

Have your say on our proposed Communities Strategy

Leicestershire County Council
Working in partnership with communities

June 2014



We're consulting the public on this proposed strategy from 23 June to 1 September 2014. Your feedback is important and will inform the final version of the strategy, and help to develop a delivery plan. Please have your say at www.leics.gov.uk/communities_strategy

What is the Communities Strategy?

The Leicestershire Communities Strategy sets out the way in which Leicestershire County Council proposes to work with communities in the coming months and years.

The financial challenges facing the Council mean that budgets to provide support to all communities in the County are being reduced at a time when these communities are being asked to deal with the practical impacts of a range of funding reductions and service withdrawals in their local area

The council therefore proposes to focus the resources still available to it on helping communities to support the individuals and families who are most in need, and enabling community groups to provide services for their communities, including services that the county council can no longer afford to provide.

We have identified eight 'building blocks' – the things that need to be in place for communities to be strong and resilient. We are proposing changes to ensure that the support we can provide through these 'building blocks' helps us to deliver the following two priorities:

Priority 1: Helping communities to support vulnerable people

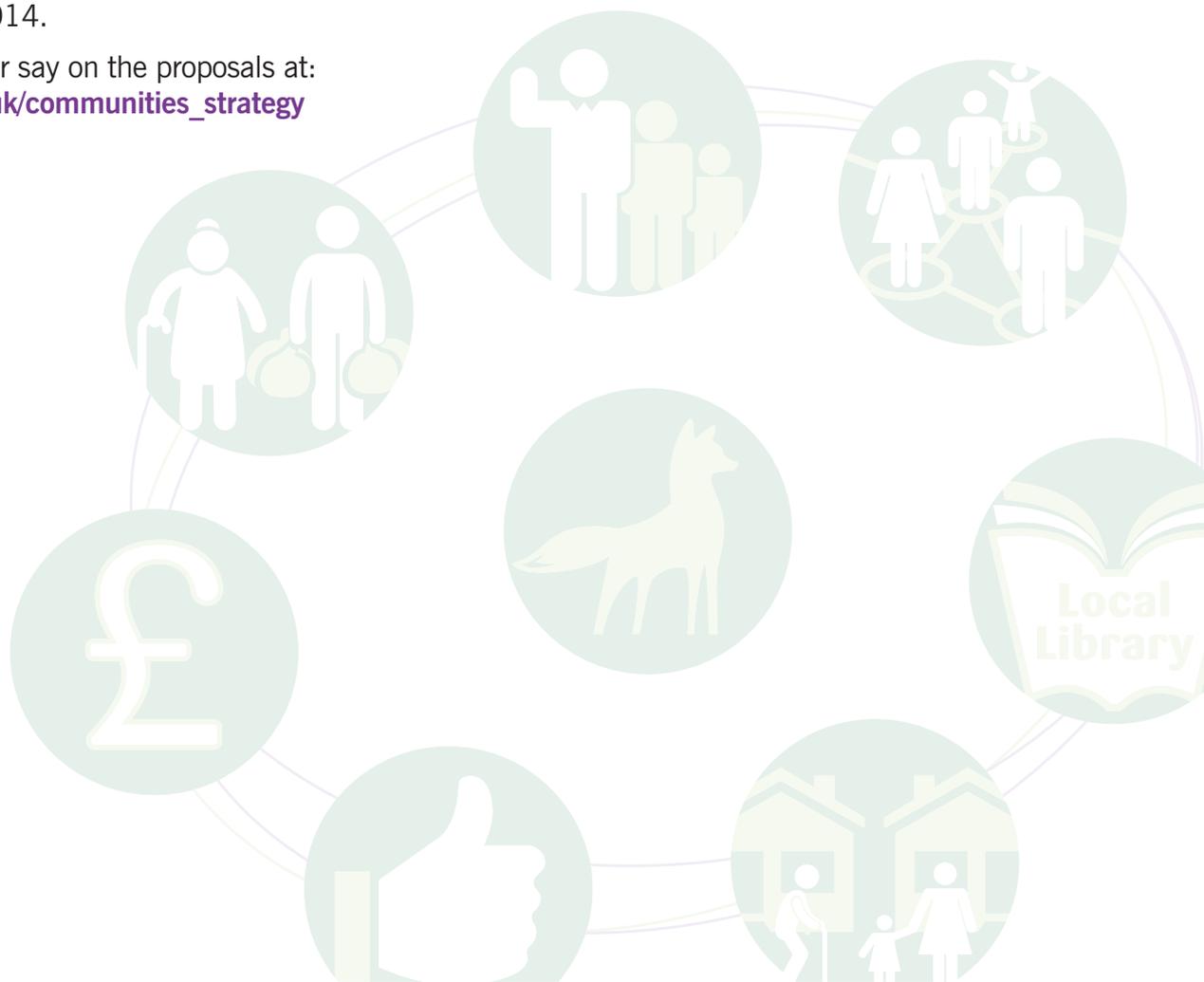
Priority 2: Helping communities to design and deliver services

To achieve that, we also need to ensure we enable and support the voluntary sector in Leicestershire to develop its potential further – which is why our third priority is:

Priority 3: Effective commissioning of, and support for, the voluntary sector.

