



Damian Hinds
MP for East Hampshire

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For immediate release

Damian Hinds Welcomes Second Reading of Localism Bill

The new Localism Bill, which was officially introduced in the House of Commons in December and will receive its second reading today, proposes significant changes to how local authorities could manage themselves and provide for their local communities.

Key among the proposals is the introduction of a General Power of Competence for all local authorities, devolving more power of discretion over business rates and giving local communities and voluntary groups the chance to run services.

Damian Hinds said

“Although the Coalition Government is less than 12 months old we have been waiting for this scale of reform to local government for much longer. The Localism Bill hands unprecedented power over from Whitehall to District and County Councils.

In times when resources for every level of government are under pressure it is not just right, it is essential that our local authorities have the autonomy they need to meet the needs of their communities and not be compelled to spend time and money chasing national targets and strategies.

Key among the proposals is the introduction of a General Power of Competence for all local authorities. This allows them freedom of action and reform unless specifically prohibited, allowing them to devise ways of managing their resources and delivering public services without the need to constantly refer to Whitehall.

Damian Hinds said

Untold time and money is consumed trying to convince national authorities of the merits of local initiatives and ideas; now they can simply get on with what they know will work. Starting from the basic premise that Councils have the best insight into what their community needs cuts out wasteful and time consuming paperwork and makes it much easier for Councils to deliver public services in smart, efficient ways that meet local needs.”

The Bill also includes a ‘right to buy’, giving communities power to save local institutions threatened with closure by allowing them to bid for the ownership and management of community assets

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Notes to editors:

Full details on the progress of the Localism Bill can be found [here](#).

Many of the reforms of the Localism Bill were issued as departmental guidance by the Department of Communities and Local Government and are being formalised in legislation. Further information is available from the [DCLG](#).

General Power of Competence: Local Authorities are creatures of statute - they only have the power to do what Parliament has authorised them to do - unlike a person that can do anything except where that power to act is curtailed by law. Since local authorities were first incorporated, power has been given to them on a piecemeal basis. Now, with General Power of Competence, local authorities can basically act in that same way as an individual, except where restricted by statute **such as creating a new tax**

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