

## **A package of advice and information sheets produced by the Community Council for Somerset**

### **Introduction - The Localism Act**

The Localism Act was passed by Government in 2012. It was specifically designed to bring new freedoms and flexibilities for local government and new rights and powers for local communities and individuals.

Local authorities are now able to make their own decisions on how to adapt housing provision to meet local needs, and have more control over the funding of social housing.

The Localism Act also changes the way a local (“neighbourhood”) area is planned by providing an opportunity for the local community to have direct involvement in planning the future of the area by creating their own “Neighbourhood Plan”. If the plan is agreed through a referendum, it then forms part of the local authorities planning policy for that area.

The Act gives new powers known as Community Rights to the local community which enables them to potentially bid for, own or manage a local asset such as land or buildings.

### **The Community Rights are:**

- Right to Build; Neighbourhood Planning
- Right to Bid; Assets of Community Value and Asset Transfer
- Right to Challenge
- Right to Reclaim Land

### **Right to Build & Neighbourhood Planning**

The Community Right to Build is a new way for communities to choose for themselves where and when to build homes, shops, facilities and businesses – putting power back into the hands of local people where it belongs.

Neighbourhood planning allows local residents and businesses to have their own planning policies in a neighbourhood plan that reflect their priorities, deliver tangible local benefits and have real weight in planning decisions.

## Right to Bid

You can use the Community Right to Bid to ‘pause’ the sale of buildings or land you care about such as your local pub, shop, library or football ground. It gives your community time to develop a bid to buy it.

## Right to Challenge

The Community Right to Challenge enables communities to challenge to take over local services that they think they can run differently and better. The Right to Challenge could be used to run a wide range of local services.

## Right to reclaim land

The Community Right to Reclaim Land helps communities to improve their local area by giving them the right to ask that under-used or unused land owned by public bodies is brought back into beneficial use.

If you would like to view more details on Community Rights, you can download more detailed guides on our website: [www.somersetccc.org.uk/community-rights](http://www.somersetccc.org.uk/community-rights) or you can view a “Plain English” summary of the Localism Act here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf)

### CCS Support

CCS can support you with tailored information and advice, as well as supporting your community or group with business planning, surveys and delivering community engagement. If you would like to know more, please contact us on 01823 331222 [jane@somersetccc.org.uk](mailto:jane@somersetccc.org.uk) or [clare@somersetccc.org.uk](mailto:clare@somersetccc.org.uk)