

WIRRAL LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – EXECUTIVE BOARD**WEDNESDAY 8th JULY 2009****REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES****SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT****1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report outlines for Executive Board members the present position in terms of the Sustainable Communities Act. In particular the provisions in the act for proposals from the public that require some form of action from central government.
- 1.2 The report details the steps taken to this point by Wirral Council Cabinet and the next stage of the process for the Executive Board acting as the 'local panel' for proposals, before further consideration by Cabinet and subsequent submission to the LGA.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Sustainable Communities Act received Royal Assent on 23 October 2007. The aim of the Act is to promote the sustainability of local communities. Sustainability of local communities refers to encouraging the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area, including participation in civic and political activity. This reflects the well-being powers granted to local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000 and contributes to the broader agenda for partnership working at local level, including the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the negotiation of the Local Area Agreement.
- 2.2 One of the provisions of the Act is for proposals to be invited from the public, through community organisations, which require action from central government. Proposals to the Secretary of State can only be made by local councils. However, the Act makes clear that anyone can suggest a proposal via their local council with the expectation that most suggestions for potential proposals will come from community organisations. Guidance relating to the Act is clear that there is no funding attached to implementation, i.e. to fund any such proposals. The deadline for the first round of such proposals is 31st July 2009.
- 2.3 A basic criterion for proposals is that they must be ones that need some form of action from central government (such as a change in legislation, a transfer of responsibilities from one public body to another, a new national policy or a change or strengthening of policy). In considering proposals, local councils need to distinguish between those which could happen anyway, if agreed at local level, and those which need central government action or intervention of



some sort. The latter category covers those appropriate to be submitted onwards, firstly to the LGA as Selector and potentially to the Secretary of State.

3. WIRRAL APPROACH

3.1 At its meeting of the 9th April 2009, Wirral Council's Cabinet agreed a series of proposals relating to the provision in the Sustainable Communities Act for proposals to be invited from the public, through community organisations, which require action from central government.

3.2 Cabinet agreed that:

- A call for proposals, alongside detailed guidance and links to key documents pertaining to the Sustainable Communities Act, would be publicised with a deadline of 31st May 2009;
- Arrangements would be put in place in consultation with Wirral's Strategic Partnership Executive for Wirral's Strategic Partnership to act as the 'local panel' with consideration given to consulting the views of bodies supporting minority and under-represented interests;
- If the panel considered that a proposal or proposals should be progressed, a report would be presented to Cabinet in July for a final decision on whether the proposal or proposals could be submitted to the Selector (i.e. the LGA).

3.3 Further to Cabinet agreement, a call for proposals was published via the internet and through distribution via all partnership networks, with a guidance document and a proforma for submissions.

4. SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

4.1 A number of submissions were received in response to the call for proposals, as outlined in **Appendix 1**. All but one of these were not eligible for consideration within the scope of the Act, given that they can potentially be dealt with at the local level, i.e. without changes required at central government level. Appendix 1 also outlines the action that has been taken in relation to these proposals.

4.2 One proposal was received which could potentially be suitable for selection under the terms of the Act (attached as **Appendix 2**). This proposes changes in central government legislation and funding relating to Community Asset Transfer

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 This report proposes that the one proposal received which could potentially be suitable for selection under the terms of the Act (see 3.2 above and Appendix 2) is circulated for comments to the Strategic Partnership Assembly and other



key groups, such as the Older People's Parliament. The deadline for comments will be the 22nd July. Subject to any serious concerns being identified during the course of the consultation, Executive Board is asked to endorse the proposal for further consideration by Cabinet on the 23rd July (see below).

- 5.2 A separate report will be taken to the Council's Cabinet on the 23rd July 2009, advising of the Strategic Partnership Executive Board endorsement of the proposal and requesting delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Policy to submit the proposal to the LGA as the selector.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Sustainable Communities Act 2007
- Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Guide, *DCLG 2008*
- Letter from Secretary of State – invitation to submit proposals, 14th October 2008
- Council Notice of Motion 3rd November 2008 Minute 65
- Cabinet Report April 9th 2009 Minute 448

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 As outlined in 5.1, it is recommended that the one proposal received which could potentially be suitable for selection under the terms of the Act (see 3.2 above and Appendix 2) is circulated for comments to the LSP Assembly and other key groups. Subject to any serious concerns being identified during the course of the consultation, it is recommended that the proposal is endorsed by the Strategic Partnership Executive Board for further consideration by the Council's Cabinet

Jim Wilkie

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report was prepared by Jane Morgan who can be contacted on 0151 691 8140 respectively



APPENDIX 1**SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**Harvest project

North Birkenhead Neighbourhood Forum submitted a proposal which was in effect an application for funding for a straw bale building to be constructed at the allotment site for the purpose of community education and furtherance of the 'Good Food Project'.

The proposer has been referred to the Council's lottery and voluntary sector liaison officers for assistance.

Wirral Environmental Network

The Wirral Environmental Network submitted a non specific proposal which was inadmissible as it was requesting funding.

Forum Housing Association Young People's Project Panel

This submission, whilst inadmissible as it does not require any central government action, contained some suggestions that have been forwarded to the Head of Youth Service for comment and progression if appropriate.

Central Liscard Area Residents Association (CLARA)

CLARA submitted a proposal relating to recognition of Tenants and Residents Associations as special interest groups and representation on the LSP.

A reply was sent pointing out that structures already exist to allow associations like CLARA to connect with strategic groups such as the Strategic Housing Partnership, and with the Local Strategic Partnership through representation via the Voluntary and Community Sector Network.

Individual Submission

This submission was in two parts. The first suggested a mandatory council register of landlords with the aim of assisting community members report incidences of anti-social behaviour. Advice was taken from the Housing Strategy team and a reply sent with the details of a current government consultation which includes the points raised in the submission.

The second suggestion was to have mandatory dog licensing with a DNA sample taken to enable identification in cases of dog fouling. Advice was taken from the principal Environmental Health Officer.