

Supplementary Committee Agenda



Sustainable Communities Task and Finish Panel Tuesday, 9th March, 2010

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

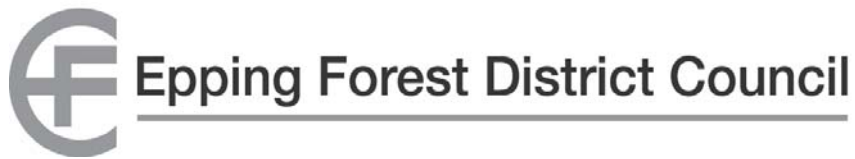
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5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FINAL REPORT (Pages 3 - 26)

Final report attached.

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SCRUTINY

REPORT OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES TASK AND FINISH PANEL

MARCH 2010

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1. Chairman's Foreword

Forward by Councillor John Philip – Chairman of Panel -

tba



2. Panel Composition

The Leisure Task and Finish Panel comprised of the following Members:

Councillors J. Philip (Chairman), A. Boyce, Mrs R. Brookes, A. Clark, Mrs R. Gadsby, A. Lion, R. Morgan, Mrs P. Smith and D. Wixley.

The Panel met on three occasions through the Review Period.

3. Introduction and Overview

At Full Council on the 30 June 2009, the following motion was agreed with respect to the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

“That this Council:

- (a) supports the “bottom up” process in the Sustainable Communities Act, designed to allow local authorities and their communities to drive the action and assistance that Central Government gives in promoting thriving sustainable communities;
- (b) notes that the Act gives local authorities the power to make proposals to Government on the action and assistance Government must take or give to promote sustainable communities and that those proposals can be for a transfer of public money and functions from central or regional control to local control;
- (c) notes that the Act defines sustainable communities broadly, that definition having the four aspects of:
 - (i) the improvement of the local economy;
 - (ii) protection of the environment;
 - (iii) promotion of social inclusion; and
 - (iv) participation in civic and political activity;
- (d) notes that reasons for a local authority choosing to use the Act include gaining new powers or assistance from Government determining those powers or that assistance and transferring public monies from central or regional control to local control;
- (e) resolves to use the Act by submitting proposals for action and assistance from Central Government as best serves the District;
- (f) That consideration of this motion be referred to the next appropriate meeting of the Cabinet.

The motion was subsequently considered by the Cabinet in July 2009, who deferred the item to Overview and Scrutiny. At the September 2009 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, members established the Task and Finish Panel, to consider the matter in more detail.

4. Terms of Reference

At our initial meeting, the Panel developed and agreed the following Terms of Reference. These were kept under review throughout the period of our work, to ensure their continuing relevance.

1. To consider the opportunities presented by the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 with respect to the improvement of the local economy, protection of the environment, promotion of social inclusion and increased participation in civic and political activity.
2. To identify ways of developing proposals which the local authority consider would contribute to promoting the sustainability of local communities and, in particular, the scope for the transfer of functions from one body to another.
3. To investigate and recommend the best method of raising awareness and encouraging proposals from local people to put forward policy proposals with regard to:
 - (i) the improvement of the local economy;
 - (ii) protection of the environment;
 - (iii) promotion of social inclusion; and
 - (iv) participation in civic and political activity.
4. To explore the feasibility of establishing representative panels of non-elected or nominated members of the local community (to include under-represented groups) with whom to consult on any proposals.
5. To consider how information on local spending reports could, when available, be utilised to inform proposals to promote local sustainability.
6. To identify a timetable that would facilitate proposals being submitted for consideration by the Government's selector in the 2010/2011 round of applications.

5. Methodology – How we went about the Task

From the outset we recognised that the Council had not engaged in the initial round of applications and, as such, at the start of the Task and Finish review, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Central Government were yet to determine what a good proposal looked like. Indeed, we also accepted that there was no guarantee that a further round of applications would be sought, although we understood that there had been no indication from any political party that the Act would be repealed.

At our first meeting we received a presentation on the scope of the Sustainable Communities Act and the potential opportunities presented.

We then went onto review a number of spreadsheets received from the LGA which included a breakdown of proposals submitted by Essex County Council, other District and Borough Councils in Essex and neighbouring London Borough Councils. From this scoping exercise we identified a number of proposals which appeared to have some relevance for us as an authority, and invited representatives from the London Borough of Redbridge and Maldon District Council to meet with us to share their experience.

