

The Sustainable Communities Act proposal form

Using this form

This form should be used to submit proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act to the LGA for short listing. Please complete all sections and then email a copy to selector@lga.gov.uk. These must be received by **July 31st 2009**, and you will receive confirmation that the form has been received.

Once submitted, information within this form may be made publicly available, unless you request for it to be kept private. We will treat information submitted sensitively. If you wish to attach any relevant presentations or graphs etc. please attach them separately in the email.

For questions regarding the act or the role of the Selector, please see our [FAQs](#). Any further questions can be directed to selector@lga.gov.uk.

Section 1: Proposal Summary

Proposing Authority

Under the terms of the Sustainable Communities Act, all proposals must be submitted by a local authority, or group of authorities, in England. Any group, organisation or individual may originate or develop a proposal. However all proposals will require Local Authority endorsement and submission to the Selector.

Parish councils and other organisations and agencies must seek support and formal endorsement from a proposing local authority (defined in the Act as county councils, district councils (including metropolitan, non metropolitan and unitary authorities), the common council of the city of London or the Council of the Isles of Scilly).

1.1 Lead Authority name

South Hams District Council

1.2 Is this proposal submitted by this authority alone, or is it a joint proposal with other local authorities? (If joint please list authorities)

1.3 Who is the lead contact (s) in the authority for this proposal? Please provide email address and telephone number - *The LGA will direct any enquiries to this contact.*

Laura Payne, Policy Implementation Officer
laura.payne@southhams.gov.uk 01803 861325

Supporting Organisations

Whilst proposals may only be submitted by a local authority, we acknowledge that local partners and outside organisations may wish to register support for the proposal. This is entirely voluntary.

1.4 Please provide details below of supporting organisations to your proposal. Please explain if the organisation is a charity, company, unincorporated association or other body. If a charity or company please provide registration numbers. If a local partnership please explain the relationship to the Local Strategic Partnership for the area.

This Proposal was put forward by one of our Officers and was based on an example proposal distributed by Local Works.

Summary of your proposal

Please summarise your proposal. You may wish to include:

- The main elements of your proposal
- What issues your proposal is addressing and how it will promote the sustainability of the local community
- Who is affected by this proposal and how?
- Which public bodies might be affected?
- What are the main actions needed from Government?
- What do you expect this proposal to achieve?

1.5 Please enter your summary below (*word limit 1000 words*)

Main Elements: That the Government gives Local Authorities the power to apply rate relief to businesses that earn 50% of their turnover from selling local foods and goods and that this be fully funded by Central Government.

Issues Addressed: Climate change is a global problem that can be addressed by local solutions. Currently food and goods mileage greatly contributes to global CO₂ emissions. Food transport within the UK is adding nearly 19 million tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere every year (2002) (DEFRA 2005)¹, equivalent to 5.5million cars or just over 3% of the current total emissions (623.8 million tonnes).² The problem of 'food miles' goes beyond just carbon emissions, the direct social, environmental, and economic costs of food transport has been estimated at over £9 billion each year, and is dominated by congestion.¹

There is no legislation or incentive for businesses to reduce food or goods miles and therefore produce and products from across the world can be brought into the UK in large quantities and sold at a low price. Whereas locally grown/sourced food and products cannot compete on these economies of scale. The Government needs to provide legislation that allows businesses who source/grow local produce lower non-domestic rates to enable them to reduce prices and compete in the globalised market.

Sourcing and growing local products and food is one small step to reducing CO₂ emissions and reducing worldwide climate change.

Who is affected: This proposal will benefit all from a reduction in congestion and greenhouse gas emissions by introducing an incentive for businesses to 'buy local'. This proposal will particularly benefit small businesses or farms in rural areas who struggle to compete with larger producers or international producers, or smaller outlets that have to compete with larger out of town supermarkets.

Public bodies affected: Local authorities (district and unitary) who administer local non domestic rates to businesses. In order to make this initiative viable, the Government should fully fund it by providing the Billing Authority with the remainder of the discounted business rates bill.

