

The Government's Localism Bill, to be published tomorrow (9 December), will encourage developers to 'buy-out' objectors opposed to development in their neighbourhood, says law firm Winckworth Sherwood. Equally, local communities will be able to hold developers to ransom to ensure they are compensated fairly for accepting new homes, retail units or industrial development on their doorstep.

The Government will on 9 December publish its flagship piece of legislation, the Localism Bill. The Bill is one of the largest pieces of legislation to be put before Parliament and introduces a host of initiatives, collectively labelled 'the Big Society'.

The Bill will have a significant impact on the planning regime in England with local communities given a greater say over the development they wish to accept in their neighbourhood.

Keith Jenkins, Senior Partner at law firm Winckworth Sherwood says: "Local communities are less likely to respond to development proposals on their doorstep with 'Over my dead body', more 'What's it worth?'

"Yet developers will have to tread carefully. If a developer comes bearing too many gifts it will be accused of bribing a community into accepting development. Yet if it comes offering very little or nothing at all it may find its scheme slows to a halt and accused of being stingy.

"I am sure the Government did not have the bribing of local communities at the heart of its localism agenda, but it is going to be extremely difficult to stop this kind of activity from happening."