

**North Hertfordshire District Council
Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

Community Rights

DRAFT SCOPE

Terms of reference

To examine all aspects of NHDC's policy and processes on community rights as introduced in the Localism Act and suggest improvements if necessary. Specific areas for scrutiny shall include:

- the implications of the Localism Act and the opportunities this brings for the community and the Council;
- the Council's preparedness for dealing with applications and potential impacts on resource availability;
- the effectiveness of the Council's processes;
- provision of information on community rights and management of potential conflicts between decision making and empowerment roles;
- the effectiveness of the Council's engagement with the community and vice versa;
- the challenges, and opportunities for the council;
- comparison with other councils.

The community rights considered shall include:

- The right to bid;
- The right to challenge;
- The right to build;
- Community asset transfer;
- Neighbourhood planning.

Expected Outcomes

A robust process for publicising community rights and dealing with applications.

Timeframe

Two stages, timings to be confirmed

1st stage - right to bid and right to challenge

2nd stage – other community rights

Link with Council Priorities

Working with local communities.

Potential Witnesses and Community Engagement

Andrew Cavanagh - Head of Finance, Performance & Asset Management

Liz Green – Head of Policy and Community Services

NHDC Legal representative

Councillor(s) from other districts and boroughs in Hertfordshire

Sample of previous community applicants, eg

- Royston Hospital Action Group
- Knebworth Parish Council

Green Issues

There are potential environmental benefits arising from neighbourhood planning rights, or through groups being funded to improve energy efficiency in community buildings.

Key Questions

- What do the new community rights mean for the Council and the community?
- What sort of information and support is available to the community?
- How prepared is the Council for dealing with applications?
- How effective are the Council's processes for dealing with inquiries about and applications for community rights?
- How are other councils taking forward this area of work?

Information documents

Brief Guide to the Localism Act

Community Right to Bid Regulations

Information provided to local groups – forms, web information etc

Membership

Chair – party depends on timing

Membership to be confirmed

Portfolio Holder - Cllrs Tony Hunter & Terry Hone

Lead Officers – Andy Cavanagh and Liz Green

Support Officer - Brendan Sullivan, Scrutiny Officer