We welcome your views - your feedback will inform the final version of the strategy and help us to develop a delivery plan. We're consulting with the public on this proposal from 23 June to 1 September 2014.

Please have your say on the proposals at:
www.leics.gov.uk/communities_strategy



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Four case studies have been included within this document as examples of activity initiated and led by communities in Leicestershire and beyond.

We have chosen two case studies that demonstrate the role that communities can play in supporting vulnerable people and two different examples of service delivery which communities have taken on.

The case studies are for illustrative purposes only.



Councillor Pam Posnett,
Cabinet Lead Member -
Communities

1. Foreword

In my role as Cabinet Lead Member for Communities, I am pleased to be able to introduce the council's new approach to working with the communities of Leicestershire. This is a period of change and challenge for all organisations in the public sector, with shrinking budgets, growing demand for services and increased customer expectations.

Our approach to working with communities has always been to enable and empower local areas, in that we have tried to support communities to tackle the issues that matter to them. The current climate means that we need to make some difficult decisions and prioritise community activity that supports us in delivering our priorities, whilst doing what we can to continue to help communities to help themselves.

The council is in the process of transforming the way in which it plans and delivers services. We are therefore asking the communities of Leicestershire to work with us to ensure that we maximise the impact of the reduced funding available to us. Truthfully, this will mean communities doing more (for example running services and recruiting volunteers to support people in need), but will also mean that communities have greater influence over services, new opportunities to participate and, ultimately, more control over their own destiny.

Councillor Pam Posnett, Cabinet Lead Member - Communities

Building the resilience of communities to reduce demand on high cost services

CASE STUDY: DEMENTIA CAFÉ – MARKET HARBOROUGH



Background

Harborough has the highest proportion of the 65 plus age group in the County, and the NHS estimates that by 2025 10-15% of families within Leicestershire will experience some form of dementia. During the formative stages of the project, volunteers worked hard to assess the need for a 'new' service and spoke to a lot of care groups over a wide spectrum.

A local initiative to support those newly diagnosed with dementia and their families was established in 2011. Sessions provide an opportunity for people to get together, with those they care for, to have time out, to share information and meet others. Since March 2011 more than 120 people have signed up as members and a steady stream of new members are finding their way to our door.

Developments include a members' resource library, the delivery of memory workshops at monthly meetings and most recently a 'Singing for Memories' group meets on the First Tuesday of the month at the same venue.

Benefits

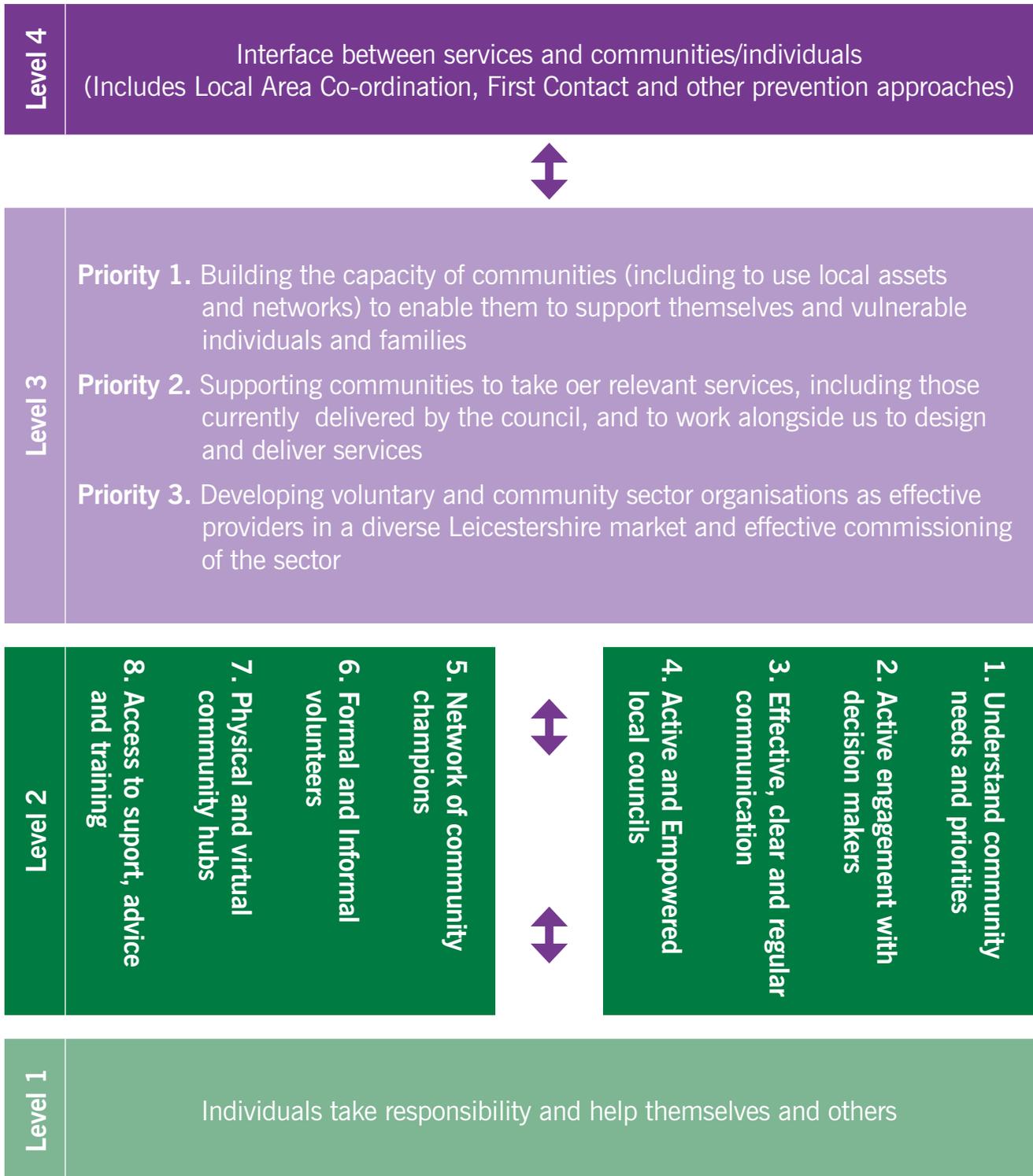
A new diagnosis of dementia is a devastating and isolating experience. The café is one of the few facilities in Harborough district that offers support to both the cared for and carers. Everyone is made welcome and speakers are invited along to talk on topics of interest to members; often there are fun activities such as 'laughing yoga', but above all each meeting is an opportunity for coffee, cake and conversation.

