

THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

Introduction

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (SCA) is being used by local (parish and town) councils to inspire their communities to agree with them new and innovative ways of improving their area or become involved in Big Society projects.

Since 14 October 2013 local councils have been able to make direct proposals under the Act to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

To submit a proposal under the Act direct to the Secretary of State, parishes should visit [DCLG Barrier Busting](#).

Purpose

The Act was amended in 2010 to help improve the procedures for receiving, considering and taking decisions on SCA proposals.

The legal order extending the powers to local councils to submit proposals commenced on 14 October 2013.

There are no deadlines for submitting proposals under the second round invitation of the Act.

NALC Selector Role

The implementation of the Act is governed by the [Sustainable Communities Act Regulations 2012](#).

If the Secretary of State rejects a local council proposal made to him under the Act, he will communicate this to the proposing council direct. However, if the proposing local council wishes either the original proposal or an amended version of it to be re-submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration, it must re-submit the (new) proposal to NALC direct to chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk.

NALC will then discharge its statutory duty as Parish Selector under the Act ([View NALC's Selector Terms of Reference](#)), and, as appropriate, ensure that its Sustainable Communities Advisory Board considers the re-submission request at its next quarterly meeting.

[View NALC Selector Criteria](#) applied to local council proposal re-submission requests.

NALC's Advisory Board

Under its responsibility as Parish Selector under the Act, NALC established an Advisory Board (the Sustainable Communities Advisory Board) to help it make decisions on whether to re-submit proposals for the Secretary of State's consideration at the Department of Communities and Local Government.

[View Notes from the Board's Inception Meeting – 23/09/214](#)

[View the Board's Draft Terms of Reference](#)

Procedure of Requesting Proposal Re-submissions

NALC will try to reach agreement with the Government on a proposal submitted by it in order to ensure that the Government is able to publish a final decision on whether / how the proposal will be implemented within 6 months of when the proposal was resubmitted by NALC.

The final decision by the Department will be available on the Government's [Barrier Busting website](#).

NALC will also notify the Secretary of State in writing of any proposals it wishes to submit, within four months of receiving written notice from a local council that it wishes to re-submit a proposal that has been initially rejected by Government.

Local Consultation

Early feedback from DCLG is very clear – that some parish proposals have obviously not evidenced or engaged in local consultation outside the council chamber with residents that – on a given policy issue – an SCA proposal is the most appropriate tool of engagement to use.

Parishes must therefore not just engage with residents to consult with them on whether an SCA proposal is the most appropriate policy tool to use, but should also evidence such specific consultation when submitting their proposal.

A rejected parish proposal has been agreed in writing between DCLG and NALC to be one, which has been accepted for consideration by the Secretary of State at DCLG and then considered by that person, before being rejected.

If a parish proposal is rejected the proposing parish will receive a letter from DCLG confirming this containing details of the relevant NALC officer to whom re-submitted proposals should be sent with the appropriate request for the NALC Sustainable Communities Advisory Board to consider that re-submitted proposal.

[View example of a survey form used by Bunwell Parish Council \(Norfolk\) for its residents to support its proposal under the Act from May 2014 to have free charging points for electric vehicles](#)

[View The Local Works SCA Guide for Town and Parish Councils](#)

Proposing Parish Council Case Study Thumbnails [At November 2014]

The NALC Sustainable Communities Advisory Board asked the National Association at its 23 September 2014 session to produce some very short thumbnail case study data of the nine proposals submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007, to that point.

Such data is contained in the table below:

Proposing Council	SCA Theme
Bleadon Parish Council, Dorset	Cheques / Electronic agenda
Tenterden Town Council, Kent	NHS Services
Sevenoaks Town Council, Kent	Business Rates
Frome Town Council, Somerset	Open Spaces
Chesham Town Council	High Speed Two
Wingham Parish Council	Vehicle Operator Licensing
Bunwell Parish Council	Vehicle Charging Points
Burton on the Wolds, Cotes & Prestwold Parish Council	Neighbourhood Planning Committees
Lathom South Parish Council	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects