

Business Plan 2011–2015

Department for Communities and Local Government

November 2010

This plan will be refreshed annually

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A) Vision

The Department for Communities and Local Government has the leading role within government for setting the agenda for decentralisation and localism and has an important role in delivering the Big Society. Our purpose is to make a radical redistribution of power and funding from government to local people to deliver what they want for their communities, transforming public services.

We are setting a framework for government to decentralise by removing central burdens, empowering people to take action, letting local people control public spending, breaking apart monopolies, making public bodies and services transparent and strengthening accountability.

We will make local decisions a normal part of everyday life, giving communities, neighbourhoods and individuals more say, choice and ownership of their local facilities. We will decentralise power as far as possible, turning government upside down and inside out. Localism isn't simply about giving power back to local government. We will push power downwards and outwards to the lowest possible level – so that power is held by local people. People want more for less in their services and we will free up councils to make that happen.

We want people to have control over the decisions that affect them. Big Society encourages family and social responsibility plus civil liberties to create a stronger society. We want people to feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities and be the builders of localism. They will be re-energised and empowered to enable ideas to flow from local people and enterprises.

We will give greater freedom, by streamlining grant funding and removing burdens so that local authorities can prioritise and allocate budgets to support public services in ways which meet the needs of local people and communities. We will increase fairness by devolving control over budgets to local authorities so they can move towards more personalised and effective provision of services for vulnerable groups. We will give more responsibility by freeing up funding and reducing bureaucratic controls so local authorities and their partners can focus on their priorities, helping to manage demand on services and reduce costs to society.

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

B) Coalition Priorities

Structural Reform Priorities

1. Decentralise power as far as possible

- Free local government from central and regional control; decentralise power; provide greater freedom and flexibilities to local government so that they can genuinely lead their communities; and simplify and deregulate local government finance

2. Reinvigorate accountability, democracy and participation

- Trust people to take control of the decisions that affect them by devolving power closer to neighbourhoods, increasing citizen participation, promoting community ownership, lifting inspection burdens on councils and unnecessary regional administration

3. Increase transparency by letting people see how their money is being spent

- Let local people know who is spending their money and what it is being spent on by publishing financial and performance data online – ‘show me the money’

4. Meet people's housing aspirations

- Meet people's housing aspirations, including by providing local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth, as well as making the provision of social housing more flexible

5. Put communities in charge of planning

- Give local people and communities far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which they live by radically reforming the planning system

B) Coalition Priorities

Other major responsibilities

Supporting local government

- We are radically transforming local government, freeing it from central regulation and regional control, so that elected councils are free to deliver essential services according to local needs

Communities and neighbourhoods

- We aim to ensure that citizens are able to make the best of their communities, removing barriers so that they are able to take action to overcome difficulties such as community conflict, extremism and deprivation, with neighbourhoods as the building blocks for action

Regeneration

- We aim to support regeneration and reduce disadvantage and deprivation, ensuring value for money for taxpayers from EU programmes, decentralising the Thames Gateway and working with London's Mayor to ensure a lasting legacy from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Housing

- We oversee housing and homelessness policy in England to meet the aspirations of a growing and ageing population and support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in communities

Planning

- We are responsible for planning policy and building regulations in England. We are ensuring that the planning system, building regulations, the building control system and energy performance certificate regimes support our ambitions for a low-carbon and eco-friendly economy

The Fire and Rescue Service

- We work with the Fire and Rescue Service and the wider fire sector to support them in preventing deaths and injuries from fire, promote fire prevention and respond to major national emergencies

B) Coalition Priorities

The Department will no longer...

...hold onto power at a national level. We are doing away with Regional Strategies with their centrally imposed top-down housing targets and will give more powers for housing and planning to local communities. We have stopped the expensive and unpopular Comprehensive Area Assessment with its excessive inspection and micromanagement of local authorities; rather we are increasing accountability of local authorities to local people and businesses through our reforms. We will scrap all ring-fencing of our local authority grants

...sponsor certain regional or unnecessary organisations, such as Regional Development Agencies and Regional Leaders' Boards, when local authorities or neighbourhoods can be empowered to carry out their functions. The 27 DCLG-sponsored unelected arm's-length bodies will be reduced by two-thirds through abolition, merging or transfer of functions

...spend money on ineffective programmes. For example, we will replace the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant with financial incentives to local authorities to increase housing supply. We have suspended and will abolish Home Information Packs (HIPs) in order to encourage sellers back into the market by reducing unnecessary cost and inconvenience when selling homes.