During its 'set-up', the café benefited from the expertise of the NHS Community Mental Health Team (with whom the café has a partnership agreement) and Voluntary Action South Leicestershire. On-going funding has been via a two-year sponsorship deal with Sainsbury's supermarket in Harborough which provided both direct funding, provisions for café meetings, and supported a group of staff to become volunteers and help at café events. The Rotary Club of Market Harborough and Robert Smyth Academy have also joined forces to provide a regular Christmas Special Concert, with the school's renowned jazz band playing.

2. Overview

- 2.1** This strategy sets out the county council's thinking about how we work with Leicestershire communities (both communities of place/geography and communities of interest) in a new public service environment. There is less money, increasing demand for services and major changes to both public services and the welfare system are underway.
- 2.2** The council has a track record of empowering communities by helping them to 'help themselves', including by supporting communities to identify local needs and develop their own solutions. There are a number of existing examples of community involvement in service delivery, including snow, flood and heritage wardens, and of volunteering in support of council services, for example composting champions and youth offending service volunteers.
- 2.3** Transformational change is required within the council to balance the books yet ensure that we are still able to protect the most vulnerable individuals and communities. It is essential that the council works with partners in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to reduce demand for services and that we continue to encourage and empower communities to work alongside us to deliver key services to Leicestershire citizens. The council's approach is captured in a new vision for the council: **"Leading Leicestershire by working with our communities and partners for the benefit of everyone"**.
- 2.4** The vision is underpinned by six strategic imperatives, two of which are of particular relevance to this strategy:
- Support and protect the most vulnerable people and communities
 - Enable and support communities, individuals and families
- 2.5** To be successful, the council and its partners will have to focus, amongst other things, on prevention and early intervention in order to stop problems arising (wherever possible) which, in turn, will keep costs down. This means that we need to move away from a generic, 'one size fits all' approach to something that is more targeted and responsive to community needs.
- 2.6** The council has therefore identified three priorities for working in partnership with communities:
- Priority 1: Building the resilience and capacity of communities to support themselves and vulnerable individuals and families - thus reducing demand on public services
 - Priority 2: Supporting community groups to take over relevant services, including those currently delivered by the county council, and to work more closely alongside us to design and deliver services
 - Priority 3: Developing voluntary and community sector organisations in Leicestershire as effective providers in a mixed, diverse market which supports delivery of services and support for vulnerable people, and effective commissioning of the sector
- 2.7** These priorities (shown on page 6 at Level 3) underpin our approach to transforming public services in Leicestershire. The rest of the model is shown below and the remainder of this strategy provides more detail about our proposed approach, including case studies to illustrate the potential opportunities for communities and the voluntary sector to work alongside us to deliver real change across Leicestershire.

Leicestershire Communities Model



3. The case for change

Less money

- 3.1** Leicestershire County Council has to save at least £110m (or a third of its current budget) by 2018. The unprecedented scale of the cuts requires us to transform completely the way in which we deliver services, including by delivering some services in partnership with communities and changing the way in which we commission services.

