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MPs BILL TO AID PARISH COUNCILS AND TRANSPARENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAKES PROGRESS

North East Bedfordshire MP Alistair Burt has succeeded in achieving a second reading of his Private Members Bill, the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (Amendment) Bill. In the House of Commons last Friday, February 26th, the Bill progressed to its committee stage, though shortness of time in the Parliamentary schedule still makes it unlikely that the Bill will become law.

Alistair Burt said 'My Bill takes forward two amendments to the Sustainable Communities Act. This has already been useful in prompting some 300 proposals from communities and groups through their local councils to improve some of the infrastructure in their areas, which in many parts of the country have seen a reduction of community facilities, such as shops or post offices in recent years. My Bill ensures a further round of such proposals, and involves more directly town and parish councils in the process.

I have five town councils and over fifty parish councils in my constituency, who make a great contribution to democracy in the area, and I felt they richly deserved this recognition in the process.

The Bill now proceeds to Committee next week, but after that it will have to move rapidly in the Lords if it is to become law before the shutters come down for a general election.'

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