In the event, Maldon District Council were unable to send a representative but kindly submitted a useful briefing note. At our second meeting we welcomed Judith Paterson, Principal Policy Officer from the London Borough of Redbridge, who explained their approach to the Act and the main issues encountered in their submission process.

Finally, the Panel considered an analysis prepared by the LGA with respect to the proposals they had selected to be put forward to Central Government, noting with interest the type of submissions that had been successful.

6. Recommendations

That the Council notes the conclusions reached by the Task and Finish Panel with respect to the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 and in particular that:

- (i) the District Council engage in any future round of the Sustainable Community Act 2007 in recognition of the benefits that could be achieved in identifying issues that are important to local people;
- (ii) the Council monitors the progress of the first round short-listed proposals under review and receives a future report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on those proposals chosen for implementation by the Secretary of State and their relevance for this authority;
- (iii) any future report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee highlights any lessons learned from the evaluation of the initial round that will be undertaken by the Local Government Association;
- (iv) at an appropriate time in the future, once timescales become clearer, a presentation is given to the Local Council's Liaison Committee seeking Town and Parish Councils' support in seeking proposals for Sustainable Communities Act submission.
- (v) as above, a similar presentation is given to the Local Strategic Partnership "One Epping Forest";
- (vi) further consideration is given to the establishment of a Citizens' Panel with whom to consult on any future proposals as well as other issues the Council may wish to seek views upon;
- (vii) consideration should be given to the future establishment of a working group of Members to oversee the submission of any future bids under the Act.

7. Report on the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

Main Features of the Act.

The Department of Communities and Local Government is the lead agency in Central Government for the implementation of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. The Act provides an opportunity for local authorities (as defined under section 8 of the Act) to make proposals which they consider would encourage the improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of local areas. It begins from the principal that local people know best what needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area, but that sometimes they need central government to act to enable them to do so.

The Act sets out a process by which ideas generated by local communities, which aim to promote local sustainability, are put forward by the local authority to central government through a body known as the “selector”. The Local Government Association was appointed as the selector in February 2008, and has a role in “short-listing” proposals to be submitted to Government for consideration.

After submission, the Secretary of State is required to decide which proposals on the short-list should be implemented, and after consulting the LGA, to give reasons for that decision. The Secretary of State will then publish a statement of how the Government will take forward any proposals that are to be implemented. In addition, the Secretary of State is required to publish an action plan on how proposals will be implemented and report to Parliament each year on progress being made, under the Act.

Making Proposals

The Act is designed to encourage local communities to come forward with ideas and proposals to promote the sustainability of their local areas. “Sustainability” is defined in the Act in very broad terms, and can cover anything which could improve the economic, social, or environmental well-being of the area, or promote participation in civic or political activity.

Ultimately anyone can suggest a proposal, via their council. The expectation is that most proposals will come from community organisations, local branches of national organisations, parish and town councils, residents and tenants’ associations, local strategic partnerships and other partnership bodies. Proposals can be developed by councils themselves.

However, before making any proposal, local authorities must establish or recognise one or more panels of representatives of local persons and consult these panels to try to reach agreement about which proposals (if any) it wants to put forward. It should be noted that authorities are not required, by statute, to submit proposals.

The deadline for submitting proposals in the initial round was 31 July 2009. This was intended to allow sufficient time for proper consideration by local community groups and local authorities.

Criteria for proposals under the Act

The basic criterion is that proposals must require some form of action from central government (such as a change in legislation, a transfer of responsibilities from one public body to another, a new national policy or a change or strengthening of policy).

In considering proposals, local councils need to distinguish between those which could happen anyway, if agreed at local level, and those which need central government action or intervention of some sort. The latter category covers those appropriate to be submitted onwards, firstly to the LGA as Selector and potentially to the Secretary of State.

Potentially the Act allows for proposals that involve significant shifts in responsibilities across the public sector, including Government and regional agencies and quangos (Non Departmental Public Bodies) as well as local service providers. Such proposals would need to demonstrate why they would improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the locality from where the proposal is made. The agency concerned must be consulted about this proposal, but is not required to support it. Where a successful case is made for the transfer of responsibilities from one public body to one or more others, relevant budgets would transfer across at the same time.

