

North Devon Conservatives

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Time to shift power to local people and rein-in Whitehall bureaucrats

Bold new blueprint to give North Devon more power – and make Councils more accountable

Local residents will have the power to instigate local referendums, will know more about how town hall money is spent and North Devon Council will have more powers and funding under a new Conservative blueprint for local democracy.

The proposals to revive local democracy were recently unveiled by David Cameron in a major policy document, and have been endorsed today by Philip Milton, Conservative Prospective MP for North Devon. The new policies include:

- Abolishing all regional planning and housing powers in the hands of regional government, returning powers and discretion back to local communities.
- Creating bottom-up incentives for house building, by allowing North Devon Council to benefit from the increase in council tax revenues from new homes.
- Allowing councils to establish their own local enterprise partnerships to take over the economic development functions and funding of South West Regional Development Agency
- Giving a real incentive for councils to promote local economic growth, by allowing them to keep the uplift in business rate revenues from businesses growing in size.
- Granting North Devon Council a new discretionary power to give discounts on business rates, allowing them to help local shops and services, such as rural pubs or post offices, or even create new local enterprise zones.
- Making greater use of direct democracy, including allowing North Devon's residents to veto high council tax rises, or instigate a council-wide referendum on local issues if 5% of local residents give their backing.
- Requiring North Devon Council to publish detailed information online about its spending – including the pay and perks of senior staff; and issuing new guidance to stop 'rewards for failure' to sacked town hall staff (highlighted by the recent Baby P scandal).
- Scrapping Labour's new Infrastructure Planning Commission, which it intends to use to force through the environmentally damaging Heathrow expansion and other controversial projects.

Published and promoted by Sir Richard Peek on behalf of the NDCA, The Strand, Barnstaple, N. Devon
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Philip said:

“These radical plans will put local people in the driving seat, and cut back interference and meddling by Whitehall bureaucrats.

“The next election won’t just be about whether to transfer power from Labour to Conservatives. It will also be about whether to transfer power from the central state to local people.

“Greater powers for local government must also be accompanied by more openness, greater accountability and new measures to protect the pockets of local taxpayers.”

Notes to Editors

The full policy paper, entitled *Control Shift*, is available on conservatives.com:

http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2009/02/Its_time_to_transfer_power_from_the_central_state_to_local_people.aspx

Or can be downloaded direct from:

[http://www.conservatives.com/Campaigns/~/_media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/Returning Power to Local Communities.ashx](http://www.conservatives.com/Campaigns/~/_media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/Returning_Power_to_Local_Communities.ashx) (PDF)

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