

## Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill - Please support this chance to continue to engage people in politics

We write to ask you to please support the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill. The Bill will improve the original Sustainable Communities Act 2007 that has already seen one hundred councils, and their citizens - including many of our members - put forward three hundred ideas on how to create and protect vibrant communities. This is exciting and inspiring given people's current levels of disengagement and disillusionment with politics.

The Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill will do the following things:














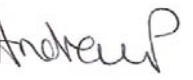

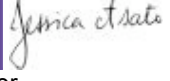

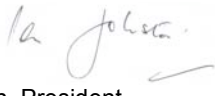



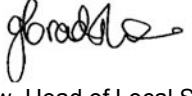





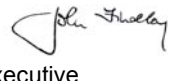












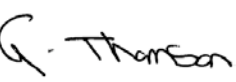
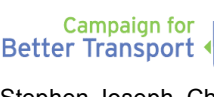
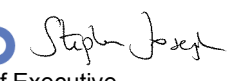



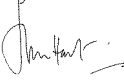





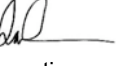

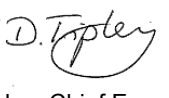
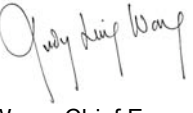



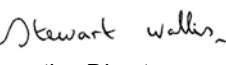



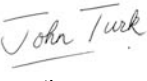
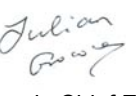
- 1. Create a rolling programme for proposals** so that more councils and citizens can be involved in the Act's process. There is great public interest in this.
- 2. Involve Parish and Town Councils** by formally including them in the process when their Local Authorities choose to use the Act and by also allowing them to put forward suggestions for government action via their County Associations. Very many Parish and Town Councils were involved in the campaign for the Act but are now becoming disillusioned that they have been omitted from the process. The new Bill will prevent that.
- 3. Involve citizens further by empowering them to petition their Local Authorities to use the Act.** Many citizens have been unhappy about the fact that they can only be involved in the Act if their Local Authority chooses to be. The Bill will give them the power to petition their Local Authorities to get involved, so that residents in their areas can too. Petitioning is already government policy.
- 4. Proper publishing of the Local Spending Reports (LSRs).** The former Minister (Phil Woolas) said the LSRs would require government to publish a local breakdown of spending and proposed spending by all public bodies, so people can see how their money is spent. But the LSRs currently contain information mostly about local government bodies. The new Bill would put this right.

The Bill would increase the involvement of people in democracy and help create sustainable communities. **All parties have expressed support for these ideas.**

We ask you to please

- sign Early Day Motion 143 in support of the Bill (a form is enclosed for you to sign and hand in to the Table Office), and
- **urge relevant Ministers in your government to, if required, agree to give the Bill extra time or to speed up the procedure in this short session.**

Yours sincerely

   Mervyn Kohler, Special Advisor Age Concern and Help the Aged	  Mike Jeram, National Secretary UNISON	  Hugh Lanning, Deputy General Secretary Public and Commercial Services Union	  Billy Hayes, General Secretary Communication Workers Union
  Nael Lawson, Chair Compass	  Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive National Council for Voluntary Organisations	  Ruth Bond, Chair National Federation of Women's Institutes	  Andrew Pakes, Co-Chair Socialist Environment and Resources Association
  Jessica Asato, Acting Director Progress	  Ian Johnston, President Police Superintendents' Association	  Paul McKeever, Chairman Police Federation of England and Wales	  Gemma Bradshaw, Head of Local Sustainability Local Government Information Unit
  Andy Atkins, Executive Director Friends of the Earth	  Doug Parr, Policy Director Greenpeace UK	  John Wright, National Chairman Federation of Small Businesses	  John Findlay, Chief Executive National Association of Local Councils
  Mike Benner, Chief Executive CAMRA - the Campaign for Real Ale	  Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General Muslim Council of Britain	  Dot Gibson, General Secretary National Pensioners' Convention	  Suleman Khonat, President National Federation of Retail Newsagents
  Michael Gelling, Chair Tenants and Residents Organisations of England	  Sue Holden, Chief Executive Woodland Trust	  George Thomson, General Secretary National Federation of SubPostmasters	  Stephen Joseph, Chief Executive Campaign for Better Transport
  Peter Facey, Director Unlock Democracy	  Simon Hart, Chief Executive Countryside Alliance	  Tony Armstrong, Executive Director Living Streets	  Nick Randle, Chief Executive Society of Local Council Clerks
  James Lowman, Chief Executive Association of Convenience Stores	  Debbie Tripley, Chief Executive Environmental Law Foundation	  Judy Ling Wong, Chief Executive Black Environment Network	  Adrian Gane, Director General Country Land and Business Association
  Stewart Wallis, Executive Director new economics foundation	  Shaun Spiers, Chief Executive Campaign for the Protection of Rural England	  John Turk, Chief Executive National Pharmacy Association	  Julian Grocock, Chief Executive SIBA - the Society of Independent Brewers

Also signed by: Sam Younger - Chief Executive of **Shelter**, Kevin Curley - Chief Executive of the **National Association for Voluntary and Community Action**, Ron Bailey - Partnership Organiser of the **Sustainable Energy Partnership** and Steve Shaw - National Co-ordinator of **Local Works**