



## COMMUNITIES: Public Services

To be sustainable, a community's services must meet the needs of the people who live there. It's important to make sure residents reach their full potential, stay healthy and safe, and have a good standard of living.

### Local government

Communities have a 'voice' through local councillors; they are elected democratically each year and their job is to represent all members of the community and work for their best interest. They hold 'surgeries' to offer help and advice to local people (these are opportunities for the public to actually meet their MPs or councillors to discuss their problems).

### Public services

Public services are funded by the National Government, council tax and business rates. Funds are allocated to local authorities, who are responsible for providing 'mandatory services' (necessary services that have to be carried out, e.g. housing, education, social services, road maintenance and safety), as well as public spaces like parks, allotments and town halls. Other public services include:

- Health care: Good quality of health care is vital for a community. Health care in the UK is free, and is provided by the National Health Service. This includes hospitals, medical centres and a national phone advice line called NHS Direct.
- Education: Education should be offered to all residents of all ages and abilities through schools, colleges, universities and adult learning centres. Primary and secondary education in the UK is free, and the Government sets out educational policies and curricula for schools.

### Emergency services

#### Police service

The police services' main role is to keep the community safe. This includes detecting and preventing crime; protecting people, animals and property; peacekeeping; catching criminals; and providing help and assistance to the public. There are also community police officers, local authority wardens and police volunteers in local areas.

#### Fire service

The main role of the fire service is to help people stay safe from fire. This involves responding to fires and educating the public about fire safety. They also deal with animal rescue, flood or storm damage, chemical accidents, road collisions and fire investigation.

#### Ambulance

The ambulance service is involved in both emergency work (working alongside police and fire in accidents and incidents where people have been killed or injured) and non-emergency tasks like moving patients between hospitals or between home and the hospital.

