

Localism Bill gains Royal Assent

The Localism Bill which was introduced to Parliament on 13 December 2010, was given Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, becoming an Act. Here we take a look at the overall effect of the Act.

New freedoms and flexibilities for local government The Act:

- gives local authorities everywhere the formal legal ability and greater confidence to get on with the job of responding to what local people want
- cuts red tape to enable councillors everywhere to play a full and active part in local life without fear of legal challenge
- encourages a new generation of powerful leaders with the potential to raise the profile of English cities, strengthen local democracy and boost economic growth
- enables ministers to transfer functions to public authorities in cities in order to harness their potential to drive growth and prosperity
- reforms the governance of London so that more power lies in the hands of elected representatives who are democratically accountable to London's citizens

Reform to make the planning system clearer, more democratic and more effective The Act:

- places significantly more influence in the hands of local people over issues that make a big difference to their lives
- provides appropriate support and recognition to communities who welcome new development
- reduces red tape, making it easier for authorities to get on with the job of working with local people to draw up a vision for their area's future
- reinforces the democratic nature of the planning system - passing power from bodies not directly answerable to the public, to democratically accountable ministers

Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally The Act:

- enables local authorities to make their own decisions to adapt housing provision to local needs, and make the system fairer and more effective
- gives local authorities more control over the funding of social housing, helping them to plan for the long term
- gives people who live in social housing new ways of holding their landlords to account, and make it easier for them to move

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