

July 2008

## **Access to information**

*How can I find out information in a way I understand and can use?*

*Communities in control: real people, real power* was launched on 9 July 2008. This White Paper is about passing power to communities and giving real control and influence to more people. Please visit [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) for more information.

We would like to encourage community groups to discuss and feedback to us about the topics raised in the White Paper. Please use this topic discussion guide in conjunction with the Community Power Pack which is also available from our website.

### **Points to consider**

Public authorities like councils, schools and hospitals used to have a bad reputation when it came to giving members of the public the information they needed or had a right to expect. Much has been achieved in the last few decades.

But there is more work to do – a key issue is how to bring all public authorities up to the standard of the best.

We are making proposals to help people to obtain understandable local information, looking also at how they can share information that they own.

We are committed to making timely and relevant information about public services and critical issues more available to the public.

### **Key policies**

- **Supporting councils in making the information they hold more readily available**, including through piloting new and innovative approaches to sharing information
- Piloting a **Digital Mentor Scheme** in deprived areas to improve general media literacy and links with community and local broadcasters
- **Improving the information available** to local people and service users.

## Questions for discussion

- In your view has the White Paper captured the correct points on gaining access to information?
- How far do you think that these policies will address the issues raised?
- What more do you think needs to be done to address these issues?