Rising demand

- 3.2** This challenge is compounded by rising demand and an ageing population. We are getting older, living longer and working proportionally less over the course of our lives. The amount of time that people are reliant on high-cost public services is increasing and costs are escalating accordingly. The flipside of this is that there is potentially more people resource e.g. to engage in volunteering and take on community projects.
- 3.3** This longevity presents a significant challenge to public services, not least where the roles of different public agencies overlap, for example when people are moving between their homes, care settings and hospitals. The big pressure on the NHS is on acute services in hospitals which, if tackled effectively, will place more emphasis on primary care in home settings (where significant local authority cuts are projected). This means that local authorities and health partners must realign and integrate resources, working together to keep people out of high-cost hospital beds and in their homes for longer, and there is clearly a key preventative role for communities and the voluntary sector.

Radical reform

- 3.4** The Welfare State is shrinking and both schools and GP surgeries are being individually empowered. Communities, charities and businesses are being invited to manage public services previously only supplied by the public sector, and there is an increasing role for social enterprises and other social businesses and for the use of new tools, including asset transfers. Inevitably, the role of local government and the wider public sector is changing.

Demand management

- 3.5** As well as ensuring that we run services more efficiently and pay less for them, we need to reduce demand – something that the public sector has struggled to do. Since its creation in the 1940s, the NHS has undoubtedly improved the nation's health - we live longer and fewer conditions prove fatal - however, becoming healthier has, in fact, increased demand on health services.
- 3.6** The majority of public money is spent on targeted services for vulnerable people, it is the area of biggest growth in demand and therefore where demand management is likely to yield most benefits. The council spends a large proportion of its budget on meeting the needs of the ageing population, people with physical and learning disabilities and looked after children. We therefore believe that there is a new role for communities to help to support these vulnerable individuals, reducing or delaying their need for services.

Changing services

3.7 Service provision is increasingly driven by service users. Personal budgets are used by adults and the families of children with disabilities to purchase social care services that are more orientated to their needs. People want to be cared for at home for as long as possible and to access services within their local community rather than a central location.

Rethinking public services

3.8 The combined effect of these changes will be fewer public services available to fewer people. As we focus our remaining resources on vulnerable people, less resource will be available to support universal or generic services for all citizens in all places.

3.9 We therefore need to rethink public services - what we do, who does it and how it is done. This includes recalibrating what people and their public services can realistically expect of each other - if local government is doing less, communities will inevitably feel the impact, but at the same time there is an opportunity for them to help themselves and to be supported by the county council in doing so. This strategy sets out how Leicestershire County Council intends to work with communities in these challenging, but also potentially rewarding, circumstances.

3.10 Communities also have a key role to play in supporting the effective commissioning of services by the council and other agencies. They are ideally placed to help identify key local stakeholders, understand the needs and aspirations of local people, map assets, establish priorities and to generate and assess options to tackle priorities. At a later point they can play a role in delivering services, or supporting their delivery, and help to evaluate progress so that services are fully tested from a local perspective.

3.11 So, in summary, why develop a Communities Strategy?

- **We can't deliver change solely on an organisational basis** - as demonstrated by the social care and health example on page 8, we (public sector, voluntary sector and communities) have to work, plan and commission services together wherever possible.
- **The change can't be solely service user based** - we need to get to people before they become vulnerable and dependent service users. Communities can help us to identify the individuals and families at risk of vulnerability and the specific issues that they face.
- **We need to build the capacity and resilience of individuals, communities and the local voluntary sector** to reduce the number of people who need to access health and care services, thus reducing the footfall through high cost services.
- **Services will inevitably need to be more targeted** – we need to move away from providing generic support (communities may be able to step in here) and target our resources to the people and places that most need them (i.e. where they will have maximum impact) whilst, at the same time, doing all that we can to support others to 'help themselves'.
- **Our ambition is to deliver the 'best possible services within the budgets available' by working the 'Leicestershire pound'** – we need to maximise both the sources of funding available to, and the resources (e.g. volunteer time) available within, communities. This includes recognising the vital role of County Councillors as 'community champions' and the potential role of council staff within their own communities.

Building the resilience of communities to reduce demand on high cost services

CASE STUDY: THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME: LONG CLAWSON

Partly funded by a £3,847 grant from the county council, the Good Neighbour Scheme offers practical help to residents of Long Clawson in the following ways ([information taken from their website](#)):

- Companionship for folks who would like a chat and a cup of tea or maybe a game of Scrabble.
- Support while recuperating from illness with things like gardening; taking the children to school; light housework or caring for pets; transport to hospital appointments, doctors, opticians, hairdressers, dentists or shopping.
- Household tasks such as changing light bulbs; replacing batteries or moving small items of furniture.
- Help with writing letters or filling in non-legal forms; reading to people with a visual impairment; learning to use email and the Internet.

A co-ordinator is available to call between 8am and 8pm every day. This co-ordinator will then arrange for one of the registered and DBS checked volunteers to provide the support requested.

The scheme is available to everyone in the village and is a good example of how support at an earlier stage could help prevent users requiring high cost services in the future (for example, by helping to avoid a fall in the home which could result in a hospital stay). It is also a service which helps reduce demand on public services which, arguably, could not be delivered by a public service because people often only seek help from formal services at the stage when a high cost service is required.



