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Putting communities in control – Empowerment White Paper

I am writing to thank you for the valuable contribution you have made and are continuing to make to the challenge of bringing about a transformation in the UK's most deprived communities.

The Government knows well that it is through the work of our partner organisations and local people, whether they work for statutory agencies or community-led groups that real people's lives are changed for the better.

Up and down the country I have visited places and seen examples of where local people, working in harmony with the local authorities, have turned round the symptoms of long years of neglect and underinvestment and created jobs, encouraged growth and rekindled pride.

Government also recognizes that local people usually know what's best for their neighbourhood and this is why we want to make it easier than ever before for people to have their say in decisions affecting their community.

I write to you today, to tell you about an important new White Paper, which I intend to publish in June. This paper will set out what Government and others are going to do to make this a reality, but I want your views to be at the heart of this document.

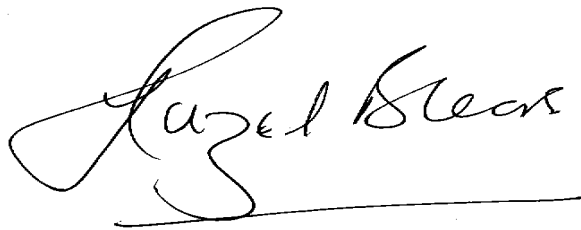
Let's have an open debate about how we as a society can make global, social and economic change our ally; how we can harness the vast talent and potential of the British people to make every city, town, village and local community prosper.

You will find a copy of the 'Unlocking the Talent' document at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/unlockingtalent> to whet your appetite and you can give us your views in a number of ways:

- Email us at unlockingtalent@communities.gsi.gov.uk
- Take part in our online discussion forum, running until 10 April at www.haveyoursay.communities.gov.uk/forums/
- Write to us at Community Empowerment White Paper Unit, Communities and Local Government, Zone 5/C6 Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU.
- If you need a hard copy of the 'Unlocking talent' document, please contact Communities and Local Government Publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7NB, telephone 08701 226 236 quoting product code 07CE05128.

I hope you will take the opportunity to contribute to this hugely important debate and help shape the Empowerment White Paper.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hazel Blears". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.

Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears MP

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government