Places will be able to apply for funding from the Regional Growth Fund to support key capital projects which also deliver economic growth. In addition, the New Homes Bonus and the Tax Increment Financing will also give local authorities the freedom to borrow against tax revenues. We will give local authorities greater flexibility for local spending decisions, according to their local priorities

C) Structural Reform Plan

The Coalition is committed to a programme of reform that will turn government on its head. We want to bring about a power shift, taking power away from Whitehall and putting it into the hands of people and communities, and a horizon shift, making the decisions that will equip Britain for long term success. For too long citizens have been treated as passive recipients of centralised, standardised services. This Government is putting citizens back in charge, and Structural Reform Plans are part of this shift of power from government to people.

This section sets out how, and when, the Department will achieve the reforms that are needed to make this happen. Structural Reform Plans are key tools for holding departments to account for the implementation of Programme for Government commitments, replacing the old top-down systems of targets and central micromanagement.

Each month, the Department publishes a simple report on its progress in meeting these commitments. These reports are available on our departmental website and on the Number 10 website.

All legislative timings and subsequent actions are subject to Parliamentary timetable and approval.

1. Decentralise power as far as possible

(p.1 of 4)

Free local government from central and regional control; decentralise power; provide greater freedom and flexibilities to local government so that they can genuinely lead their communities; and simplify and deregulate local government finance

ACTIONS		Start	End
1.1 Provide greater freedoms and flexibilities to local government			
i.	Prepare to phase out ring-fencing of government grants to local government, working with other departments and HM Treasury to identify ring fences that could be removed as part of the Spending Review	Completed	-
ii.	End the ring-fencing of government grants to local government, except for the dedicated schools grant and the public health grant	Nov 2010	Apr 2011
iii.	Freeze Council Tax in England for one year in partnership with local authorities	Apr 2011	Mar 2012
iv.	Deliver proposals for long term change to how local authorities are funded through the local government resource review, including local retention of business rates, giving councils greater freedoms, while retaining fairness in the local government finance system	Jan 2011	Jul 2011
v.	Develop and introduce proposals to implement local retention of business rates and Tax Increment Financing and any further changes agreed in the local government resource review, working with HM Treasury	Started	Apr 2012

MILESTONES			
A.	Departments start phasing out ring-fencing of government grants	Complete	
B.	List of government grants to local government published at the time of the local government finance settlement for 2011/12	Feb 2011	
C.	Council Tax rates frozen in England for one year	Apr 2011	
D.	Local Government resource review work on local business rate retention concluded	Jul 2011	

1. Decentralise power as far as possible

(p.2 of 4)

Free local government from central and regional control; decentralise power; provide greater freedom and flexibilities to local government so that they can genuinely lead their communities; and simplify and deregulate local government finance

ACTIONS		Start	End
1.1 Provide greater freedoms and flexibilities to local government (continued)			
vi. Support the Department for Work and Pensions in localisation of Council Tax Benefit, providing the necessary protection to the most vulnerable consistent with wider local government finance reform		Nov 2010	Apr 2013
1.2 Create directly elected Mayors to enable the largest 12 cities in England to have Mayors from 2012, subject to confirmatory referendums and full scrutiny by elected councillors			
i. Develop proposals for directly elected Mayors, including significant transfer of power to areas that choose a Mayoral system		Started	Dec 2011
ii. Introduce the Localism Bill to establish directly elected Mayors		Nov 2010	Nov 2010
iii. Prepare cities for the new powers and structures		May 2011	May 2012
iv. Hold referendums in England's 12 largest cities, and any other cities that choose to participate. If cities vote to have a Mayor, start the transfer of additional powers and full executive authority and rapidly hold and election		May 2012	May 2012
MILESTONES			
E. Localism Bill introduced		Nov 2010	
F. Bill introduced to implement Tax Increment Financing		Jul 2011	
G. Referendums held in each of England's 12 largest cities		May 2012	

1. Decentralise power as far as possible

(p.3 of 4)

Free local government from central and regional control; decentralise power; provide greater freedom and flexibilities to local government so that they can genuinely lead their communities; and simplify and deregulate local government finance

