

Question from Ms Susana Piohtee, Hereford

As you will know, after a great deal of campaigning, the Sustainable Communities Act is now a reality.

In the introductory information it says: 'the Sustainable Communities Act is a new law that empowers citizens and councils to ask for help from government to promote sustainable communities – and then requires the government to reach agreement with them. This is NOT the usual consultation everyone is so fed up with – government cannot just say 'no' to all the good proposals and ideas that local people have. This is new wording and precedent in law.

The whole process will start in October when the government will write to councils inviting them to 'opt in' to the Sustainable Communities Act. It is crucial that your council does this, otherwise you and your community will be excluded from the process and your voice will not be heard.'

Given the amount of development planned for our county over the next years, this Act will provide The Herefordshire Council with a useful tool with which to challenge government on the appropriateness of some of its requirements of this Council. How are you going to respond to this invitation to 'opt in' when invited to do so in October?