

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

London Borough of Islington

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)

Submitted by London Borough of Islington

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.*

Alanna Coombes
Alanna.coombes@islington.gov.uk
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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.

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*)

Traditional community shopping centres typically provide less than twenty shops or facilities including a post office, a pub, a grocery store, a newsagent and perhaps a café, a chemist, a fast-food outlet, or laundrette. Such facilities form the natural heart of a community, sustain that community and encourage residents to get to know each other and feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods.

Too often, these traditional shops and facilities come under threat from an imbalance of premises - especially fast-food. A creeping death has too often come to these vibrant little engines of communities that kills off the character and distinctiveness of a neighbourhood. Too often what is left are a poor range of facilities that can no longer sustain the community in its diverse needs and a decline sets in that sees local people having to travel elsewhere for goods and services. This has the effect of creating neighbourhoods that offer so little as to be simply not worth a trip.

We want to protect and promote vibrant neighbourhood shopping centres where smaller shops significantly enhance their character and vibrancy and make a valuable contribution to consumer choice.

To do so, we would like to see the following changes:

Automatic Rate Relief

1. Introduce automatic small business rate relief rather than businesses having to apply for it.

Permissions & Appeals

2. To instruct the Planning Inspectorate and planning authorities that the sustainability of a neighbourhood shopping area is a strong material consideration in planning decisions. So more weight must be given to objections on the grounds that the application would have a detrimental effect on the sustainability of the existing businesses.

3. Remove developers' right of appeal over planning decisions in neighbourhood shopping centres (for example, if a supermarket is refused planning permission).

4. Require full planning permission before any facility (such as a shop or a pub) is demolished to encourage developers to consider options for re-use and stop town centres being blighted by vacant sites for long periods of time.

5. Strengthen penalties for large organisations that demolish or part-demolish without proper planning permission.

Zoning

6. Give greater protection to distinctive local shopping areas to protect their character by giving local authorities the tools to 'zone' these areas, giving them special protection. The aim would be to protect basic food shops and services such as post offices, pharmacies and pubs.

Use classes

7. Establish greater differentiation within the use classes system. This could be to protect small shops by differentiating them from other facilities within the A1 category and by re-categorising premises such as internet cafes, coffee shops and other fast food outlets into A3 use.

Cloning

8. Powers to restrict 'formula businesses' in shopping areas so that the establishment of chain stores, set up to a formula, can be restricted so that independent businesses can survive and high streets do not become largely identical.

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)

The emerging Local Development Framework for the area, particularly the core strategy, places considerable emphasis on what makes a local area a good place to live. One of the main components is a set of local shopping and other retail facilities and local entertainment and leisure facilities. The options for achieving this are discussed in the core strategy consultation paper.

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

The proposal will impact primarily at neighbourhood level.

2.3 Who would benefit from your proposal?

Anyone who lives, works or visits an area in convenient distance to neighbourhood shopping centres who would be potential users of the services and facilities available.

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

Not relevant.

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

Not applicable

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?

Not applicable

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.

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

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

The provision of local services and facilities is central to this proposal.

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.

Such goods and services are more likely to be provided in a neighbourhood where small, independent traders operate rather than large chains.

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

Not applicable

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

The proposals aim to have a good balance of business premises and so prevent an unhealthy imbalance of many take-aways or fast-food premises that offer poor nutritional value.

e) the number of local jobs

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Being able to shop locally and enjoy local leisure facilities and community meeting spaces (such as community pubs) would reduce the need to travel by car as such facilities and services are available within walking distance.

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

A better mix of local shops that better cater for the many needs of local people are likely to help develop a sense of community, which in turn helps people to become involved in their local democracy.

i) measures to increase mutual aid and other community projects

Not applicable

j) measures designed to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases

Not applicable

k) measures designed to increase community health and wellbeing

Fewer take-aways and fast-food outlets could improve the health of a local community; a shopping centre that is a thriving heart to a community helps to promote a sense of community and sense of belonging and so enhances a person's wellbeing.

l) planning policies which would assist with the purposes of this Act, including new arrangements for the provision of affordable housing

Planning policies are referred to elsewhere in this proposal.

m) measures to increase the use of local waste materials for the benefit of the community

Not applicable

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?

The need to apply for rate relief; the lack of weight given to the sustainability of town and neighbourhood shopping areas; planning law including the classification of business uses.

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

As outlined in 1.5

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.

We told our local communities about the SCA through the Council website, our borough-wide resident magazine; residents' eBulletin; the Members' Bulletin; and directly to a range of community and third sector groups. This generated over 100 ideas to be put forward by residents, community groups as well as some staff members and councillors.

Council officers examined all the original proposals to sift out ones that appeared to go against existing council policy; where the council already has powers to take the action proposed; or where the proposal does not fall within the scope of the SCA for some other reason.

These proposals then went to a newly formed SCA panel to consider. This panel included residents from groups that councils have traditionally struggled to engage or forum members of such groups, including a blind resident, a resident with learning disabilities, and a resident (with an interpreter) who spoke English as a second language. The panel held its meeting on Monday 29 June and members looked in detail at a number of proposals each in some detail. Their comments and indications of interest or enthusiasm enabled us to sift further the proposals which were considered by, and agreed by, our Council's Executive.

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).

We received a number of proposals from different business people that suggested ways in which local shops could be protected and promoted. The proposals were discussed at our SCA Panel where they approved of the spirit of such protection and promotion. Using their comments an outline proposal was agreed by councillors at their Executive meeting in early July. The proposals now submitted distill the original proposals put forward by business people and reflect the views of the Panel and of Executive members.

A petition for the protection of local post offices as essential community facilities has been presented to government on behalf of Islington residents.

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

No further, direct consultation has been carried out.

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.

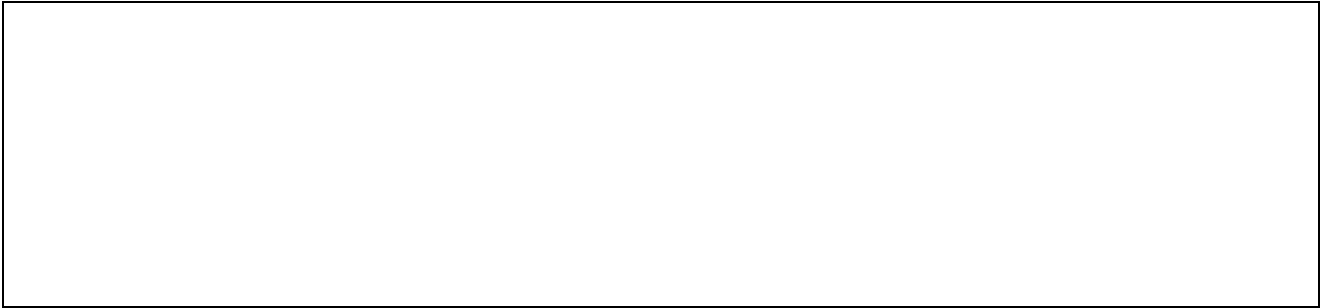
The proposals were agreed at the Council's Executive meeting on 9 July 2009.

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

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.