ACTIONS		Start	End
1.3 Remove reporting burdens on local government from central departments			
i.	Abolish Comprehensive Area Assessment and cut local government inspection	Completed	-
ii.	Identify exceptional areas where central government needs to retain an oversight role	Started	Nov 2010
iii.	Develop a single, reduced, list of the data requirements placed on local government by central departments, working with other departments and local government	Started	Apr 2012
iv.	Develop and implement a process for managing new data requirements from departments, and from their associated inspectorates and regulators	Apr 2011	Apr 2012
1.4 Shift power over funding away from the centre and establish community budgets for public service delivery, working with other government departments and with places			
i.	Create the conditions for all places to pool and align locally controlled public budgets, and review centrally-funded support for public sector improvement	Started	Apr 2011
ii.	Implement Community Budgets in 16 places as part of a national effort to tackle problem families	Started	Apr 2011
iii.	Evaluate the take-up and effectiveness of community budgets	Nov 2012	Mar 2013
iv.	Subject to 1.4iii, implement community budgets across the country	Jan 2013	Apr 2013
MILESTONES			
H.	Comprehensive Area Assessment abolished	Complete	
I.	First phase of community budgets launched in 16 places	Apr 2011	
J.	Single data list published of requirements placed on local government by the centre	Apr 2012	
K.	Community budgets start to be available across the country	Jan 2013	
L.	Evaluation published of community budgets	Mar 2013	
M.	First annual data release on spending in community budgets	Apr 2013	

2. Reinvigorate local accountability, democracy and participation

(p.5 of 7)

Trust people to take control of the decisions that affect them by devolving power closer to neighbourhoods, increasing citizen participation, promoting community ownership, lifting inspection burdens on councils and unnecessary regional administration

ACTIONS		Start	End
2.5 Abolish the Government Office for London (GOL)			
i.	Work with the Disposal Service Agency to dispose of assets as appropriate	Started	Dec 2010
ii.	Complete the transfer of historic data and IT infrastructure across Government Office Network wide IT infrastructure	Started	Mar 2011
iii.	Vacate the GOL building and return it to the landlord	Started	Apr 2011
2.6 Abolish the remaining Government Offices			
i.	Develop proposals on transfer of ongoing functions, working with affected departments	Started	Nov 2010
ii.	Announce the intention in principle to abolish the remaining Government Offices	Completed	-
iii.	Determine the scope of residual ongoing functions and complete required transfers	Nov 2010	Mar 2011
iv.	Consult unions and staff	Started	Dec 2010
v.	Confirm the abolition of the remaining Government Offices	Completed	-
vi.	Redeploy or release Government Office staff	Started	Aug 2011
vii.	Vacate GO buildings for reassignment or disposal by DCLG estates management	Started	Aug 2011
2.7 Stop the proposed restructuring of local government in Norfolk, Suffolk and Devon			
i.	Introduce legislation through the Local Government Bill	Completed	-
MILESTONES			
N.	Local Government Bill introduced	Complete	
O.	Clarify retention or abolition of remaining Government Offices	Complete	
P.	Assets disposed of from Government Office for London	Dec 2010	
Q.	Government Office for London building vacated and returned to landlord	Apr 2011	
R.	Staff redeployed or released from Government Office Network	Aug 2011	

2. Reinvigorate local accountability, democracy and participation

(p.6 of 7)

Trust people to take control of the decisions that affect them by devolving power closer to neighbourhoods, increasing citizen participation, promoting community ownership, lifting inspection burdens on councils and unnecessary regional administration

ACTIONS		Start	End
2.8 Disband the Audit Commission and refocus local audit on helping local people to hold councils and local public bodies to account for local spending decisions			
i.	Develop and implement a new local audit regime where all such audits will be regulated within a statutory framework, with oversight by the profession and the National Audit Office	Started	Dec 2012
ii.	Disband the Audit Commission, considering options for moving its in-house practice into the private sector, including through mutualisation	Started	Dec 2012
2.9 Make local authorities accountable for health and safety decisions and offering citizens a route for redress where events have been cancelled by a local authority			
i.	Develop and introduce legislation so that officials who ban events on health and safety grounds should put their reasons in writing. The Local Government Ombudsman may award a settlement where it is not possible to reinstate an event	Started	May 2012
ii.	Develop and introduce legislation so that local authorities conduct an internal review of all refusals on the grounds of health and safety	Started	May 2012
2.10 Stop councils unnecessarily using surveillance powers, banning local authority use of powers unless signed off by a magistrate, and work with the Home Office in its review of counter-terrorism and security legislation		Completed	-
MILESTONES			
S.	Review of local authority use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 completed	Complete	
T.	Proposals for a new local audit regime published	Apr 2011	
U.	Regulations in force to allow the public to hold councils to account for cancellation or banning of events on health and safety grounds	Apr 2013	

3. Increase transparency by letting people see how their money is being spent (p.1 of 3)

Let local people know who is spending their money and what it is being spent on by publishing financial and performance data online – ‘show me the money’