Regulations and Guidance on Consultation

The Secretary of State has made regulations and published guidance on the Act, with respect to consultation arrangements. In effect, the regulations require local authorities, before making any proposals, to establish or recognise one of more panels of representatives of local persons and to consult them about each proposal.

The intention behind Section 5(5)(a) of the Act is to ensure that the panels of representatives of local persons include persons from under-represented groups. The regulations state that “under-represented groups” means those groups of local persons who in the opinion of a local authority are under-represented in civic and political groups are under-represented in their area and how best to engage with them.

Whilst the guidance does not prescribe which groups should be included in panels, how panels should be constituted or how many panels a local authority may choose to establish or recognise. It does, however, set out reasonable steps to identify and include representatives, parish councils, or anyone else likely to be affected by, or interested in the proposal. In addition, the guidance states that local authorities will want to consult parish councils in their area.

Reaching Decision on Proposals

Following the deadline for receipt of proposals, the LGA have now considered and, in liaison with the Secretary of State, short-listed certain proposals. The Secretary of State will now need to decide which proposals to implement. Local authorities have asked for an indication of the likely approach of Government to decisions on short-listed proposals, which has yet to be forthcoming.

Because the process is new and the scope of the Act is wide, it is difficult to be precise about how quickly decisions will be made. However, short-listed bids have been processed by the Local Government Association for submission in December 2009.

Further rounds under the Act

Further rounds under the Act are subject to an invitation from the Secretary of State. The LGA have indicated that they are fully supportive of further rounds under the act and in response to calls from local authorities that the absence of a further round was causing difficulties locally, Councillor Keith Mitchell, Chairman of the LGA Selector Panel, wrote to the Secretary of State. The official line from the department is that any invitation for further rounds will be considered only after the completion of round one and an evaluation of its effectiveness. No timetable or schedule has been set for this. Again, the LGA have indicated that they will continue to press for further rounds to be confirmed at the earliest possible date.

8. Summary of Main Conclusions

As a result of our consideration of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 and having the benefit of learning first hand from the experience of other local authorities who submitted proposals, we have concluded:

1. That as the Secretary of State has yet to determine which of the short-listed proposals will be implemented, it is too early to assess the overall impact of the Act. However, the process of seeking proposals, if well managed can provide opportunities for positive community engagement and identification of issues that are important to local people.
2. That notwithstanding the above, care should be taken not to raise expectations that may not be fulfilled and a balance should be struck between the amount of resources engaged in seeking and submitting proposals, against the likelihood of success.
3. That whilst the Act does present a real opportunity to identify issues on which central government can assist councils and local people to promote the sustainability of their communities, care is required to ensure that proposals are not already within the powers of local authorities (including powers for the promotion of Wellbeing in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000). This was identified as a significant reason for a number of proposals not being shortlisted.
4. That there are already established processes for setting the levels and distribution of public sector funding and as the Government does not regard the Act as a route for agreeing additional funding, either at a national or local level, a very strong case will need to be made to support any proposals that require this.
5. That the experience of other authorities suggests that more time should be given and more creative approaches taken to the encouragement of community led proposals. Whilst the use of Council Websites had led to some ideas coming forward, it was felt that the use of community forums, tenant groups, town centre partnerships and, in particular, Ward Members and Town and Parish Councils could be a better approach to community engagement.
6. That existing consultation mechanisms such as the Place Survey and work around the Local Development framework Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy could highlight the types of issues that people felt were important and proposals could be canvassed in line with themes e.g. Protecting the Special Character of the District, Reducing the Fear of Crime, Activities for Young People, etc.
7. That further consideration should be given to the establishment of a Citizen's Panel or similar in order to facilitate ease of consideration of any future Sustainable Community Act proposals. It was felt that some of the current work with local groups on Equality and Diversity could be utilised to ensure that any consultative panel was representative.
8. That the Local Strategic Partnership "One Epping Forest", could play a key role in terms of identifying and encouraging proposals, particularly where there was a cross cutting bid which covered a number of public or voluntary sector agencies.

9. Appendices

1. A Guide to the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

10. Acknowledgements

The Panel would like to acknowledge the support of the London Borough of Redbridge and Maldon District Council in the review.

