

West Lancashire Borough Council Outcome of Proposals Submitted in July 2009 Under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007

15 December 2010

Summary taken from:

Decisions on proposals submitted following the 2008 invitation (ISBN: 978-1-4098-2586-9)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/scadecisions>

Requests the Government will help Councils to implement themselves, or explore further

Proposal

Local authorities to keep a greater proportion of Right to Buy receipts to enable house building & estate remodelling.

Decision comment

- The Government confirmed in the spending review that pooling of Right-to-Buy receipts will continue for the Spending Review period. Recent provisions have allowed authorities to retain receipts from dwellings built or acquired after July 2008, as well as receipts arising from Social Homebuy disposals and we can discuss with the councils how they may be able to do this. We are considering the impact on HRA reform and will announce full details of this shortly.

Requests within proposals which will not be implemented

Proposal

Lobby for changes to the Treaty of Rome to encourage economic stimulus.

Decision comment

- The Government is unable to implement these proposals as European Union (EU) law is designed to prevent non-discrimination and equal treatment in all procurements.
- A 'buy British' or 'buy local' approach would not allow suppliers from other member states to compete for these contracts. There are ways, however, within the EU Rules to encourage bids from local suppliers – for example with food, specifying fresh, seasonal produce, organic produce and having contract conditions on frequency of delivery.
- Contract award criteria are based on value for money (or MEAT) criteria and assessed from the perspective of the contracting authority. It is not permissible to take account of food miles or environmental impacts at contract award stage.

- The Office of Government Commerce works closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on food and sustainability issues, advising them on what can be achieved within the legal and policy framework governing public procurement.
- The Government recognises the invaluable contribution of small and medium sized enterprises to the economy and is committed in its Coalition Agreement to promoting small business procurement in the public sector. Work is progressing on improving transparency in public procurement and the Office for Government Commerce website currently contains guidance on the flagging of opportunities suitable for small and medium sized enterprises, use of streamlined pre-qualification questionnaires and advice on supply chains. The Efficiency and Reform Group within the Cabinet Office is working on further simplification of procurement timescales to make it even easier to do business with the public sector

Proposal

Re-direct funding for training contracts to local authorities, to ensure locality-specific training needs can be addressed and enable the establishment of practical learning/training & social enterprise business hubs.

Decision comment

- The Government's commitment to free colleges and other training organisations from central control will allow them to deliver what is required locally in discussion and partnership with local authorities and other key local bodies such as the local enterprise partnership. If this new arrangement is to work efficiently, the distribution of public funding to the national network of approved colleges and training organisations must be streamlined and simplified.
- New arrangements being introduced will give the Skills Funding Agency responsibility for distributing funding to colleges for young people's provision too so that bureaucracy and duplication of funding and management information arrangements are kept to an absolute minimum

The full report is available from

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/scadecisions>