

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 a representative of a local Barnardo's funded centre (Barnardo's is a registered charity no. 216250 SC037605 and a company limited by guarantee in England no. 61625). Barnardo's is a member of the Community Partnership Forum, which meets twice a year to give feedback to the South Hams Strategic Partnership.

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 ensures that volunteer centres and Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) are fully funded to encourage volunteer activities in communities. Apart from their own fund raising, currently CVS centres are commonly on Service Level Agreements with local funding bodies, such as Local Authorities, however these are commonly short term agreements. For example, SHDC's current (2007-2012) financial support for the local CVS under a Service Level Agreement is: £33,297 (net £23,993 (£9,304 to Council as rent and service charge for accommodation). The lack of guaranteed longer-term funding, particularly in the current economic climate, means that CVS and their connecting third sector organisations cannot always sustain funding or work in developing areas that could benefit communities.

Issues addressed: SHDC Members support our local CVS as they recognise the role this organisation plays in representing the hundreds of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and groups in the South Hams, and as one of the Council's key strategic partners supporting the development and delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy. In doing so, the CVS makes a direct contribution to the Council's overall aim 'to improve the well-being of the people of the South Hams'. It provides advice, training and other support to a wide range of VCS groups, which support our Corporate Priorities and positively helps the Council to fulfil the 6 Council commitments and 3 cross-cutting themes which underpin these priorities. This recognition of support is repeated throughout the county, the median UK funding from district councils in

England to CVS organisations in 2006/2007 was £15,600. Despite our current Service Level Agreement, support from the Government through statutory funding would sustain the CVS and associated projects and ensure that long-term benefits are passed onto the local community.

The representative from Barnardo's said:

"I have worked in the voluntary sector for the last 7 years starting with a local charity moving on to a national one. The support for the local charity I was involved in from the South Hams CVS was vital for our survival. During this period I was always aware that this CVS has struggled to survive. So much effort was put into fundraising to keep the centre open and effective – energy and time which could have been spent in supporting local charities and volunteers.

I understand that the Department for the Third Sector is keen that a certain percentage of statutory commissioning should go towards this sector. CVSs should have a minimal level of guaranteed income to support their front line work and their important role in strategically developing services to the communities."

Our local CVS's Volunteer Centre was awarded '**Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation**' by Volunteering England. This confirms that it provides:

- Brokerage
- Marketing of volunteering
- Good practise development
- Development of volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering

All of these important roles are at risk if the CVS is fundraising for it's own means rather than being able to devote time to supporting other third sector organisations.

The CVS also takes an active role in working groups and activities (i.e. Sherford New Community, Volunteering, Environment South Hams, Migrant Workers Initiative, and other partnerships such as the South Devon and Dartmoor Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), Community Planning database).

During 2007-2008, the SHCVS helped local voluntary and community groups to access in the region of £300,000 of funding, and supported 70 groups with their funding needs.

By supporting and working in partnership with SHCVS, 59% of local voluntary organisations association with the CVS, now work directly in partnership with SHDC or Devon County Council.

All of these benefits of the CVS are at risk- due to the uncertain future of their funding as public spending is reduced due to the high rate of public borrowing.

Public bodies: This proposal should not affect any public bodies directly. The long-term funding secured for the CVS will ensure that community groups and volunteers throughout England will flourish under the support given. This should alleviate some public services as innovation within communities can counteract potential problems during a recession.

Main actions from Government: The Government needs to introduce a policy that ensures the long-term survival of the CVS. The Department of the Third Sector needs to ensure that the CVS are appropriately funded, to ensure their long-term survival in order to provide the many benefits they offer to community and voluntary groups throughout England.

Benefits: By ensuring that the CVS throughout England are sustained through long-term Government funding, many small local charities and volunteers would benefit from the consistent and sustainable support (the commissioning process at this stage gives advantages to big charities

because small charities don't have the resources to respond to the tenders within the expected time frames). Resources would be channelled more efficiently and effectively responding to community needs. Overall this proposal would result in a more sustainable community because a greater number of community initiatives would take place, improving living in all areas of England.

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.

Community projects and volunteer activities are focussed on providing benefits to the local community, whether it is the production of a community garden, or provision of care services; all CVS supported activities are vital to the sustainability of the South Hams area. The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action states that voluntary and community action is vital for healthy and inclusive communities.¹

¹ <http://www.navca.org.uk/about/>

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

This proposal will benefit all CVS centres throughout England. In every urban and rural area in England, local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) generally known as the CVS, work behind the scenes to ensure that local third sector groups and organisations get the support they need.

LIOs differ greatly in character and size, from small rural organisations with one or two paid staff, to large multi-million pound operations. Each is part of a network that is in touch with over 164,000 local third sector groups and organisations across the country.²

² <http://www.navca.org.uk/about/whatisanlio.htm>

2.3 Who would benefit from your proposal?

The 164,000 local third sector groups and organisations across England.

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

There should be no adverse affects on sustainability arising from this proposal.

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

There would be an increase in the promotion and support available to VCS groups in all areas throughout England, therefore it is expected that more community and voluntary activities and projects will be able to take place- contributing to a more sustainable society.

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.
- c) the rate of increase in the growth and marketing of organic forms of food production and the local 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
- e) the number of local jobs

It is widely reported that partaking in volunteer initiatives can build up a good skills base and improve job prospects. During these difficult economic times it is important that the Government does as much as they can to help people get back in employment, and supporting the CVS would be a key contribution.

- 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
- h) the increase in social inclusion, including an increase in involvement in local democracy
- i) measures to increase mutual aid and other community projects

Supporting the CVS and ensuring their long-term survival will have a positive impact on many existing community projects, as well as result in more community projects coming to fruition due to the additional support the CVS can provide.

- j) Measures designed to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases
- k) measures designed to increase community health and wellbeing

Through long-term funding of the CVS, community health and well-being will improve due to the greater number of community initiatives and projects that can be undertaken through the support of a more effective CVS.

- 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

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

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?

-Lack of recognition from the Government of CVS benefits to the wider community and the issues the centres face by not having secured long-term funding from public bodies.

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

The Government needs to make a policy change or introduce a new policy to recognise the importance of the Third Sector and their supporting organisations.

Through this policy the Office of the Third Sector needs to ensure that long-term consistent appropriate funding is given to all local CVS centres through out England, to ensure that their important work is not impacted by fund raising for their own survival.

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 a representative of Barnardo's, who, in partnership, run local children's centres in Dartmouth and Ivybridge of the South Hams. The proposal was supported by many of the attendees and received 17 votes from the CPF event. It was placed 9th out of the 11 proposals short listed that received 10 or more votes. The Community Sounding Board voted this proposal as their eleventh priority out of the eleven short listed.

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.