11. Background Papers

1. The Sustainable Communities Act Analysis of Proposals Submitted by Councils – Local Government Services Research Programme.
2. The Sustainable Communities Act Short-list of Proposals made under round one – Local Government Association.
3. Briefing Note from Maldon District Council.

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Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Guide



Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Guide

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February 2008

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Sustainable Communities Act – Implementation

The Sustainable Communities Act received Royal Assent on 23 October 2007. The aim of the Act is to promote the sustainability of local communities. This note describes what will happen next. It is in three parts.

1. A quick guide to the main provisions of the Act
2. A step by step guide to the Sustainable Communities Act. This describes what the Act means clause by clause. It makes clear what has to be done, who has to do it and when they have to do it.
3. A timetable for action, stating how the Government plans to implement the Act. This will describe the Government's approach to implementation and give details of key dates.

Background

The Sustainable Communities Bill was introduced to Parliament as a Private Members Bill. It was sponsored in the House of Commons by Nick Hurd MP, Conservative, Ruislip-Northwood and in the House of Lords by Lord Marlesford. The Bill was supported through Parliament by the Government and all of the main English political parties. It is the result of a five year campaign led by a coalition of organisations under the banner Local Works. Local Works name 85 national supporting organisations reflecting a very wide constituency.

A quick guide to the Sustainable Communities Act

The Sustainable Communities Act aims to promote the sustainability of local communities. It begins from the principle that local people know best what needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area, but that sometimes they need central government to act to enable them to do so. It provides a channel for local people to ask central government to take such action. It is also a new way for local authorities to ask central government to take action which they believe would better enable them to improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area. This could include a proposal to transfer the functions of one public body to another.

The scope of the Act is very broad, covering economic, social and environmental issues. It does not limit the type of action that could be put forward, provided the action is within that broad scope. It is for local people to decide what they think needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area.

The Act is designed to strengthen the role of communities. It provides a simple process by which the ideas generated by local communities are fed through their local authority and a body known as the “selector” (which we envisage will be the LGA) to central government. As it will not be possible for all suggestions to be put direct to central government, local authorities and the selector will have a “short-listing” role. The government will consult the selector and try to reach agreement on which of the proposals on the short-list should be implemented. The government will respond to all of the suggestions that are short-listed by the selector and will publish an action plan setting out how it will take forward the suggestions that it adopts.

As well as enabling local communities and local authorities to make suggestions for government action, the Sustainable Communities Act also ensures that communities are better informed about the public funding that is spent in their area. New “Local Spending Reports” will provide quick and easy access to information about where public money is spent. This will enable local authorities, their partners and communities to take better informed decisions about the priorities they choose to pursue to promote the sustainability of their local community.

A step-by-step guide to the Sustainable Communities Act

Section 1: Sustainability of local communities

The aim of the Act

Section 1 describes the principal aim of the Act as being to promote the sustainability of local communities. In the Act, references to promoting the sustainability of local communities are references to encouraging the economic, social or environmental well-being of the authority's area, or part of its area. This includes participation in civic and political activity.

Section 1 was written in this way to reflect the well-being powers that local authorities were granted by the Local Government Act of 2000. The reason for making this link is to ensure that the Act supports the role of local authorities as community leaders and contributes to the broader agenda for partnership working at local level, including the development of Sustainable Community Strategies and the negotiation of Local Area Agreements.

The power of well-being

The well-being power enables local authorities to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area. The breadth of the power is such that councils can regard it as a 'power of first resort'. Rather than searching for a specific power elsewhere in statute in order to take a particular action, councils can instead look to the well-being power in the first instance. If what they propose to do is likely to promote or improve the well-being in their area and does not involve raising money. And if what they propose is neither explicitly prohibited, nor explicitly subject to limitations and restrictions, on the face of other legislation then a council can proceed.

The references to well-being are designed to be inclusive and are deliberately drawn broadly. This means that there is a very wide range of activity which falls within the scope of the Act. It is for local authorities – and local people – to make the case for which activities they think will contribute to the economic, social and environment well-being of their area when making proposals under section 2 of the Act.

