



Excellence for Leicestershire – Working Together to Deliver Quality Services.

Policy Statement on ‘Better Access to Better Services’



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Foreword by Mr Barber, Leader of the County Council

Leicestershire County Council is embarking upon a journey to design its services to help Leicestershire people to continue to enjoy life in a safe, prosperous, healthy and attractive County.

To achieve this we will need to work in partnership with other service providers to deliver accessible services that not only provide value for money but can also be accessed in a way that meets the needs of Leicestershire people.

We intend this policy statement to demonstrate our intent to work with people in Leicestershire and with other service providers in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to ensure that all our services are co-ordinated jointly and offer choice in how they are accessed.

We recognise that each provider has their own individual identity and autonomy in agreeing a shared vision on accessible services. We believe that working together in true partnership will ensure the development of common goals in delivering Better Access to Better Services.

We will promote our vision as a starting point for discussion between all public service providers to develop a shared vision of working together to deliver accessible services to the people of Leicestershire.

This is the County Council's commitment towards achieving Better Access to Better Services in Leicestershire and all public service providers are invited to join us upon this journey and share this experience together.

Our Vision for Better Access to Better Services

Our Vision of the future is one where public services are accessible and provide choice to all people who live and work and study in Leicestershire. These will be accessible in a way that provides value for money, be better for our customers and of a quality that will deliver a brighter future for Leicestershire to meet the challenges of an information age society and the needs of our communities.

Background

Community services are delivered by a number of different service providers for a variety of different needs.

These services are accessed by people in Leicestershire for many reasons, that may often be linked or overlap. Access to them is available in a number of different ways that might include:

- Face to Face meetings in council premises and in the home
- Visiting buildings
- Using the telephone
- Writing a letter
- Sending an e-mail
- Using the internet
- Interactive digital television

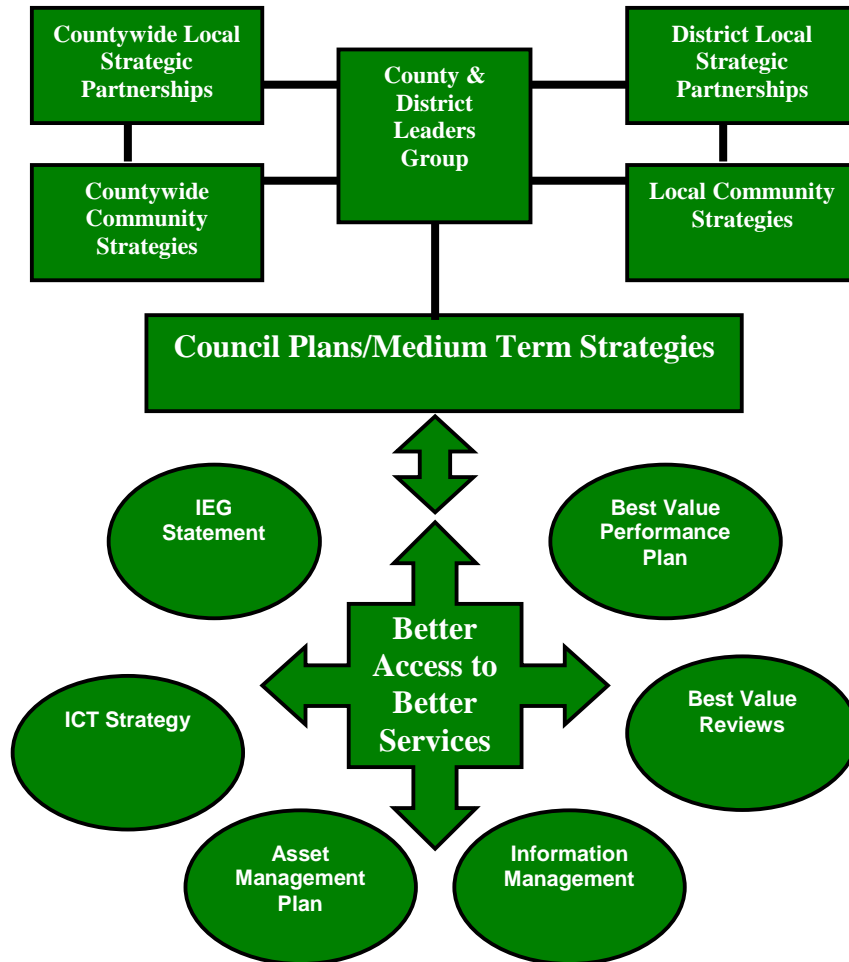
The public sector is being challenged to deliver 100% of services electronically by 2005, whilst continuing to meet the challenges of best value and opportunities for joint delivery of services in partnership with other agencies.

It is important that the delivery and accessibility of community services is determined by the needs or preferences of people using them, the existing services already provided, and the resources available to achieve this, and by working in partnership. The need to utilise and exploit advances in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is important, although it is only one aspect. Therefore, better access to better services should be driven by the following themes:-

- The needs of Leicestershire people
- The location of delivery
- The times of availability
- The method of delivery
- The opportunities for joint delivery
- The effective use of assets.

As well as the potential and suitability for utilising and exploiting advances in ICT.

At this time a range of initiatives that relate to the delivery of, and access to, services and information are being undertaken by the County and District Councils as well as other bodies. These are linked to the principal County Council plans, policies and strategies illustrated in the diagram below. Appendix 1 contains a brief summary showing some of these linkages.



Strategic Aim and Objectives

Community Service providers will each have their own proposals and strategic aims and objectives to guide the work they carry out to deliver services in the future for the people of Leicestershire.

Our Strategic Aim will be to work to offer choice in the way public services are accessed and thus improve access to services for all Leicestershire people. Services will be accessible to all groups in the community and responsive to people's needs and how they choose to access them.

Our Strategic Objective will be to transform our organisation to ensure that access to services is co-ordinated effectively between all our partners and we change the way we 'do business' to achieve our aim. This will ensure that services that people want to access are provided and developed in a way that most appropriately meets their needs, our partners, and our own.

Basic Principles of Accessible Services for Leicestershire

Our Leading Principle will be to ensure that people can access public services in the way that is most convenient for them.

To achieve this we will need to focus the co-ordination and integration of our services within the County to meeting the needs of the people of Leicestershire, and will begin this process by adopting the following basic principles in our approach:-

The Needs of Leicestershire People

- ❑ **Develop consultation strategies and protocols to ensure consultation is co-ordinated between services**
- ❑ **Establish the needs of Leicestershire people for the public services they receive and the preferred method of access.**

The Location of Delivery

- ❑ **Assess different options for the location of a range of integrated service outlets where public services can be accessed.**
- ❑ **Provide both mobile and static locations where people can access public services.**

The Times of Availability

- ❑ **Explore the options to extend the times and availability of public services.**
- ❑ **Assess the potential for electronic delivery outside traditional working hours.**

The Method of Delivery

- ❑ **Assess the different methods available to deliver each service.**
- ❑ **Tailor public services so that they can be accessed by the most suitable method.**

The Opportunities for Joint Delivery

- ❑ **Support effective partnerships to achieve real improvements and economies of scale in accessing public services.**
- ❑ **Explore and develop new and improved arrangements to co-ordinate efficient access to public services between agencies.**

The Effective Use of Assets

- ❑ **Transform the way we 'do business' as an organisation to focus on providing better access to better services.**
- ❑ **Manage our assets (staff, property, information, & finance) to ensure they are used effectively.**

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**Appendix 1 - Leicestershire County Council Policy
Commitments on 'Better Access to Better Services'**

