Item 3

Sustainable Communities Act

Background

The Sustainable Communities Act encourages local communities to come forward with ideas and proposals to promote the sustainability of their local area. ‘Sustainability’ is defined in the Act in very broad terms, and can cover anything which could improve the economic, social, or environmental well-being of the area, or promote participation in civic or political activity.

Ultimately anyone can suggest a proposal, via their council. The expectation is that most proposals will come from community organisations, local branches of national organisations, parish and town councils, neighbourhood forums, residents and tenants associations, local strategic partnerships and other partnership bodies.

A basic criterion is that proposals 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 will 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. The deadline is July 31st 2009.

Assessment criteria for proposals

Depending on the nature of the proposal the assessment will need to cover questions such as

- Does the proposal require action from central government, or is it something that a local council or (other local partner body) could do anyway?
- How will it contribute to environmental, economic and/or social sustainability, (including participation in civic and political activity)?
- What will be the impact of the proposal, in terms of geographic area or population affected. Is it of very local significance or potential sub-regional impact? The LGA is likely to short-list small-scale as well as larger ideas, in keeping with the devolutionary intent of the Act.
- What legal issues might be involved? Do any local bodies (council, police, health, others) already have the necessary powers?
• If there are proposals for transfer of functions, what other bodies are affected? Have they been consulted?
• Have the Act’s requirements for consultation with a community panel been met, and what evidence is there of local support for the proposal? Have the various matters in the Schedule to the Act been taken into account, where relevant to an individual proposal?

Local consultation

- All councillors were asked to choose priorities gathered from consultation with community/neighbourhood groups to develop local area plans. 13 councillors responded and a table of results is attached at Appendix 1.
- Consultation with the wider community was carried out via the new Inovem web based consultation. Hard copied were also sent to groups without e-mail addresses. Results are attached at Appendix 2.
### Appendix 1

**Results from Councillors consultation on local priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cllr</th>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>Priority 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinson</td>
<td>Supporting District &amp; Local Shopping Centres</td>
<td>Building Community Networks &amp; Sustaining Community Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rundle</td>
<td>Supporting District &amp; Local Shopping Centres</td>
<td>Building Community Networks &amp; Sustaining Community Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altaf-Khan</td>
<td>Supporting District &amp; Local Shopping Centres</td>
<td>Building Community Networks &amp; Sustaining Community Projects</td>
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<td>Murray</td>
<td>Supporting District &amp; Local Shopping Centres</td>
<td>Building Community Networks &amp; Sustaining Community Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scanlan</td>
<td>Supporting District &amp; Local Shopping Centres</td>
<td>Building Community Networks &amp; Sustaining Community Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gotch</td>
<td>Improve Community Activities (particularly for young people &amp; older people)</td>
<td>Northern Gateway Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>tackling flood risk</td>
<td>• dealing with effective regulation of private rented housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Nooijen</td>
<td>tackling flood risk</td>
<td>• dealing with effective regulation of private rented housing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>• purchase of the Boatyard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khan</td>
<td>Developing more activities for young people, older people and vulnerable people</td>
<td>Tackling litter &amp; generally improving the appearance of the street scene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goddard</td>
<td>Traffic &amp; Transport Issues (including 20mph zones &amp; improved bus services, safer cycling &amp; walking)</td>
<td>Supporting District &amp; Local Shopping Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malik</td>
<td>Tackling litter &amp; generally improving the appearance of the street scene</td>
<td>Developing more activities for young people, older people and vulnerable people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timbs</td>
<td>Establish community identity, energy and excitement in Cowley</td>
<td>Developing more activities for young people, older people and vulnerable people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Local Priorities - What Really Matters to You?

Community Report

Number of participants: 19

Groups represented:

- Cutteslowe Community Assocation
- Oxford Civic Society
- African-Caribbean & African Kultural Heritage Initiative (ACKHI)
- Friends of Quarry
- Rose Hill Tenants' and Residents' Association
- Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council
- Oxford Waterside Residents' Association
- Old Marston Parish Council

This report provides an overview of responses received from individuals and community groups throughout the consultation period. It should be noted that due to time constraints, the consultation period was just one week and this may have impacted the number of responses received.

