

Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP
Secretary of State
Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

17 June 2011

Dear Secretary of State

The Localism Bill is an important piece of legislation for the voluntary and community sector and the communities we work with. As a sector, we share many of the aspirations behind the wider localism agenda. However, following initial debates at Committee stage in the House of Lords we are concerned that some of proposed changes to the Bill risk undermining your aspirations to empower local communities and establish new rights for communities.

We believe the proposal for a Community Right to Buy in the Localism Bill, is an important and symbolic step forward and, if introduced effectively, has the potential to provide a very significant additional mechanism for community groups to acquire their own assets whilst increasing their confidence, independence, and capacity to deliver valuable services to local people.

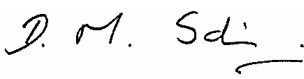
We understand that there is some pressure to reduce the moratorium period to three months. All the evidence from our members suggests that even six months is a very tight timeframe for community groups to confirm their interest, assess viability, raise the finance, and deal with any legal or other complications, and that three months, in nearly all cases, is likely to prove impossible.

We, the co-signed, would have serious concerns should the proposals be watered down and the moratorium period reduced.

Yours sincerely



Sir Stuart Etherington, NCVO



Debbie Sorkin, National Skills Academy for Social Care



Toby Blume, Urban Forum



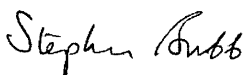
Tim Waldron, YMCA



Steve Wyler, Locality



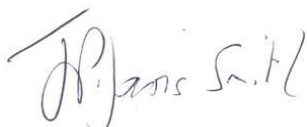
Kevin Curley, NAVCA



Sir Stephen Bubb, ACEVO



Peter Holbrook, Social Enterprise



Justin Davis Smith, Volunteering England