ACTIONS		Start	End
3.1 Work with the Cabinet Office and other government departments to publish local data held by central government			
i.	Prepare departments for the publication, in an open and standardised format, of the data they hold on local authorities	Started	Mar 2011
ii.	Publish central government datasets on local spending included in the second Local Spending Report consultation document	Completed	-
3.2 Release datasets held by the Department for Communities and Local Government to make councils and other bodies more accountable			
i.	Prepare a comprehensive list of data held by DCLG and supporting bodies to be published in an open and standardised format	Started	Jan 2011
ii.	Publish data in line with public sector transparency, moving progressively to fully open formats	Jan 2011	Apr 2012
iii.	Support the Cabinet Office in its reviews of government use of data	Started	Mar 2012
MILESTONES			
A.	Datasets included in the proposal for a second Local Spending Report published on data.gov.uk	Complete	
B.	Comprehensive list of data held by DCLG and supporting bodies published in an open and standardised format	Jan 2011	
C.	Proposals published to manage the data legacy of abolished DCLG bodies	Jan 2011	

3. Increase transparency by letting people see how their money is being spent (p.2 of 3)

Let local people know who is spending their money and what it is being spent on by publishing financial and performance data online – ‘show me the money’

ACTIONS		Start	End
3.3 Help local authorities publish, in an open and standardised format, (a) items of spending, contracts and tenders above £500 and (b) job titles and salaries for senior council officers			
i.	Work with local authorities to support publication	Started	Jan 2011
ii.	Require publication by a Code of Practice on council transparency, through the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 or other legislation	Nov 2010	Nov 2010
iii.	Work with the Cabinet Office to ensure that councils are included in any measures introduced to drive a culture of transparency in the public sector	Nov 2011	Jan 2012
3.4 Encourage citizens, developers, public and private sector organisations to access and use local data and information			
i.	Support interest in the transparency of local government spending, working with the national and local media	Started	Apr 2011
ii.	Work with the Local Public Data Panel to offer prizes to support local transparency	Started	Mar 2011
iii.	Run events and take other actions, including ‘hack’ and developer days, to encourage new uses of data and test out new applications on the public; support developers to create innovative websites and to identify what information or data the public would prioritise	Dec 2010	Aug 2011
iv.	Support local authorities in improving data literacy, awareness and skills	Started	Aug 2011
MILESTONES			
D.	Local authority spending, contracts and tenders above £500, and job titles and salaries for senior council officers, published in an open and standardised format	Jan 2011	
E.	Data on local authorities held by central government departments published	Mar 2011	
F.	Support provided for developers, including ‘hack’ and developer days	Aug 2011	

Jan 2011

Jan 2011

4. Meet people's housing aspirations (p.1 of 5)

Meet people's housing aspirations, including by providing local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth, as well as making the provision of social housing more flexible

ACTIONS		Start	End
4.1 Publish a policy paper setting out the Government's plans for reform of social housing, including affordable rent, tenure reform, social housing allocations, mobility, homelessness, overcrowding and council house finance			
i. Publish a policy paper on reform of social housing		Nov 2010	Nov 2010
ii. Introduce the Localism Bill		Nov 2010	Nov 2010
iii. Publish a summary of consultation responses and a draft Direction on Tenure		Jan 2011	Jan 2011
4.2 Introduce an 'Affordable Rent' scheme, which will contribute towards up to 150,000 new affordable homes for the spending review period. This will allow housing associations to provide new homes at a rent between social and local market rents and with a tenancy agreement that will be reviewed after an agreed period of time			
i. Publish with the Homes and Communities Agency details on how the funding will work		Jan 2011	Jan 2011
ii. Prepare for launch of the 'Affordable Rent' scheme		Jan 2011	Apr 2011
4.3 Abolish Home Information Packs			
i. Home Information Packs suspended by Order		Completed	-
ii. Draft legislation to abolish Home Information Packs		Started	Nov 2010
iii. Introduce the Localism Bill to abolish Home Information Packs		Nov 2010	Nov 2010
MILESTONES			
A. Localism Bill introduced		Nov 2010	
B. Policy paper published on plans for reform of social housing		Nov 2010	
C. 'Affordable Rent' scheme implemented		Apr 2011	

4. Meet people's housing aspirations (p.2 of 5)

Meet people's housing aspirations, including by providing local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth, as well as making the provision of social housing more flexible