4. The background

- 4.1** We are not starting with a blank piece of paper. There are encouraging signs that individuals, communities and the organisations working with them (including town and parish councils) are increasingly aware of, and willing to be a part of a response to, the need to make changes to public services.
- 4.2** Two recent consultations have helped to shape the approach outlined in this Strategy:
- The county council undertook a county wide consultation on how we should reorganise our budgets, which received over 7,200 responses from residents, stakeholders and staff
 - The county council also undertook a survey of over 140 people and organisations to ascertain their understanding of the 'Big Society' and expectations of the role of communities and individuals in the future.
- 4.3** A message from the latter consultation neatly summarises the current situation:
- "There has to be honest discussions about the reality of potential cuts to services, and communities need to think about what they could do to protect those services that are vital to their local area – to think about what they would be prepared to lose in favour of those that they would not want to lose."*
- 4.4** There are three specific dimensions to our work around communities. The first is a longer term **'demand management' role** - building capacity and resilience in local communities to encourage them to find solutions that improve outcomes for vulnerable individuals and families, which reflects the imperative to move people out of high cost services.
- 4.5** A shorter term priority is around the role of **communities in taking over some services currently delivered by the public sector, or working alongside the public sector to deliver services** e.g. a community could 'top up' a service earmarked for a reduction in hours. This involves working with communities to identify opportunities and enabling them to develop viable alternative or additional services.
- 4.6** Linked to this is our third priority which focusses on how the council works with **the voluntary sector**, including our role in developing organisations in the sector as effective providers in a mixed, diverse market that also includes individuals, communities, social businesses and the private sector.

Communities taking on services currently delivered by the county council

CASE STUDY: A COMMUNITY RUN LIBRARY: CHALFONT ST GILES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



“We are a 100% volunteer organisation - all unpaid... individuals with skills such as management, financial, marketing and fundraising skills are all useful. The organisation also needs access to the necessary expertise to handle the relevant legal issues including data protection and safeguarding.

We have around 50 volunteers from all walks of life, mostly retired people but not exclusively so. We operate with two volunteers on duty in the library at any one time and typically each volunteer serves in the library for half a day once a fortnight. The county council provided initial library system training and we continue to hold update training sessions as required.

What the public gets

Residents use the community library in the same way as any county library.

- Access into a wider library network, so our users have online reservation access to over 6 million books.
- We have increased the library's opening hours from 20 hours to 34.5 hours per week.
- We have increased the book stock by 60%.
- The library's lending has increased every year from 2007-12.

Conclusions

Our experience indicates that there are opportunities to give small libraries a new lease of life whilst saving money.

The model that we have followed in Chalfont St Giles is not universally applicable. Our library is small with light to moderate use. Buckinghamshire is a relatively prosperous county with a sufficient pool of people with the time and skills to operate the local library. Trying to follow the same model in a busy town library in a deprived area would, I think, be less likely to succeed.

Nevertheless the overriding requirement for a successful volunteer-run small library is, in my view, a strong local community with a desire to keep the local library open. It can be done!”

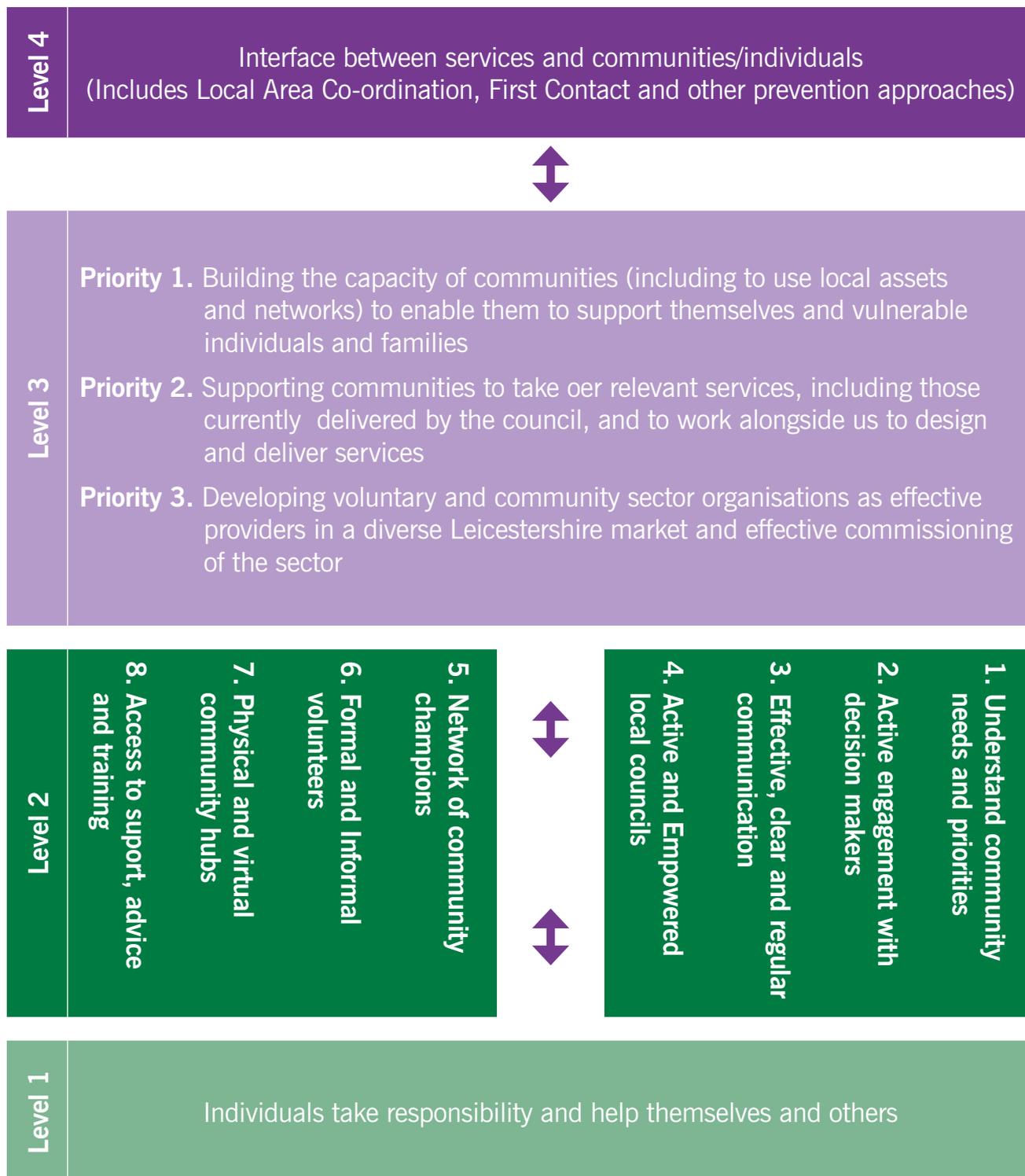
Tony Hoare, Chairman of Chalfont St Giles Community Library