Section 2: Proposals by local authorities

Invitation to make proposals

Section 2 describes one of the key new measures introduced by the Act. It requires the Secretary of State to invite local authorities to make proposals which they consider would contribute to promoting the sustainability of local communities. Other than the reference to sustainability there is no limit placed on the types of proposals that local authorities can make. The details of how these proposals are to be made are covered in subsequent clauses.

Transfer of functions from one body to another

Section 2 also states that proposals may include a request for a transfer of functions from one person to another. Broadly speaking, this provision recognises that local authorities may believe that the functions of some public bodies may be better performed by another. They may, therefore, propose that those functions be transferred. This may be a transfer from a national body to a local body, or it could be a transfer from one local body to another. If a local authority decides to request that the functions of one body are transferred to another they may also request that responsibility for the funding that is linked to that function is also transferred.

If a local authority makes such a proposal it must first consult both the body which currently performs the function and the body which the local authority proposes to transfer the function to. The functions that could be in scope are limited only by the principal aim of the Act, which is to promote the sustainability of local communities.

Matters in the Schedule

Before it makes a proposal a local authority must have regard to the matters specified in the Schedule to the Act. "Having regard to" means that the local authority needs to consider or take into account these matters. The matters described in the Act's Schedule reflect some of the key concerns of Local Works and its partners. They are designed to help local authorities and their residents form a view of the types of activity that could promote the sustainability of their local community.

Timing of first invitation

The Secretary of State must issue the first invitation to local authorities to make proposals on or before 22 October 2008, which is one year after the Act was passed. While the Act does not specify a time at which the Secretary of State must issue further invitations, the intention is to do so periodically. The Government will work with the local government sector to agree the frequency and timing of further invitations.

Section 3: Decision on short-list

Appointment of a “selector”

Section 3 requires that before inviting proposals the Secretary of State must appoint a “selector” to consider the proposals. The selector must represent the interests of local authorities. The Secretary of State envisages appointing the Local Government Association as the selector. The selector must draw up a short-list of proposals and it must do so in co-operation with the Secretary of State. The selector must follow the procedure laid down in regulations (see section 5 below).

Co-operation between the Secretary of State and the selector

On receiving the short-list the Secretary of State must decide which of the proposals should be implemented. Before doing so, the Secretary of State must consult the selector and try to reach agreement about which of the proposals to implement. Although the Secretary of State and the selector must try to reach agreement, the final decision on whether or not to implement any proposal rests with the Secretary of State.

Section 4: Action plans

Publication of decisions

Section 4 requires the Secretary of State to publish her decision under section 3, and the reasons for it. She must also publish a statement of the action she proposes to take to implement any proposal. This statement will be known as an “action plan”.

Reports to Parliament

Each year the Secretary of State must publish and lay before Parliament a report which describes the progress that has been made in relation to each action plan.

Section 5: Proposals: regulations

Regulations

Section 5 requires the Secretary of State to make regulations about the procedure to be followed by local authorities and the selector in relation to proposals. Before making regulations the Secretary of State must consult the selector and others who the Secretary of State believes represent the interests of local authorities. This consultation will inform the content of the regulations.

The regulations **may**:

- specify, or authorise the selector to specify, steps to be taken by a local authority before making proposals;
- specify steps to be taken by the selector in considering the proposals and drawing up the short-list;
- require the selector to prepare and provide a report on the proposals.

The regulations **must**:

- require a local authority, before making any proposal, to establish or recognise a panel of representatives of local persons and consult it about the proposal;
- require a local authority to try to reach agreement about proposals with the panel;
- require a local authority to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State – see below.

The regulations have yet to be made but they may include requirements intended to ensure the clarity, workability and quality of the overall process. The objective is to design a system that captures the best ideas from communities.

Guidance

The Act requires local authorities to consult and try to reach agreement with local people via a panel of representatives before they make a proposal. Beyond this requirement, the Act does not specify how local authorities should consult or who they should consult.

The Secretary of State is, however, required to issue guidance to local authorities relating to the proposals. This:

- **must** include guidance on the inclusion of persons from under-represented groups; and
- **may** include guidance about establishing and consulting a panel of local representatives.

Before issuing this guidance the Secretary of State must consult local authorities or persons who represent the interests of local authorities.