ACTIONS		Start	End
4.4 Meet people's housing aspirations through a new Community Right to Build, allowing local communities to take forward their own plans for development without the need for a planning application, and promoting 'Home on the Farm' schemes that encourage farmers to convert existing disused or underused buildings into affordable housing for their communities			
i.	Draft legislation for the Community Right to Build	Started	Nov 2010
ii.	First promotion of 'Home on the Farm' schemes	Completed	-
iii.	Through engagement on Community Right to Build and during the passage of the Localism Bill, continue to encourage farmers to participate to deliver homes or other community facilities for the benefit of their community	Nov 2010	Nov 2011
4.5 Reform the Housing Revenue Account			
i.	Consult on reforms to the Housing Revenue Account	Completed	-
ii.	Agree details of reform ('self-financing') as part of the Spending Review	Completed	-
iii.	Publish a summary of consultation responses and supporting documents	Jul 2010 (Overdue)	
iv.	Publish detailed proposals for reform of the Housing Revenue Account, including when it will come into force, so that local authorities can plan for the changes	Started	Jan 2011
v.	Introduce the Localism Bill to reform the Housing Revenue Account	Nov 2010	Nov 2010
MILESTONES			
D.	First promotions of 'Home on the Farm' schemes	Complete	
E.	Localism Bill introduced	Nov 2010	
F.	Payments made setting up the new self-financing Housing Revenue Account system	Apr 2012	

4. Meet people's housing aspirations (p.3 of 5)

Meet people's housing aspirations, including by providing local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth, as well as making the provision of social housing more flexible

ACTIONS		Start	End
4.5 Reform the Housing Revenue Account (continued)			
vi. Seek up-to-date data from local authorities on their council housing stock		Jun 2011	Oct 2011
vii. Consult on proposed final Housing Revenue Account reform settlements for each local authority		Nov 2011	Jan 2012
viii. Housing Revenue Account determinations finalised and published, giving details of financing valuations and payments required for reform to take place		Jan 2012	Apr 2012
4.6 Increase mobility among social housing tenants to make social housing more flexible			
i. Develop an operational Standard for home swap providers to support better mutual exchange services		Started	Apr 2011
ii. Introduce the Localism Bill to give a direction to the regulator on a mutual exchange Standard		Nov 2010	Nov 2010
iii. Consult on the draft direction		Jan 2011	Apr 2011
iv. Formal consultation by the Regulator on a Standard		Nov 2011	Jan 2012
4.7 Provide strong incentives for local authorities to build new homes in the form of a New Homes Bonus and reform of the community infrastructure levy			
i. Develop the mechanics of the scheme, including a split of grant between tiers; developing an enhancement for affordable homes; data collection; distributional impact; and unit or reward		Started	Dec 2010
ii. Consult on the proposal to implement the New Homes Bonus scheme		Nov 2010	Dec 2010
iii. Analyse consultation findings and resolve outstanding issues		Jan 2011	Mar 2011
MILESTONES			
G. Localism Bill introduced		Nov 2010	
H. First local authorities receive incentives to build new homes		Apr 2012	

4. Meet people's housing aspirations (p.4 of 5)

Meet people's housing aspirations, including by providing local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth, as well as making the provision of social housing more flexible

ACTIONS		Start	End
4.7 Provide strong incentives for local authorities to build new homes in the form of a new homes bonus and reform of the community infrastructure levy (continued)			
iv. Take forward implementation phase		Apr 2011	Apr 2012
4.8 Develop a strategy to bring more empty homes back into use, working with local authorities, housing associations and some of the property owners, neighbours and others affected			
i. Invite interested parties (including local authorities and registered social landlords) to submit views through the Homes and Communities Agency's 'Maximising the Use of Empty homes' online debate		Completed	-
ii. Consider the Homes and Communities Agency's analysis of responses and develop plans to bring more empty homes into use		Completed	-
iii. Consult, as part of the New Homes Bonus consultation, on provision to reward local authorities for bringing empty homes back into use		Nov 2010	Dec 2010
iv. Work with the Homes and Communities Agency to develop a programme for empty homes		Nov 2010	Mar 2011
MILESTONES			
I. Proposals published to bring more empty homes back into use		Nov 2010	
J. New Homes Bonus scheme commences		Apr 2011	
K. First local authorities publish data on their spending on infrastructure via the Community Infrastructure Levy		Dec 2012	

4. Meet people's housing aspirations (p.5 of 5)

Meet people's housing aspirations, including by providing local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth, as well as making the provision of social housing more flexible

