

## 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](mailto:selector@lga.gov.uk). These must be received by **July 31<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 representatives of Totnes and District Community Strategy Group (a registered charity) and Transition Town Totnes (a not for profit organisation), with the support of Totnes and District Transport and Traffic Forum and the Transition Town Totnes Cycle Group. These groups are members of the South Hams Strategic Partnership's Community Partnership Forum, which aims to meet twice per year and give feedback to the LSP.

## 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:** Direct Government funding is needed to deliver a comprehensive, dedicated network of cycle routes and footpaths to dramatically increase the numbers of local residents choosing these low carbon forms of transport rather than getting in their cars. The use of fossil fuels in transport is a major cause of carbon emissions leading to global warming. For example a cycle and footpath network would link up the key market towns in our District with villages along arterial routes. The network in a local area will need to connect well to other forms of public transport, such as bus-stops and stations. It will also need, in places, to be separate from the road space currently used by cars, buses and lorries in order to be safe enough for children and older people to use with confidence.

**Issues addressed, promotion of sustainability and who is affected:** Within the local area it is well known that the large volume of heavy traffic on the narrow single lane roads of South Devon is a hindrance to the most enthusiastic cyclist. Providing safe cycling space alongside these busy roads where necessary and using quieter lanes where they can provide alternative routes, is a proven method of increasing the attractiveness of cycling. Local Government is unable to fund by itself the large scale projects needed to create such a network. The building of a network would also create both short term employment during construction and long term employment through

bicycle maintenance and repair. Such a network would also contribute to improving the health and fitness of local people.

There is a clear need to provide better walking and cycling space in Totnes and its surrounding parishes, and this situation is reflected in many other towns in the South Hams and throughout England. The scale of the effort required is much bigger than any one local authority could deliver. Many more people would walk and cycle to work, school and for small shopping trips if it was not so dangerous. A dedicated cycle route along the main arteries into a town, for example the 'Sustrans' project between the Steiner School and Dartington in the South Hams (that effectively links Buckfastleigh and Totnes as it bridges a previous gap)<sup>1</sup>. This walkway and cycle route, runs alongside the A384, but it was developed on farm land on the other side of the hedge from the road. Funding is needed to either rent or buy up similar strips of farmland along other main roads into Totnes and similar towns through England that are not well-served by public transport and suffer from severe congestion.

We need to move away from our dependence on fossil fuels for our daily travel movements for a whole range of ecological, health and social reasons, but what is missing in order to fulfil this is primarily funding, but also joined up thinking between service providers.

**Main actions required by Government:** The Government needs to recognise the importance of promoting safe cycling, through a change or introduction of a new policy to promote and commit support to a network of safe cycle routes throughout England. Public funding needs to be made available specifically for an extensive network of cycle routes throughout England. New initiatives could be developed with the private sector to ensure delivery and benefit to the local economy. Details can be worked out locally to reflect local diversity.

**Benefits of Proposal:** Such a cycle and footpath network would have enormous benefits to the sustainability of local communities all over the country. Firstly it provides a safer and more attractive alternative to the car. It means more people will get on their bikes and get more exercise and improve their overall health. If children can cycle to school they develop good travel habits, and get more exercise. Cycling also connects you better with the natural world; you notice the trees, birds, and flowers more. People talk to each other more once they get out and about on their feet or bikes, so it is an excellent way to improve social cohesion and community well being.

The other major benefit is a reduction in fossil fuel based transport. We urgently need to reduce our carbon emissions, and at the moment people do not have a realistic choice to cycle and or walk due to lack of safe routes and pavements.

Less traffic on the road leads to less congestion and less time wasted sitting in traffic jams, so it is also good for business and the local economy.

<sup>1</sup> Sustrans: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

## 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. By providing an extensive cycle network, this will contribute to the sustainability of the local area, as it will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and allow more people to enjoy the local environment.

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

This proposal will have most benefit to rural towns and villages that are commonly not served well by public transport, but will also benefit towns and cities that have large commuter populations who currently depend on public transport or cars as the only connection between work and home.

#### 2.3 Who would benefit from your proposal?

This proposal is designed to benefit all within a community. Families can enjoy safe cycling, children can safely cycle to school and commuters have safe routes to work that where possible connect to other modes of public transport.

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

Some cycle routes will inevitably have to be developed on greenfield land, however where possible this should be minimised, or compensated by developing additional habitat bordering the cycle paths or more diverse habitats else where. It is expected that the benefits of a reduction in car travel, resulting from this proposals, will out-weigh the loss of small areas of green field sites.

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

- Initially there will need to be an assessment as to where there is the greatest need within a local area and research into the most viable routes;
- Landowners, public authorities, and private businesses should come together in partnership with local community groups to define appropriate cycle networks;
- Pilot projects of cycle route construction/development should be run in areas where there is active community support, with a view of extending it to other areas once success has been demonstrated.

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?

It is unlikely that any transfer of responsibility will result from this proposal.

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 Parliament<sup>1</sup>. 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

**By providing a comprehensive network of cycle routes that link to public transport hubs, such as bus and train stations, this will result in an increase in public transport use, as the services become more accessible and convenient.**

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

**The building of the proposed network will create short-term employment during construction and long-term employment through bike sales, maintenance and repairs.**

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 reduction of the reliance on cars by promoting the use and convenience of cycling through a major network of safe cycle routes.**

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

**By reducing the reliance of the population on cars, the proposed cycle network will indirectly contribute to a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from car travel. The UK road transport sector produces around a quarter of the UK's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>2</sup>.**

k) measures designed to increase community health and wellbeing

**This proposal will directly benefit the health and well-being of communities making it 'easier'/ more convenient to exercise as part of daily life and increasing connections between previously separate communities will improve well-being.**

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

<sup>2</sup> Energy Saving Trust, 2008. Driven.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/uploads/documents/aboutest/DRIVEN%20FINAL.pdf>

## 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 public and private funding;
- Lack of 'joined-up' thinking between responsible public bodies;
- Lack of recognition of benefits of a comprehensive cycle network and the positive ripple-effect it will have on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, traffic, health, the environment and individual finances.

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

The Government needs to recognise the importance of promoting safe cycling, through a change or introduction of a new policy to promote and commit support to a network of safe cycle routes throughout England. Public funding needs to be made available specifically for an extensive network of cycle routes throughout England. New initiatives could be developed with the private sector to ensure delivery and benefit to the local economy. Details can be worked out locally to reflect local diversity.

## 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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, 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 'Cycle Network' proposal was put forward by representatives from the Totnes and District Community Strategy Group and Transition Town Totnes. The proposal received 22 votes from those who attended the CPF event in February and was ranked fifth out of the 11 short listed (those proposals that received ten or more votes). The Community Sounding Board also voted this proposal as being the fifth most important out of the 11 proposals short listed. As well as the support from the proposing organisations, support has also been expressed by the Totnes and District Transport and Traffic Forum and the Transition Town Totnes Cycle Group.

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**

Devon County Council, as our local Highways Authority, are aware of this proposal.

### 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:selector@lga.gov.uk) by 31 July 2009.