Please note Q1 asked respondents to provide names of groups they are answering on behalf of. This information has been provided above and as such has been omitted in the sequencing below.
Q2: Last year, the Area Co-ordinators conducted a consultation into neighbourhood priorities. The priorities provided at this time have been divided into three categories; Community and Crime, Environment and Housing and Economy.

Which of these categories of priorities do you feel is most relevant to your Area?

Q2 showing Community and Crime as most selected option
Q3: Please select your top three priorities within Environment.

Q3 graph showing ‘tackling litter and improving street scene’ as most selected priority
Q4: Please select your top three priorities within Housing and Economy.

Q4 graph showing ‘effective regulation of houses in multiple occupation’ as most selected priority
Q5: Please select your top three priorities within Community and Crime.

- Building community networks and sustaining community projects
- Establish community identity, energy and excitement in Cowley
- Improve community activities
- Improve community activities, facilities and support young people and vulnerable groups
- Improve perception of Blackbird Leys Estate
- Maintain ongoing programme of school holiday play schemes
- Managing the night-time economy
- More activities and facilities for children and young people
- More family focussed activities
- Other (please specify)
- Responding to the challenges of an ageing population
- Supporting young people
- Tackling anti-social behaviour

Q5 graph showing ‘Tackling anti-social behaviour’ as most selected priority
Q6: Are there any priorities not listed above that you would like us to consider?

- Need also to tackle anti-social behaviour (but can do this by providing better facilities and activities)
- Increase Black representation at local government level. More open/transparency and democratic local government. Adoption of national strategy to involve Black and other Minority communities.
- Creating a ring road bus service so that people don’t have to travel into the City and back out again
- Improve infrastructure, roads are in a terrible state. Install measures (lights or roundabout) to control traffic at foot of Ashhurst Way. Improve Lambourn Road / Ashhurst Way junction
Q7: From the priorities selected and detailed above, which one do you feel is most important?

- Improving community activities. I feel this would help create a better sense of community amongst residents and may encourage people to be more involved and take more pride in their areas.
- Helping Children and Young People.
- Improving community activities, facilities, and supporting young people and vulnerable groups.
- Effective flood relief and planning - whilst not everyone in Oxford lives in an area which floods, when Botley and South Oxford do flood it affects the entire City as well as placing hundreds of homes and businesses at risk in a way that no other single issue does.
- Enabling people to lead healthy lives by promoting well being through the built environment and opportunities to enjoy being outside and exercise. There is too much in the city sacrificed to drinking.
- Improving the street scene both through Council action - clearing the signage jungle, better rubbish bins etc, person action - dropping less litter, showing more respect for their community and community action participating in litter picking and street scene planning and delivery.
- Housing and economy- build/improve local authority housing stock. Homeless a matter needing urgent attention cannot be tackled without more money for affordable housing. Housing association too expensive for low-income groups & can leads to dependence on state benefits/supplement their low income. Good quality housing has many other benefits, health/wellbeing. Healthier people take part in other activities/less drain on state resources. Important in the present economic downturn.
- Difficult to say. I also thought this questionnaire odd in that there are items about Cowley, Blackbird Leys, Jericho etc which I'm sure are important to those communities but not so important to our community. I'm not clear who this consultation is aimed at.
- Housing, as said early, supply has been severely constricted but demand hasn't. This has driven up prices to unsustainable levels and has produced huge inequality. Unfortunately the generation of people that currently make decisions have got very wealthy from the immoral housing situation whereas the younger generations have been left out.
- Northern Gateway Development. The Westgate is a waste of money - the centre should remain, as it is - a wonderful mix of old and new. Use the North to provide employment sites so that people do not have to commute into the City.
- A decent bus service to Cowley centre is essential for Rose Hill residents to be able to participate in employment, shopping, leisure and social activities.
- Conversion of family houses into multi occupation / flats changes the whole character and nature of an area = more parking, more noise, a transient population - may be creating the 'sink' estates of the future.
- Community Networks.
- Tackling litter and graffiti.
- Effective regulation of houses in multiple occupation is most important to me to stop people misusing the law.