ACTIONS		Start	End
4.9 Ensure continuous improvements in energy efficiency of new buildings looking specifically at zero-carbon homes and non-domestic buildings			
i.	Develop plans to revise Part L (conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations, increasing the energy efficiency requirements for new buildings, and lay before Parliament	Completed	-
ii.	Evidence gathered on carbon compliance levels for new homes by the Zero Carbon Hub, an independent body funded by the government and by industry supporting the delivery of zero-carbon homes	Started	Dec 2010
iii.	Consult on revisions to Part L 2013 of the Building Regulations	Dec 2011	Mar 2012
4.10 Reduce the number of arm's-length bodies by abolition and transfer of functions, including for the National Tenant Voice and Tenant Services Authority			
i.	Review framework for social housing regulation and Tenant Services Authority	Completed	-
ii.	Introduce primary legislation to abolish the Tenant Services Authority	Nov 2010	Nov 2010
iii.	Transfer regulatory functions to the Homes and Communities Agency	Nov 2011	Apr 2012
iv.	Prepare for transition of staff and functions from Tenant Services Authority to the Homes and Communities Agency	Nov 2010	Apr 2012
v.	Abolish the National Tenant Voice	Jul 2010	Nov 2010
MILESTONES			
L.	Part L of the Building Regulations brought into force	Complete	
M.	Quarterly data published on energy efficiency of new homes and number of homes achieving Code for Sustainable Homes standards	Nov 2010	
N.	Update published on next steps for zero-carbon homes and non-domestic buildings	Dec 2010	
O.	Tenant Services Authority abolished and functions ended or transferred	Apr 2012	

5. Put communities in charge of planning

(p.1 of 4)

Give local people and communities far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which they live by radically reforming the planning system

ACTIONS	Start	End
5.1 Radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods much greater ability to shape the places in which they live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication 'Open Source Planning'		
i. Amend planning policy to give councils the power to stop unwanted 'garden grabbing'	Completed	-
ii. Develop proposals to streamline the process of producing local authority plans, including removing unnecessary requirements and stopping Planning Inspectors from re-writing plans	Started	Nov 2010
iii. Develop proposals to empower local communities to bring forward neighbourhood plans through the structure of either a parish council or a newly-formed neighbourhood forum	Started	Nov 2010
iv. Work with a small number of places to develop neighbourhood plans using existing powers	Nov 2010	Apr 2012

MILESTONES		
A. Planning policy amended to give councils the power to end unwanted 'garden grabbing'	Complete	
B. Empower local communities to bring forward their own plans for their neighbourhoods	Apr 2012	
C. First annual release of data on the number of neighbourhood plans. The plans will indicate the number of people involved in the process of their production and be published on line by each local planning authority	Apr 2013	
D. Funding in place to help town and parish councils to develop neighbourhood plans	Apr 2011	

5. Put communities in charge of planning

(p.2 of 4)

Give local people and communities far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which they live by radically reforming the planning system

ACTIONS		Start	End
5.1 Radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods much greater ability to shape the places in which they live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication 'Open Source Planning' (continued)			
v. Introduce the Localism Bill to give local authorities these flexibilities and communities these powers		Nov 2010	Nov 2010
vi. Prepare and introduce secondary legislation as necessary		Nov 2011	May 2012
5.2 Publish and present to Parliament a radically simplified and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development			
i. Produce the national planning framework		Started	Apr 2012
ii. Introduce as part of the national planning framework a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development		Started	Apr 2012
5.3 Abolish Regional Strategies and return decision-making to local councils			
i. Draft legislation to repeal the legal underpinning of Regional Strategies and introduce a duty to co-operate on local authorities with other local authorities and public and statutory bodies		Started	Nov 2010
ii. Introduce the Localism Bill to repeal Regional Strategies and introduce a duty to co-operate on local authorities		Nov 2010	Nov 2010
MILESTONES			
E. Localism Bill introduced		Nov 2010	
F. National Planning Policy Framework published		Apr 2012	

D) Departmental expenditure

This section sets out how the Department is spending taxpayers' money as clearly and transparently as possible.

We have included a table to show the Department's planned expenditure over the Spending Review period, as agreed with the Treasury. It is split into money spent on administration (including the cost of running departments themselves), programmes (including the frontline), and capital (for instance new buildings and equipment). As soon as possible, we will include the proportion of this expenditure that goes to the voluntary and community sector and to small businesses.

A second page shows the Department's planned expenditure on local government.

By April 2011, each department will also publish a bubble chart setting out in detail how its settlement will be allocated for the 2011/12 financial year, across its key programmes and activities.

Table of spending for 2011/12 to 2014/15

This section sets out the department's planned expenditure over the Spending Review period, as agreed with the Treasury.

£bn ^{1 2 3}	Baseline 2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Total departmental expenditure allocation	9.0	5.3	4.0	3.4	3.2
<i>Administration spending⁴</i>	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
<i>Programme spending⁴</i>	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.3	0.9
<i>Capital spending</i>	6.8	3.3	2.3	1.8	2.0
<i>Spend on voluntary and community sector (%)⁵</i>	Data to be confirmed				
<i>Value of contracts to small and medium sized enterprises (%)⁵</i>	Data to be confirmed				

1. Detailed breakdown of these budgets will be published by April 2011

2. Excludes departmental Annually Managed Expenditure

3. Numbers may not sum due to rounding

4. Excludes depreciation

5. To be confirmed at the end of each financial year

Local Government Expenditure

£bn	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<i>Resource DEL¹²</i>	28.5	26.1	24.4	24.2	22.9
<i>Capital DEL</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Total DEL</i>	28.5	26.1	24.4	24.2	22.9

1. In this table, Resource DEL excludes depreciation

2. LG DEL includes funding for police and fire authorities. Excluding these contributions LG DEL for councils will fall by 28%

Common areas of spend

The indicators below will help the public to judge whether the Department is being run efficiently, and can be compared across departments.