Definitions

The Act defines what is meant by:

- **local person**: a person who is likely to be affected by or interested in a proposal
- **panel**: a panel constituted in accordance with the regulations made by the Secretary of State

- **representative:** a person who appears to the local authority to be representative of local persons
- **under-represented groups:** to be defined in the regulations.

Links to the new “duty to involve”

Aspects of this section are very similar to the new ‘duty to involve’ which applies to best value authorities, introduced in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Best value authorities are defined in the Local Government Act 1999. The duty to involve requires best value authorities to inform, consult or involve representatives of local people in the exercise of their functions. Where authorities are proposing to use panels as part of their implementation of the duty to involve, they may find it sensible to use the same panels in relation to the Sustainable Communities Act where the panels meet the requirements of the Sustainable Communities Act.

Section 6: Local spending reports

Local spending reports

Section 6 requires the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the production of local spending reports. A local spending report provides information about public expenditure in relation to a particular area. This will help promote the sustainability of local communities by providing access to high quality information about the public funding that is spent in the area.

Arrangements

The Act requires the Secretary of State to consult on the arrangements but leaves discretion about the details to the Secretary of State. It does not specify what information must be included in a report, or the way in which the information must be presented. Bodies whose expenditure may be included in the local spending report include local authorities, government departments and any other person exercising public functions. The area covered by a report must be one or more local authority areas, one or more parts of a local authority area or any combination of these. Reports can cover past, current or future expenditure and the Secretary of State can provide different reports for different areas. The first arrangements must be made on or before 22 April 2009, which is 18 months after the Act was passed, but we intend to do so well before this date. We plan to update the information provided in local spending reports as it becomes available.

Purpose

The aim of this section is to support local authorities, their partners and local people in their work to promote local sustainability. This provision will inform local authorities’ consultations with local people, strengthen local democracy and enhance the operation of the new Local Area Agreements by ensuring that there is greater accountability and transparency. We intend to ensure that local spending reports are closely linked with the regular and accessible information on local services that we have committed to provide for local communities.

Local spending reports will enable local authorities, their partners and communities to take better informed decisions about the priorities they choose to pursue to promote the sustainability of their local community. They will also enable local people and local authorities to identify which functions (and funding) they might propose should be transferred from one body to another.

While the aim behind local spending reports is to identify where public money is spent, it will not be possible or cost effective to map all public expenditure. For example, some public funding supports services which are not geographically specific or are used by people from a number of local authority areas.

Section 7: Sustainable community strategy

Section 7 simply amends existing legislation to rename “community strategies” as “sustainable community strategies”. This section has no further effect. The aim of this provision is to highlight the key role these strategies play in promoting sustainability.

Sections 8, 9 and 10

These sections contain further definitions (for example of what “local authority” means in this Act), enable funding to be paid out to carry out the functions of the Act, and define the geographical coverage of the Act.

Schedule

The Schedule describes a series of matters to which local authorities must have regard (see above). These are issues which members of the coalition led by Local Works believe have a significant impact on the sustainability of local communities. The Schedule is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive. It is intended to give local authorities and local people an indication of the type of matters they may wish to address in their proposals.

Implementation

Approach to implementation

The Government will work closely with the Act's supporters to agree a plan of implementation. While the Act contains a number of requirements that must be met, we believe that the strength of the Act lies in the way that it will encourage central and local government and local people work together to promote the sustainability of local communities. So we propose that both the regulations and the statutory guidance will be "light touch" and we do not expect to set out a series of detailed regulations that must be followed. Much of the detailed operation of the Act is subject to consultation, and we will ensure that we follow Cabinet Office guidance on consultation.

Timeline for implementation

The Act contains a number of commitments relating to consultations and to timing. There are a number of other measures that we will need to take forward in order to implement the Act effectively. This is the outline timetable that we propose to follow:

- Discussion with Bill's supporters to prepare consultation package by January 2008
- Appoint the selector (which we envisage will be the LGA) by February 2008
- Formal consultation on Regulations and Guidance: February to May 2008
- Lay Regulations before Parliament: May 2008
- Bring together Sustainable Communities Bill Guidance with Creating Strong and Prosperous Communities Guidance: May 2008
- Secretary of State issues first invitation for proposals by October 2008
- Consultation on Local Spending Reports: Summer 2008
- Secretary of State makes arrangements for first Local Spending Reports: Autumn 2008 (required by April 2009)