

## Power for People and Communities Policy Working Group Remit

Liberal Democrats believe in giving people more control over their own lives – using responsive local institutions to meet local needs and circumstances. This does not just mean in local government, but in the workplace, in service provision, and in local communities. This working group will therefore focus on ways to decentralise power and empower individuals and their communities. The group should produce practical policies on how to increase the power and capacity of local communities and to deal with the devolution programme of the current government, including City Deals, the future of English regions, building on our existing ‘devolution on demand’ approach.

In addressing these issues, the group will need to take into account existing policy on devolution, local government, workplace democracy, and community organising. It will, in particular, build on policy papers 117 *Power to the People* (2014), 98 *Community Futures* (2011), and 79 *The Power to be Different* (2007).

In the course of its work the group should consider:

- Policies to empower community action to address local community needs and problems, for example through community energy co-operatives and or tenants’ management of social housing.
- Our understanding of localism in light of continued technological change, globalisation, and the growing capacity for non-local communities to emerge and organise.
- Policies to enhance and empower democratic local government, including local government structures, finance and revenue raising.
- Whether the map of existing local government structure adequately reflects the key functions of local government, and if not, what principles the map of local government should be based upon.
- The future for devolution to the regional or sub-regional level in England in light of the further devolution of powers and resources to Scotland and Wales and existing Liberal Democrat policy on ‘devolution by demand’.
- The Liberal Democrat response to the Conservative moves towards English City Regions and Metro Mayors, including the relationship between funding and administration, and the potential of rural areas to be left behind by this process.
- How to maximise the power of individuals and communities to shape the provision of local services.
- Policies to enhance and empower the voluntary sector.
- The role of local government and voluntary organisations in developing community assets and initiatives.

The group will take evidence and consult widely from both within and outside the party. This evidence should inform the group’s proposals, which will be presented alongside an analysis of costs and an Equalities Impact Assessment. A policy paper of no longer than 10,000 words should be produced for debate at Spring Conference 2018. Prior to that a consultative session should be held at Autumn Conference 2017, and a draft policy paper should be presented to the Federal Policy Committee by January 2018.