Indicators
Overall:
Cost of operating the Department (including procurement, employment cost and property) over time and against projected cost
Number of employees, including breakdown by job type, seniority and their contract type (full time/part time)
Cost of corporate services (including human resources, finance, information and communications technology, communications, procurement) as a percentage of the cost of operating the department
On 3rd party spend:
Property cost per square metre and per employee
Cost of standard desktop computer per employee and number of electronic devices (laptops, desktops, mobile phones etc.) per employee
Value of major areas of spending (office products, travel etc.)
Number and value of major government projects and whether they will be delivered on time and to budget

E) Transparency

Greater transparency across government is at the heart of our commitment to enable the public to hold politicians and public bodies to account, to reduce the deficit and deliver better value for money in public spending.

This section will set out the information that will enable users of public services to choose between providers, and taxpayers to assess the efficiency and productivity of public services, holding them more effectively to account. By publishing a wide range of indicators, we will enable the public to make up their own minds about how departments are performing. We will use transparency to facilitate the choice and democratic accountability which will replace top-down targets and micromanagement.

All the data in this section will be made available free of charge, and we will regularly review whether our published data meets the needs of the public.

This section is published in draft until April 2011 to allow for further consultation.

Information Strategy (p.1 of 3)

The Government wants to create a new era of accountability and openness where bureaucratic accountability is replaced by democratic accountability and where the public have a clear right to know and a right to challenge. The Department for Communities and Local Government is driving this agenda. Putting more data in the public domain is central in making this happen and ensuring that 'the people are the boss'.

We have put transparency at the heart of our work to redistribute power from government to local people and communities by ensuring greater accountability in the way taxpayers money is spent. The priority for DCLG is to ensure that the public is able to see where their money goes and what it delivers. As such, a key structural reform priority for the Department is 'Let local people know who is spending their money and what it is being spent on by publishing financial and performance data online – 'show me the money'.

Transparency is championed by David Prout, as Director-General with responsibility for transparency and Chair of the DCLG Transparency Board. We are committed to publishing data in line with the Public Data Principles. As such, all data will be published and registered on data.gov.uk, although we will continue to protect sensitive data. We expect our Arm's Length Bodies to continue to follow DCLG's strong lead in ushering in the new era of accountability and openness. The operating principle of transparency will apply to the whole departmental family and form a condition of funding in letters of delegation to our Arm's Length Bodies.

Greater openness and transparency is absolutely critical to root out waste and inefficiency as well as being more democratic. Putting information online is a simple step which will drive smarter spending. We have made an ongoing commitment to be open and transparent with our expenditure information, and we are matching the expectation set for Town Halls by publishing expenditure over £500 rather than £25,000.

Information Strategy (p.2 of 3)

DCLG has published online grant data and procurement data on spend over £500 for 2008/09, 2009/10 and the first quarter of 2010/11. The main Departmental Arm's Length Bodies have opened their books too. From November, data for DCLG and our Arm's Length Bodies will be published online monthly. We are also committed to transparency in our relationship with contractors and all new DCLG tender documents over £10,000 will be made available to the public free of charge from December 2010, and our contracts published in full by January 2011. DCLG will be transparent in sharing our financial and operational management information on a prompt and regular basis.

Our impact and input indicators have been selected from many datasets relating to DCLG to enable the public to judge whether the investment that it is making to deliver its ambitions will enable better services for less money. They are set out in tables in this section. Annex A sets out a further list of key datasets that have been identified as enabling people to evaluate the quality and value for money of the public services and public bodies for which DCLG is responsible, and those datasets that DCLG uses to make policy decisions. Where datasets are being released for the first time, this is made clear. We are committed to information being disaggregated to the local level.

We are running a campaign on transparency to build awareness amongst the general public of the right to access data, to increase demand for its use and to encourage innovative uses of data by web application developers. We will harness the feedback and ideas generated through this campaign to improve our transparency and identify further opportunities for releasing data. In addition, we recognise the need to implement the 'Right to Data' and in advance of legislation welcome direct requests from the public for data, through the DCLG Freedom of Information team.

