



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Alan Simpson (Nottingham, South) (Lab): One of the great attractions of such legislation is that it would give local authorities in the UK the same powers and entitlements that they have in other parts of Europe—in France, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Italy—including the right to set energy generating and water recycling standards so as to exceed national targets rather than follow them. Will the Minister look again at the proposals that are being made for policy planning guidelines to give UK local authorities the same across-the-board entitlements as their counterparts in Europe?

Mr. Woolas: My hon. Friend will know that we have our goal of zero carbon homes. We will indeed be considering the points that he raises. Many of the measures already contained in legislation before the House move towards substantial powers being held locally, particularly through the local area agreement process. I am pleased to tell the House that by the end of this week every local authority in England will have a local area agreement.