

The RTPI fully supports the principles of localism. Democratic accountability has been at the heart of planning for over 60 years, and direct public engagement for over 40. Planning and planners have a duty to all those involved in, and affected by, planning to meet their needs and aspirations, balanced with meeting social and economic objectives while protecting our built and natural heritage.

Based on these principles, the RTPI will be examining the Localism Bill to ensure that certain tests are met including that:

1. It allows for a clearly stated and democratically agreed vision of **national spatial priorities**, including meeting needs for housing and infrastructure, and addressing the challenges of climate change;
2. It takes a broad view of **sustainable development** that requires all those exercising a presumption in favour of it to place economic, social and environmental sustainability on an equal footing;
3. It does not assume that the **Government's agendas** for economic growth, for meeting targets for reducing emissions and increasing renewable energy, for social inclusion and housing delivery will be achieved simply because there is the freedom of choice to do so;
4. Any **duties** placed on local government and others – including a duty to co-operate – are clearly defined, are resourced and are enforceable where necessary;
5. Any **rights** given to communities, such as the right to plan or to build, are not token rights unsupported by resources, expertise or democratic challenge;
6. The understandable desire among communities for immediate **investment** in local facilities does not prejudice longer term investments to meet larger-scale needs such as hospitals, waste facilities and transport infrastructure;
7. The systems of **incentives**, funds, levies and agreements work together to fund a rigorously analysed and democratically agreed list of infrastructure priorities, and that such incentives are open and transparent and are not perceived as, or act as, development bribes;
8. **Neighbourhood planning** not only serves to provide what local communities desire, but also allows for what wider communities need;
9. In exercising **powers** over the future of their areas, communities accept and fulfil the **responsibilities** attached to doing so;
10. It makes it clear that it is equally important for a neighbourhood group to **consult as to be consulted**;
11. It gives an **equal opportunity** for all communities to be involved in shaping their own futures, including those communities and groups whose engagement has often been neglected and have been served by Planning Aid in the past and we hope will continue to do so in the future;
12. It does not hamper the ability of RTPI members to continue to provide a **professional, independent, unbiased, evidence-based** service to all those involved in, and affected by, planning.