Main actions from Government: Government to provide Billing Authorities the power to apply rate relief to businesses that earn 50% of their turnover from locally sourced/grown goods. The Government to provide financial support to Billing Authorities who provide the relief, as part of the Government's Carbon Management Agenda and in order to prevent a reduction/deterioration of local services.

Benefits: Reducing CO₂ emissions is at the heart of the sustainability agenda. This proposal would provide local businesses throughout the country with an incentive to source/grow local produce- improving the economic future for local businesses as well as contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions from the UK.

This proposal will contribute directly to creating sustainable communities throughout the country, enabling people to become less dependent on 'global' goods and food and more centred on their local area.

¹ DEFRA, The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development, 2005.

<https://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodmiles/execsumm.pdf>

² DEFRA, Greenhouse Emissions Statistics, 2008.

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/download/ghg_ns_20090326.pdf

Section 2: About your proposal

The form asks a set of questions to gather as much information as possible to allow for assessment and short-listing by the Selector. A word-limit is stated for each part of the form.

We appreciate that SCA proposals will vary in range and scope, and some questions will be more relevant than others for any one proposal. Please do not feel that answers are required for every questions or that the full word limit need be used in respect of each and every question box. If you are submitting a joint proposal, please include evidence for all areas.

Impact on sustainability *(word limit 2000 words)*

2.1 Please explain how your proposal promotes sustainability as defined locally (for example in your Sustainable Communities Strategy or LAA)

Within our SCS, we have defined sustainable development as '*taking into account the future affects of our activities so that the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is not compromised*'. Our SCS aims to ensure that communities in the South Hams continue to be desirable places to live and work, with good quality local public services and an environment to cherish. It also aims to reflect the local culture of South Hams, ensuring promotion of equality and diversity. This proposal promotes sustainability locally as it promotes the local economy, right through the business chain- from the production to the selling of products. This proposal will contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, lowering the threat of climate change for future generations. This proposal will reduce congestion, improving the environment for current and future populations. Ultimately this proposal will provide the means for local communities to compete with larger retailers/suppliers, providing a more sustainable way of life- buying local at an affordable price.

2.2 Over which geographic area will your proposal impact? (e.g. neighbourhood, town, city, sub-region)?

This proposal will impact predominantly on smaller communities. The definition of 'local' goods can be defined by each billing authority- as a city and a rural district will have different requirements of the term. For example in the South Hams, local could be defined as any food or good produced within the boundary of the district.

2.3 Who would benefit from your proposal?

Local producers, suppliers, retailers, consumers, and all road users. The proposal will ultimately benefit all by reducing congestion and carbon emissions- contributing to lowering the impact of climate change. This proposal could also have a knock-on affect of connecting communities with local food- and ultimately result in people eating healthier as their awareness of seasonal produce improves.

2.4 What steps will you take to mitigate any adverse affects on sustainability from your proposal (if relevant)?

The current system of importing many goods and food from overseas or transporting food long distances within the UK, is unsustainable. The demand for 'out-of-season' food is also unsustainable. The UK needs to reconnect to 'local' seasonal produce. Although this proposal could result in an impact on the food transport industry and some international suppliers, the

change will ultimately be a positive one, resulting in a more sustainable food industry, where the UK is less reliant on other countries and agriculture requires less subsidies.

2.5 What project, activities and changes would take place in your area if your proposal was successful?

2.6 Does your proposal involve transfers of responsibilities between public bodies in the area? If so what are these? What budgetary implications might be involved?

N/A

Local authorities are required to 'have regard' to a set of specific issues when deciding whether to support SCA proposals. These are matters listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, as passed by Parliament¹. It is worth noting that the issues listed in the Act are not supposed to be exhaustive and that ideas can cover anything that promotes the sustainability of the local area.

Many of these matters may not be relevant to any one proposal. If you are submitting a joint proposal please include evidence for all areas.