(A full version of this case study is available online)

5. The communities model

- 5.1** In order to support the effective transformation of council services, each section/department of the council will need to consider, in conjunction with the voluntary sector and representatives of communities, the opportunity to do things differently and better. For every proposed transformational change (i.e. a proposed change to, reduction in, or removal of service) there should therefore be evidence that full consideration has been given to the potential role of communities in helping to manage demand for a particular service through an early intervention approach and/or designing and delivering this service in the future.
- 5.2** Additional short-term investment of resources by the county council will be required in communities and the groups that represent them (including parish and town councils), on an 'invest to save' basis, to build their ambition, knowledge and capacity. The Council will also need to provide, or enable access through our partners in the voluntary and community sector, accessible advice and practical support (for example in recruiting and retaining volunteers) to enable communities to take on a new or extended role.
- 5.3** Early and honest conversations with communities about the relative priorities of different services that are subject to change, and about the opportunities and risks involved in delivering services and doing things differently, will be essential.
- 5.4** The diagram on page 13 sets out the four dimensions to our proposed approach to working with communities. These are described on the following page (bottom up):

Leicestershire Communities Model



Level 1: Individuals and communities help themselves and others

The bottom, foundation level of the diagram highlights the need for all of this activity to be underpinned by work to encourage individuals to make better choices, including how to live healthier lives and how and where to live. We also want to encourage people to take responsibility for themselves and others, including by supporting physical and emotional wellbeing, to reduce the risk of escalation into services.

Level 2: The 'building blocks'

The third level shows the 'building blocks' of the Communities Strategy. Each of these is described in more detail in chapter six, including proposed 'enabling actions'.

Level 3: Our three priorities

The second level in the diagram reflects our three priorities:

Priority one: Communities support vulnerable individuals and families

ROLE OF COMMUNITIES:

Communities understand what might make individuals and families in their community vulnerable at different points in their lives. There is a variety of informal support from friends, family and communities for vulnerable individuals and families, and a range of community activities and events support physical and mental health and well-being and enhance community cohesion.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

There is a common, shared understanding of vulnerability and the factors that might make individuals/families vulnerable at different life stages. Public sector partners understand and refer into the various mechanisms that are in place to alleviate this vulnerability including First Contact, Local Area Co-ordination, Leicestershire Welfare Provision, Dementia Friends, Keep Safe Places etc.

