

Title: **Sustainable Communities Act 2007**

Portfolio holder: **Chris March (Community)**

Reporting officer: **Richard Rogers (Sustainable Communities Services Manager)**

Key decision: **No**

Purpose

At the meeting of West Wiltshire District Council on the 22 October 2008, the following Notice of Motion was proposed:

That West Wiltshire District Council

- I. Supports the Sustainable Communities Act designed to allow local authorities and their communities to reverse community decline and promote thriving, sustainable communities.
- II. Notes that the Act gives local authorities the power to make proposals to government on the action government must take to promote sustainable communities, and argue for a transfer of public money and function from central to local control.
- III. Notes that the Act defines sustainable communities in terms of the improvement of the local economy, protection of the environment, promotion of social inclusion, and participation in civic and political activity.
- IV. Notes that reasons for a local authority choosing to use the Act include gaining new assistance from government, determining that assistance, being able to argue for transfers of public monies from central to local control, and involving citizens in democracy.
- V. Resolves to request that Wiltshire Council uses the Act by preparing and submitting proposals on how central government can help build sustainable communities in West Wiltshire.

(Proposed by Cllr Carbin, seconded by Cllr Bolwell)

Council made the decision to refer this Notice of Motion to Cabinet for debate.

Background

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 provides the opportunity for local authorities, advised by representative panels of local people, to request that Government considers suggestions about how it could change the way it works in order to achieve the aim of creating sustainable local communities.

The sort of matters which are relevant to the Act include promoting local food, local public procurement, local jobs, local services such as village shops, local energy

production, reduction in road traffic, increasing community health, reducing green house gases and increasing social inclusion.

The Act also requires the production of local spending reports, which will detail how much resource from Government and its quangos is being spent in a local authority area. These will be available in April 2009 and will assist in thinking about the opportunities provided by the Act as a whole.

Key issues

- In October 2008 the Secretary of State formally invited local authorities to begin to submit ideas to the LGA, who in turn will create a shortlist of proposals to discuss with Government for possible implementation. In arriving at this shortlist, local authorities are required to work with and if possible seek the agreement of a local 'Panel' which is representative of the local area, including hard to reach groups.
- Government is encouraging but not requiring local authorities to publicise the opportunities provided by the Act.
- Whilst it would have been possible for all five local authorities in Wiltshire to set up separate Panels and submit ideas independently, given the move to one Council the Implementation Executive decided at its meeting on the 23 September 2008 to
'Agree that one panel is set up for the County, and that the implementation Executive authorises the Wiltshire Assembly to create and run a panel for Wiltshire with responsibility for submitting ideas to the Local Government Association, as outlined in paragraph 9.1 of the report.'
- The Wiltshire Assembly agreed to this proposal at its conference on 3 Oct 2008 and made suggestions concerning who should be part of the 'Panel'.

Effect on Strategies and Codes

Any effect of this Act on strategies and codes will fall on the new Wiltshire Council, not this Council

Risk Management Implications

The key risk is that ideas submitted will not be implemented by Government.

Finance and Performance Implications

There are no financial or performance implications for this Council

Legal and Human Rights Implications

There are no legal or human rights implications for this Council

Next Steps

22 October	Deadline for Secretary of State to issue invitation
13 November	Implementation Executive to receive a progress report
April 09	Local spending reports available

The 'Panel' also needs to be set up before April 2009.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to support this Notice of Motion.

Background Papers

Council Agenda and minutes 22 October 2008

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/sustainablecommunitiesact