



## More Power for Local People

*Too often, people's opinions about what happens in their area are ignored. Taxes we pay locally disappear into the Treasury and are spent elsewhere, and the way public services are provided reflects what central government wants rather than what local communities need. It's completely unfair that big developers and faceless bureaucrats have more power than local families in deciding where new buildings go up. Liberal Democrats will do things differently, because we believe local people and families know best about how things should be done in their area. We will cut back central government and all the stifling targets that it sets, make sure local taxes are spent locally and give people a real say over things like their local NHS, neighbourhood policing and new housing.*

**Give people a say in policing and the NHS.** It's completely unfair that you get to vote for the council which collects the bins, but you don't get a say in the NHS that could save your life or the police who keep your family safe. We will create directly elected health boards and police authorities so these services deliver what you need.

**Scrap £1bn of inspection regimes.** We will free communities to set their own priorities and targets, and close down the inspection regimes that keep council staff busy filling in forms for the government instead of looking after local people.

**Improve local bus services.** There aren't enough buses for people to get around, especially older people who can't drive. We will give councils greater powers to regulate bus services according to community needs, meaning local people get a real say over routes and fares.

**Control over what is built in your area.** Residents should have the power to appeal planning applications where an authority has said 'yes', just as developers presently have the right to appeal applications to which a Council has said 'no'. We will create a third party right of appeal in cases where planning decisions go against locally agreed plans.

**Fairer local taxes: return Business Rates to councils.** Local government and local people have to rely on central government for almost three quarters of the money spent locally. Government bureaucrats hold the purse strings so they decide what happens in your area: that's unfair. We will put councils back in charge of Business Rates, giving local people more control and a real incentive to stimulate local business growth and create jobs.

**Fairer local taxes: Scrap the unfair Council Tax.** We would scrap the unfair Council Tax and replace it with a fairer local tax, based on people's ability to pay so that pensioners will not have to choose between paying their Council Tax and heating their homes. We will pilot a fair local income tax in areas that choose to try it out.