KEY ACTIONS:

- A shared understanding of vulnerability and the needs of vulnerable people in Leicestershire
- A vulnerability toolkit and training package
- A communication campaign to highlight what communities and individuals can do to support the vulnerable and help reduce future vulnerability
- A holistic package of prevention-based support for vulnerable people, including Local Area Co-ordination, Leicestershire Welfare Provision, First Contact, Dementia Friendly Communities and Keep Safe Places
- 'Proof of concept' of Local Area Co-ordination at eight learning sites from September 2014

Priority two: Communities design and deliver services

ROLE OF COMMUNITIES:

Community groups, town and parish councils and the voluntary sector participate in the design and delivery of key services, specifically those devolved from, or delivered in partnership with, the county council. Communities have a clear understanding of their role and level of accountability and receive an appropriate level of advice, support and funding.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

Councillors and staff understand alternative and innovative service delivery models and there is an ambition to design and deliver relevant services in partnership with communities. There is agreement about the specific activities that communities and the voluntary sector are best placed to deliver. A range of tools are in place to facilitate service devolution from the council.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Commitment across the council to consider alternative service delivery models and opportunities for the involvement of communities and the voluntary sector within all transformation and service redesign activity
- A consistent, but tailored, approach to engaging communities, town and parish councils and voluntary sector organisations in service change planning
- A package of 'service devolution' support (including models, a toolkit, examples of good practice and named contacts)
- Equality and human rights 'proofing' of all key proposed service changes
- An agreed approach to 'right to challenge'
- An agreed corporate approach to supporting social business models, including staff 'spin outs' from the council to deliver services previously delivered 'in house'

Priority three: Effective commissioning of the voluntary sector

ROLE OF COMMUNITIES:

Voluntary sector organisations (local, county-wide and national) are effective providers of services devolved from, or identified as priorities by, the council. The voluntary and community sector operates as part of a vibrant and diverse Leicestershire market that also includes individuals, communities, social businesses and the private sector. The voluntary and community sector understands and has an opportunity to influence and shape council commissioning priorities.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

The council staff commission effectively from the voluntary sector and community groups, based on a shared, population-based view of needs and clearly defined outcomes.

KEY ACTIONS:

- The Effective Commissioning programme recognises the role of the voluntary and community sector, alongside providers from other sectors
- Commissioning from the voluntary sector prioritises the council's transformation priorities, including around early intervention/prevention and service devolution
- Council commissioning realises added social, economic and environmental value
- Effective management of all contracts with voluntary and community sector organisations
- Work with the county infrastructure organisation (CIO) to develop (and potentially reposition) the voluntary and community sector in Leicestershire

Level 4: The interface between services and communities/individuals

The interface between services and communities/individuals will become increasingly important. There are a number of different enablers that make up this interface, one of which is Local Area Coordination (LAC).

A 'proof of concept' of LAC will begin in eight learning sites across the two Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)* areas from summer 2014.

Local Area Coordinators (LACs) are based within the community, have close links to the local GP practice(s), and work with between 50-65 individuals and their families at any time. They provide a vital interface between vulnerable individuals/families, services and communities and will underpin more intensive support such as the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) programme. They are a single, accessible point of contact, identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals and families, particularly those with disabilities, frail older people and those with mental health issues, before they hit crisis. Their role is to help prevent individuals and families from needing to access services, and to provide a 'safe landing' when people are moving out of services, including the SLF programme - safeguarding vulnerable adults, children and young people will be a key consideration. As such, they are an important part of the new Leicestershire unified prevention offer (set out in our Better Care Plan**).

* CCGs are groups of GPs that work together with patients, healthcare professionals and local authorities/communities to plan and design local health services in England. They buy healthcare services including community health services, rehabilitative care and planned hospital care.

** The Better Care Fund is a single budget to support health and social care services to work more closely together in local areas.

Communities taking on services currently delivered by the county council

CASE STUDY: THE ANSTEY AND THURCASTON FOOTPATH



The need for a footpath was first raised by local Anstey mum Emma Bown who regularly walked her children to playgroup in Thurcaston. Before the footpath, the shortest pedestrian route between Thurcaston and Anstey was two miles over fields. A potential quicker route was identified via road, but there was no room to walk alongside and it was hazardous with the speed limit being 60mph.

Background

Anstey Parish Council and Thurcaston & Cropston Parish Council set up a joint committee for the delivery of the project. Organisational aspects were shared between the two parish councils. Anstey Parish Council arranged storage and transport of the materials and got permission from landowners to cut-back hedgerows; their Quality Parish Council status (giving them 'the general power of competence') was helpful with undertaking legal aspects of the project. Thurcaston & Cropston Parish Council provided many of the volunteers. £9,311 was secured from Leicestershire County Council, with both parish councils contributing a further £1,000 each.

20 volunteers laid the footpath in September 2012, assisted by two excavator machine operators.

Benefits

The two villages now benefit from being accessible by pedestrians, allowing better quality of life for parents walking children between villages, dog walkers, joggers and children walking home to Thurcaston from Anstey Martin High School rather than relying on lifts from parents. In addition, there is now safe pedestrian access to the riding school and a reduction of traffic along Anstey Lane, benefiting residents.

Support provided

Thanks to the volunteers, the project came in on time and on budget. The Co-op kindly provided lunch for volunteers every day at a subsidised cost. E L Fencing provided their drive way for vehicles and storage of materials and tea/coffee-making facilities were also kindly provided. Park View Riding School allowed excess soil to be placed on their land.

The council helped to identify land-ownership, provided service reports for BT lines and sewerage pipes, organised the road closure and looked into liability issues. A Highways Engineer was on site each day and his expertise was invaluable. The parish councils are undertaking the on-going maintenance of the path as detailed in a legal agreement with the council.