Information Strategy (p.3 of 3)

Town hall transparency

Getting council business out in the open will revolutionise local government and help facilitate the Big Society. Transparency is the foundation of accountability. Local people should be able to hold politicians and public bodies to account over how their council tax is being spent, and decisions made on their behalf. Ministers have made it clear that councils should not rely on government guidance but press on as quickly as possible to get a range of data in the public domain for the public to see.

In particular, councils and others, including Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs), have been urged to publish details of all spending over £500 in full and online. In October 2010, the Local Government Association published advice about how councils should publish their spending details. All councils and FRAs should be doing this as a matter of course by the start of 2011, as well as publishing invitations to tender and final contracts on projects over £500, senior salaries and organisational information. Alongside this information, councils and FRAs are also encouraged to publish a wide range of data online including: councillor allowances and expenses; minutes and papers of council meetings; job vacancies; frontline service information and performance data.

Whilst national government will still have a role to play in aggregating some data of critical national importance, or to guarantee Parliamentary accountability for public funds, the onus must be on local authorities to provide local residents with the data they need. We fully support the work being done by the Local Government Association to develop effective benchmarking tools to allow citizens to compare their local council's performance against others.

We will continue to work to encourage greater use of this data by third parties. We have established the Local Data Panel to advise on plans for further local transparency. DCLG is working with other government departments to see available data on local spending made public through www.data.gov.uk/data/tag/local-spend-data.

Input indicators

The indicators set out in this section are just a subset of the data gathered by the Department which will be made transparently available as outlined in the Information Strategy.

The Department will adopt the following input indicators:

Input indicator	When will publication start?	How often will it be published?	Where will it be published?*
Affordable housing grant per dwelling (subject to further work being done to refine and test the feasibility of this measure in the new affordable rents model)	TBD	Annually	TBD
Percentage of local authority revenue expenditure funded by central government grants, broken down by class of authority	Already published	Annually	DCLG Website

The Department will be exploring other possible input indicators by engaging with local government during the consultation process. The work will include reviewing indicators for the Fire Service, energy efficiency of new houses and temporary accommodation, as well as the cost of the specified departmental policy functions that provide a national supporting function for local authorities, such as those for local government pay and pensions.

* Also linked to data.gov.uk

Impact Indicators

Our impact indicators are designed to help the public to judge whether our policies and reforms are having the effect they want. Further detail on these indicators can be found in our full list of datasets. The Department will adopt the following indicators:

Impact indicator	When will publication start?	How often will it be published?	Where will it be published?
Total number of housing starts and completions (as a leading indicator of net additions)	Already published	Quarterly	DCLG Website
Number of net additions to the housing stock	Already published	Annually	DCLG Website
Number of affordable housing starts and completions delivered through the Homes and Communities Agency	Already published	Every 6 months	HCA Website
Energy efficiency of new build housing (average Standard Assessment Procedure energy rating score)	Already published	Quarterly	DCLG Website
Households in temporary accommodation	Already published	Quarterly	DCLG Website
Fire-related casualties	Already published	Quarterly	DCLG Website
Percentage of local authority budgets delegated to local decision-making (subject to further work being done to refine and test the feasibility of this measure)	TBD	Annually	TBD

* Also linked to data.gov.uk

Other data (p.1 of 2)

We will publish a full range of datasets and our departmental organogram on our website www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1742035.pdf

In this business plan we will highlight key data, which will be particularly useful to help people to judge the progress of structural reforms, and help people to make informed choices.

1. Data which will help people to judge the progress of structural reforms:

- Spending held in community budgets, by local authority from April 2013, subject to further work being done to test the feasibility of this measure
- Spending on infrastructure via the Community Infrastructure Levy, by local authority, from December 2012. This information will be published online by each authority, subject to further work being done to test the feasibility of this measure
- Number of neighbourhood plans by local authority from April 2013. Neighbourhood plans will indicate the number of people involved in the process of their production. They will be published on line by each local planning authority
- Number of new mutuals and cooperatives created by local authorities to deliver public services, subject to further work being done to test the feasibility of this measure
- List of government grants to local government, by local authority (published at the time of the local government finance settlement)

Other data (p.2 of 2)

2. Data which will help people make informed choices (collected and published by local authorities):

- Items of spending, contracts and tenders above £500, by local authority
- Job titles and salaries of senior council officers, by local authority

3. Other key data:

- Further details of the key data sets used by the Department are given at <http://www.communities.gov.uk>. The table includes about seventy categories of data that are important to the Department. They include the data sets used for the Department's input and impact indicators and other data sets used for policy-making purposes. The categories include data published by the Department and some key sources published by other bodies, such as the Office for National Statistics. The main categories are ones for which the Department publishes several key statistical series, including ones relating to housing, planning, local government finance and fire