2.7 Please identify which, if any, of the issues authorities are required to have regard to, are relevant to this proposal and include any data and information which you feel would be helpful in the assessment process.

a) the provision of local services

b) the extent to which the volume and value of goods and services that are- i) offered for sale, ii) procured by public bodies, and are produced within 30 miles (or any lesser distance as may be specified by a local authority in respect of its area) of their place of sale of the boundary of the public body.

This proposal will directly result in an increase in the volume of goods produced and offered for sale locally ('local' to be defined by Billing Authority).

c) the rate of increase in the growth and marketing of organic forms of food production and the local economy

In local areas where organic farm produce is grown, this proposal will also aid in the growth of this sector of the economy.

d) measures to promote reasonable access by all local people to a supply of food is adequate in terms of both amount and nutritional value

This proposal will result in the sale of 'local' food in more outlets, and therefore available to more people than is currently the case. The incentive to sell a large amount of local goods will result in its increased availability to local people.

e) the number of local jobs

It is expected that there will be an increased number of outlets selling local goods; therefore there will be a demand for more local goods. This can directly lead to an increase in 'production' jobs but also indirectly in areas such as transport and marketing.

f) measures to conserve energy and increase the quantity of energy supplies which are produced from sustainable sources within a 30 mile radius of the region in which they are consumed

g) measure taken to reduce the level of road traffic including, but not restricted to, local public transport provision, measures to promote walking and cycling and measures to decrease the amount of product miles

This proposal will directly result in a large reduction in product miles, both within the UK as well as from international suppliers. By incentivising the sale of 'local' goods and food, the amount of goods sold from overseas or from long distances within the UK will reduce.

h) the increase in social inclusion, including an increase in involvement in local democracy

i) measures to increase mutual aid and other community projects

j) measures designed to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases

This proposal will result in a reduction in 'food miles' from all forms of transport. With an increased amount of local goods for sale, the distance travelled by goods and food will be greatly reduced, having a knock-on effect of reducing carbon emissions.

¹ The Sustainable Communities Act is available here : http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070023_en_1

- k) measures designed to increase community health and wellbeing
- l) planning policies which would assist with the purposes of this Act, including new arrangements for the provision of affordable housing
- m) measures to increase the use of local waste materials for the benefit of the community

Existing Barriers

(Please do not write more than 1000 words for 2.8 and 2.9)

2.8 What are the existing barriers to implementing your proposal?

Although Billing Authorities have the power to apply some rate to relief to businesses, the scale of this scheme would require some Government guidance and particularly funding. There needs to be policy commitment from Government to reduce food miles and support 'buy local' campaigns.

2.9 What actions are needed by Government to make your proposal possible?

The Government needs to provide Billing Authorities with the power to apply rate relief to businesses that earn 50% of their turnover from locally sourced/grown goods.

The Government needs to provide financial support to Billing Authorities who provide this relief, as part of the Government's Carbon Management Agenda and in order to prevent a reduction/deterioration of local services if funded by the local authority.

Part 3: Local Authority Endorsement

This section should be completed by the proposing local authority. (Under the terms of the act this means a county council in England, a district council (including metropolitan, non metropolitan and unitary authorities), a London borough council, the Common Council of the City of London or the Council of the isles of Scilly)

3.1 Have consultation requirements been met? (500 words max)

Please confirm that your authority has met the statutory requirements for consultation on this proposal, via one or more panels of local representatives and persons from under-represented groups constituted in accordance with the Act and statutory guidance as set out in [Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities](#).

You may wish to describe who has been involved in discussions and development of the proposal (*e.g. council, local community organisations and residents groups, parish or town councils, local partnership bodies, local or national organisations, political parties, church and faith organisations, local businesses or chambers of commerce and others*).

If you have not done so already please give brief details of relevant panel meetings.

Please note if you are submitting a joint application please provide details of consultation and local support across all areas.

South Hams District Council developed the scope of our implementation plan by taking into account the requirements of the Act, as well as the viability of successful implementation through limited time and resources.

