



## COLLABORATIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING Making it work

The Coalition Government is committed to “*radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live*”. This is being taken forward in the Localism Bill. As the two most active voluntary and community based organisations involved in planning CPRE and Civic Voice welcome this ambition.

We have been considering the opportunities presented by a commitment to collaborative neighbourhood planning. We convened a workshop in November 2010 involving a range of practitioners and community voices as well as experts in public engagement and deliberative research to discuss the approach.

As a result of this work we have identified a series of issues which we believe will need to be addressed during passage of the legislation if the ambition of “*giving local people the power to engage in genuine local planning through collaborative democracy*” is to be effectively realised:

1. Attention should be paid to the **capability for and culture of** participation as well as the process of neighbourhood planning to avoid a mismatch between the new approach being introduced and communities and local councils being able to implement it
2. A **variety of techniques for public engagement** should be encouraged which suit the different circumstances of different neighbourhoods, combining measures which engage a large number of people with more in-depth involvement of a cross section of the community and existing groups
3. **Independent support, advice and facilitation** should be available to all neighbourhoods and the role of **existing community and voluntary groups** in supporting local participation and enhancing the skills and competency of local volunteers should be strengthened
4. The approach to neighbourhood plans should be **universal** – working equally well in both urban and rural areas, and in areas with and without town and parish councils
5. Good planning for a neighbourhood where a community has not yet been able to prepare a plan should not be **distorted** by the immediate introduction of a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** which could undermine public confidence
6. Communities will need to see **new safeguards which underpin their commitment and investment** in collaborative neighbourhood planning and improve their confidence that plans will not be ignored – these include a carefully

defined community right of appeal against the grant of planning permission for development which conflicts with the neighbourhood plan and stronger enforcement against breaches of planning control

7. Communities will need new rights to address the “**glass floor**” problem where local councils do not or are reluctant genuinely to devolve power to neighbourhoods
8. The success of neighbourhood planning will depend on harnessing the **passion** people have for the place where they live and supporting communities in establishing a **positive vision** for their area
9. Effective measures will be needed to ensure local councils work with communities and voluntary groups in addressing **cross-boundary and strategic issues**.

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