community Right to Challenge (Expressions of Interest and Excluded Services) (England) Regulations 2012

The Assets of Community Value Regulations, which provide the detail of how the Community Right to Bid will operate, are awaiting the final stage of Parliamentary clearance and subject to this approval the scheme will come into force in October 2012. [Legislation covering the referendum stage of neighbourhood planning](#) came into force on 2 August 2012.

Who we're working with

DCLG has put in place a range of specialist support to help community groups through every stage of the Community Rights processes – from setting up a group and developing a proposal right through to the delivery stage. This support is provided by a number of partners.

The [Homes and Communities Agency](#) manages our new fund to assist community groups with the costs of using the Community Right to Build.

The [My Community Rights](#) support hub is managed by Locality. This provides a range of support and advice for communities using the new rights. You can also find details of funding

to support local groups to use the Community Right to Challenge and on the Community Ownership and Management of Assets grants programme.

We also provide funding to 4 organisations already offering support on neighbourhood planning:

- the [Royal Town Planning Institute](#) (Planning Aid)
- the [Prince's Foundation for Building Community](#)
- the [Campaign to Protect Rural England](#), working with the [National Association of Local Councils](#)
- [Locality \(the Building Communities Consortium\)](#)

Local planning authorities (usually the borough or district council) have a duty to provide advice and assistance to groups undertaking neighbourhood planning.

The Cabe Team at the Design Council offer free tailored support to community groups involved in neighbourhood planning.

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) also provides information on community-led planning including contact details for the 38 regional members of the Rural Community Action Network.

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