



**ARTICLE NO: 1C**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2009 - 2010**

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

---

**Article of:** Assistant Chief Executive

**Issue 4:** February 2010

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Owens

**Contact:** Alison Grimes (Extn.5409)  
(E-mail: [alison.grimes@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:alison.grimes@westlancs.gov.uk))

---

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT**

---

District wide interest

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE ARTICLE**

1.1 To advise members on the progress of proposals submitted by WLBC in July 2009 under the Sustainable Communities Act.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 aims to promote the sustainability of local communities by improving the economic, environmental or social well-being including participation in civic and political activity.

2.2 The Act provides a process whereby communities, organisations and public bodies can, through their local Council, propose changes at a national level to help deliver projects and work locally to support sustainability thus providing local solutions to local priorities.

2.3 Members will recall that the Council voluntarily undertook a process whereby ideas meeting the criteria of the Act were requested from the public. Of the fourteen ideas submitted, ten were considered by officers to meet the requirements of the Act. Eight of the ten were then supported by a convened Sustainable Communities Panel and subsequently endorsed by full Council in

July 2009. These were then forwarded to the Selector Panel (Local Government Association).

- 2.4 The Selector Panel received 301 ideas from over 100 councils. These 301 ideas were then considered for inclusion on a shortlist for submission to the Secretary of State.

### **3.0 CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 The LGA has now submitted its shortlist to the Secretary of State. Three of West Lancashire's proposals have been included. These are:

1. Re-direction of funding for training contracts to local authorities, to ensure locality-specific training needs can be addressed and enable the establishment of practical learning/training and social enterprise business hubs (originator: member of public)
2. Local authorities to keep a greater proportion of Right to Buy receipts to enable house building and estate remodelling (originator: Corporate management Board)
3. Lobbying for changes to the Treaty of Rome to encourage local economic stimulus (originator: Corporate management Board)

3.2 The proposals which did not make the Selector's shortlist were:

- To extend the funding that local authorities receive for the collection of recyclables to all categories of non-business premises.
- The government to support regeneration in new towns.
- Provide funding to improve train and bus services to and from Skelmersdale.
- To allow local authorities to participate in more than one local area agreement/multi area agreement.
- Changes to the funding formula for local authorities to facilitate public realm maintenance in New Town areas.

There is no appeals procedure in relation to the shortlisting process of the LGA.

3.3 The Secretary of State is now required to try to reach agreement with the LGA regarding which proposals to implement from the shortlist. There is no format or timetable for this process. The LGA are lobbying for the process to be completed by the Easter recess and are keen that the process provides genuine opportunity for dialogue and negotiation.

3.4 It is still not known when Councils will be able to submit proposals through further 'rounds' of the Act, as there has still been no formal indication from government when, or indeed if, this will take place. An Amendment Bill was due to go through parliament which would make this a 'rolling' programme and formally include Parish and Town Councils in the Act's process, but this was dropped by its sponsor. It is now anticipated that another MP will take it through parliament.

#### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

4.1 All proposals forwarded to the LGA had direct benefits to the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

#### **5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

5.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this report.

#### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

#### **Appendices**

None