

## **The Sustainable Communities Act round one - update**

### **Summary**

This paper provides members with an update on progress with regard to the Sustainable Communities Act and outlines linkages to the LGA Environment Board.

### **Recommendations**

That members note the contents of the report.

### **Action**

As directed by Members.

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## The Sustainable Communities Act round one

### Background

1. The Sustainable Communities Act (SCA) was passed in 2007 and outlined a formal mechanism for communities, through the local authorities that represent them to identify and propose actions to be taken by government to promote sustainability in their community.
2. The LGA has been allocated a statutory role, under the act as the 'Selector', to receive and shortlist proposals and to seek to reach agreement with the Secretary of State on which proposals to implement.
3. The LGA received 301 proposals from 90 lead authorities (25.5% of English Councils) under the first round of the SCA. Of the 301 proposals received, 18 were joint proposals, bringing the total number of authorities submitting proposals under the act to 100 (28% of English councils).
4. As Selector the LGA has shortlisted 199 proposals made under the Act. Short-listing was undertaken by a cross party panel of elected members, chaired by Councillor Keith Mitchell CBE.
5. Many of the shortlisted proposals echo calls for change by the LGA and will be useful in our ongoing lobbying with government. There are a number of themes emerging from proposals that link specifically to issues covered by the Culture Tourism and Sport Board's remit. For example:
  - Local authorities should be given greater powers to preserve the character of their high streets and tackle concerns about public health and anti social behaviour. For example, Bury Metropolitan Borough Council wish to add 'protecting public health' to the four existing objectives of the licensing act. Darlington Borough Council request a new legal power to enable licensing committees to take account of representations about local views on "sufficiency" in relation to the provision of premises from which alcohol can be bought.
  - Local access to broadband services, for example North Yorkshire County Council seek to change state aid rules to allow Nynet directly to local businesses and residents.
6. The LGA will now enter into discussions with the Secretary of State to seek to reach agreement on those proposals to be implemented. The LGA is lobbying for the process to be open, transparent and to provide opportunities for real dialogue and discussion at both official and member / ministerial level. The LGA

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would like the process to be concluded in a timely manner and has proposed to Government that the discussions are concluded by Easter recess.

7. Members are asked to support the implementation of the shortlisted proposals by:
  - Using the proposals as case studies in LGA lobbying.
  - Writing to relevant MPs, ministers and stakeholder endorsing specific proposals and pressing for their implementation.

## **Financial Implications**

8. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

## **Implications for Wales**

9. The Sustainable Communities Act applies to authorities in England only.

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