



## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Localism Act

**Date:** 12 January 2012

**Author:** Stephen Bray – Corporate Director

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- To inform Cabinet of the final contents of the Localism Act

### **2. Background**

The Localism Bill, announced by the Coalition Government as part of its programme in 2010, represented a wide-ranging review of a range of issues of key significance to local government. It is perhaps the single most important piece of legislation for local government proposed by the Coalition.

The Bill was enacted on 15 November 2011. As expected, it includes major legislative change relating to local authority governance; rights and powers for communities; the planning system and social housing.

### **3. Summary of key proposals**

The government has published a “plain English” guide to the Act which summarises the key proposals included in the act and the government’s rationale for their introduction. A copy is attached at **Appendix A**.

The full act is accessible on line at  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

The Council has already given consideration to various elements of the Act as the proposals have progressed through Parliament. Examples include

consideration of planning and housing related changes and consideration by the Standards Committee of changes to the Standards regime.

Further consideration will need to be given to these and other aspects of the Act in due course – in some cases this will follow secondary legislation. The guide makes clear that different parts of the Act will come into effect at different times and steps will be taken to ensure that the Council takes appropriate action to address these issues as they arise, and takes advantage of new powers offered to it as soon as possible where these are conducive to delivery of its priorities.

Policy Review Scrutiny plans to consider and review the implications of the Localism Act and will report back to Cabinet on its findings in due course. This is consistent with Overview Scrutiny Committee's strategic plan aim to examine the impact of new central government legislation.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

The Act introduces major changes that are likely to have significant wider resource implications for the Council. It is too early however for these to be quantified and further work will follow to assess these implications as implementation of the Act is progressed.

#### **5. Recommendation**

Cabinet is **recommended**: -

- To note the report
- To note that Scrutiny intend to investigate the implications of the Act for the Council and to welcome views arising from these investigations being submitted to Cabinet for consideration in due course.