

# District Council's Network

## Draft business plan 2011/12

### Introduction

This business plan sets out eight work areas that the DCN, supported by the DCEN, will focus its attention over the coming year. This will ensure that the DCN is maximising its effectiveness given the limits on its resources. Other issues may crop up during the year that the DCN wishes to engage in, which may require adjustments to the business plan dependant upon their significance.

The DCN has a key role in lobbying central government and the Local Government Group about the essential role districts play in local communities thereby ensuring districts' roles are properly reflected in policy development and emerging legislation.

### Key work areas

The DCN will focus on the following in the period August 2011 to August 2012:

Work stream	Lead councillor	Lead chief executive	Officer	Priority	Targets
Localism Bill		Philip Bostock	Patricia Hughes	High	<p>To work with the LGA and sympathetic MPs and Lords to secure appropriate amendments to the Localism Bill that are beneficial to district councils and their communities.</p> <p>To provide guidance and assistance in subsequent implementation</p>

<b>Work stream</b>	<b>Lead councillor</b>	<b>Lead chief executive</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Targets</b>
Local government resource review	Cllr Sharon Taylor	David Cook	Graham Soulsby  Jason Vaughan	High	To ensure that district councils get a fair share of localised business rates income and that the distribution between districts does not disadvantage those genuinely unable to drive growth  To put forward an effective case for other financial freedoms that benefit district councils
Welfare reform	Cllr Peter Fleming	Allen Graham	Emma Tucker	High	To influence the arrangements for the introduction of the new universal credit and secure an appropriate role for DCs in the administration of universal credit  To promote best practice in the development of local schemes in the new council tax benefit scheme
Housing reform		Charlie Lant + others	Georgina Holland or Rebecca Slack	Medium	To ensure that district councils are funded fairly to meet local needs following the enactment of any housing reforms  To take a lead role in responding to and influencing emerging changes to the housing system consequent upon the enactment of the Localism Bill

<b>Work stream</b>	<b>Lead councillor</b>	<b>Lead chief executive</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Targets</b>
Planning reform	Cllr Gillian Brown	Alan Goodrum Ian Thompson	Toby Warren	Medium	<p>To lobby for the introduction of local arrangements for the implementation of the decision to allow councils to cover their full development management costs through fees, without central direction.</p> <p>To take a lead role in influencing and responding to emerging changes to the planning system consequent upon the enactment of the Localism Bill</p>
Audit reform		David Buckle Mark Hall	Patricia Hughes	Medium	To take a lead role and advise on best practice in developing a collective offer for district councils in securing competitive future audit services
Health and social care reform	Cllr Ernie White	Sandra Whiles	Georgina Holland	Medium	To lobby for and secure a meaningful role for district councils on Health and Wellbeing Boards and the emerging health and wellbeing agenda, including being responsible for commissioned services.

<b>Work stream</b>	<b>Lead councillor</b>	<b>Lead chief executive</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Targets</b>
DCN profile	Cllr Neil Clarke	Steve Atkinson	Emma Tucker	Medium	To communicate effectively with DCN member councils and secure better media coverage, and therefore influence, for the DCN  To increase the number of member councils
Public Service Reform White Paper		Paul Lankester	Patricia Hughes	High	To ensure that the outcomes of the White paper are properly informed by the district/local community perspective.
New Ways of Working		David McIntosh		High	To promote best practice in new ways of working