Our proposals were raised at a special Sustainable Communities Act event for the Community Partnership Forum (CPF) and all South Hams District Council Members on 23rd February 2009. The CPF exists under the South Hams Strategic Partnership (SHSP) and consists of close to 200 organisations including voluntary, community, church and faith, statutory organisations and charities, as well as all of our local town and parish councils. Members of the SHSP and other interested local district councils and Devon County Council were also invited to attend. Members of the CPF include organisations that represent under-represented groups within the district such as BME and youth groups. Both these groups were able to attend the event.

At the event, close to 200 proposals were raised and discussed and a shortlist was created by attendees voting on the proposals they would like to see taken forward. The shortlist of eleven proposals was formulated into a survey for our Community Sounding Board. Our Sounding Board is a panel of close to 1,000 local residents that are demographically and geographically representative of our whole community; this Panel also included under represented groups. We felt it was necessary for our wider community to rank the shortlist in order of importance to the local community as, at the time of planning, we were uncertain of the time available and resources required to write proposals up for submission due to the unknown publication date and style of the LGA Submission Form. We felt that, as there was a risk not all of our proposals would be written-up in time, we had to focus our resources on those of most importance to our community.

We believe that by involving more than one 'panel' both containing under represented groups / individuals and agreeing our proposals with a large number of our community, South Hams District Council has met the requirements of the Act.

3.2 What are the views from this consultation? You may wish to provide evidence of local support for your proposal? This might include petitions or letters of support from the public, local councillors, Members of Parliament, businesses, public bodies and agencies? Please describe this evidence below. *(The local authority submitting the proposal is likely to wish to review such material and to summarise its content. Onward submission to the Selector of all original documentation will not normally be required).*

This proposal was put forward by one of our officers and was part of a list of example proposals we placed on the tables of the CPF event to help stimulate discussion. There was no requirement for any of the examples to be put forward unless support was given from the community or one of our attending Members. The proposal was supported by one of the attendees of the event. This proposal received 20 votes from the CPF event, and was placed 7th out of the 11 proposals short listed that received 10 or more votes. The Community Sounding Board also voted this proposal as their 7th priority out of the eleven short listed.

This proposal was based on a proposal publicised by Local Works.

Proposals may include a change/transfer of functions from one person to another. If this is relevant to your proposal please confirm that the duties under clause 2, subsection 3 of the act (consulting with organisations affected by a change in location of a function) have been carried out.

3.3 Please give brief details of consultation with any affected organisations

N/A

3.4 Confirmation of council support

The process for formal endorsement is a matter for local discretion; however we anticipate that authorities will wish to gain political endorsement and clearance for the proposal through the relevant processes at local level. Please give details of how formal approval has been attained.

A report detailing all eleven proposals short-listed from our CPF event and ranked by our Sounding Board was taken to the South Hams District Council Executive Committee on 16th July 2009. The Executive resolved to endorse / approve this proposal for submission to the LGA for consideration for implementation under the Sustainable Communities Act.

3.5 General comments

This is an opportunity for the local authority to express any additional comments or views on the proposal: This may include: *(1500 words max)*

- the council's view of levels of local support for the proposal
- any local opposition or objections that the Selector should be aware of
- relevance of the proposal to the area's Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
- outcome of any local authority discussions with agencies or public bodies affected
- potential regional/national significance of the proposal, if replicated elsewhere
- any major resource implications for the council or its local partners
- any other factors influencing viability and achievability of the proposal

Part 4: Assessment by the Selector

SCA proposals will be assessed by the LGA as Selector. This will include consideration, short listing and negotiation with the Secretary of State via the LGA Selector panel made up of councillors from the four parties represented on the LGA

The LGA Selector Panel is committed to undertaking the role in a transparent manner; as such reasons for decisions on proposals will be made available.

There will be no appeals process in relation to decisions of the Selector Panel.

4.1 Do you confirm your agreement to abide by the outcome of the Selector's assessment and decision-making processes?

Yes, South Hams District Council confirms to abide by the outcome of the Selector's assessment and decision-making processes.

4.2 Would your council, accompanied by the originators of the proposal, wish to make a short verbal presentation to the Selector Panel, should this opportunity be available?

Yes

Thank you for completing this form.

Please email it to selector@lga.gov.uk by 31 July 2009.