6. Delivering the Communities Strategy

We have identified eight 'building blocks' that need to be in place for communities to be strong and resilient enough to be able to support vulnerable people and service devolution. The tables below set out the role of both communities and the county council and include examples of potential actions. As the detail of the council's 24 transformation priorities emerges, additional, service-specific actions will be added into the delivery plan, which will be informed by the consultation process and in place by October 2014:

Building block 1: Understand community needs and priorities		
Role of Communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>Communities of 'place' (including town and parish councils) and 'interest' have a clear, evidence-based understanding of the needs and priorities of <u>all</u> sections of their specific community, particularly the most vulnerable and hardest to reach.</p>	<p>Information about community needs/priorities is shared effectively and enables the council to make evidence-based decisions that are taken on a place (not department or organisational) basis.</p> <p>Community champions provide a means of accessing up to date 'soft' intelligence about specific communities to inform service design and transformation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and support to communities about effectively capturing community needs • Effectively share key intelligence on community needs and priorities with partners and communities • Use this intelligence, alongside a range of other insight, to make evidence-based decisions, including around service transformation

Building block 2: Active engagement with decision makers		
Role of communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>Communities have regular opportunities to access and influence service providers and decision makers before key decisions are made, including bespoke forums to bring communities and voluntary sector organisations together when relevant.</p> <p>A network of "community champions" act as a conduit between service providers and the community.</p>	<p>Engagement with communities is targeted around council priorities and includes decision makers and community champions.</p> <p>'Public' meetings are held on issues identified by the council and the community as a priority and, wherever possible, this engagement is co-ordinated across the council to avoid 'engagement overload'.</p> <p>An independently facilitated Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group provides effective external challenge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a new engagement model for the council in transformation and service planning (part of the Consultation, Community Engagement and Communications Strategy) • Agree 'best practice' for engagement around service devolution and transformation opportunities • Provide the voluntary and community sector with opportunities to share the 'community voice' with decision makers • The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group provides robust challenge of all key policy and service change proposals, including scrutiny of Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments

Building Block 3: Effective, clear and regular communication

Role of communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>Communities receive information through a range of mechanisms that invite responses and encourage an honest and open on-going dialogue. Communities know how to put forward ideas for doing things differently and how to raise concerns or problems.</p> <p>Timely feedback is provided on how things have changed as a result of community input, even if the response is not what communities want to hear.</p>	<p>The council and its partners are much better at communicating joint messages and breaking down the barriers for communities in terms of who does what.</p> <p>Information obtained via consultations is used to shape future services and inform commissioning decisions.</p> <p>A network of community champions and a range of other mechanisms help to get key messages out into the community, including to encourage behaviour change and share inspirational examples of good practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communities communications plan • Establish a shared, corporate view of the main communications channels to and from communities e.g. Leicestershire Matters, forum alerts, social media, partner and community newsletters, e-news bulletins • Use these communication channels to share and promote best practice

Building Block 4: Active and empowered town and parish councils

Role of communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>Town and parish councils are actively involved in supporting vulnerable people and delivering services devolved from the council.</p> <p>A number of 'vanguard councils' are working with us to develop innovative projects that tackle shared priorities. These councils are able to access small sums of funding on an 'invest to save' basis</p>	<p>Departments recognise and value the role of local councils and have a good relationship with both the LRALC and individual councils.</p> <p>There is on-going dialogue through regular meetings and events and clear evidence of local council involvement in both designing and delivering a wide range of priority services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils contract with council transformation priorities • Work with a set of 'vanguard' town and parish councils to support delivery of these priorities, including by testing new service delivery approaches and models • Plan and deliver joint events and conferences to engage and inform local councils • Co-ordinate communication with local councils, with consistent corporate messages

Building Block 5: Network of community champions		
Role of Communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>Within each community is a number of voluntary ‘community champions’ who are trained and supported to work with their county councillors in championing community and individual needs and signposting to self-help and early intervention support.</p> <p>County, district and town/parish councillors play an effective role in leading their communities through change and stimulate social action to tackle community priorities.</p>	<p>This network of champions, working with their county councillor ‘champion’ is valued by the council and partners who work through them to access communities, using their knowledge and connections to better understand and respond to community needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building work with county councillors – including training and support - to enable them to lead and champion communities through challenging times • Identify, train and support volunteer community ‘champions’ to work alongside the network of 55 county councillors • Refocus the Think Leicestershire model on training for councillors, town and parish councils and other community ‘champions’

Building Block 6: Formal and informal volunteers		
Role of communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>There is a range of volunteers within each community who provide informal support for individuals/families or community activities and participate in more formal volunteering e.g. Good Neighbour schemes and service delivery.</p> <p>People understand why volunteering, particularly to support vulnerable people and/or to retain services, is important, and it is easy for them to volunteer. They feel valued and supported in their volunteering role.</p>	<p>All council departments and partners value and support volunteers and work together to provide a joined up and coherent range of volunteering opportunities which prioritise service devolution and support for vulnerable people.</p> <p>Volunteering is part of a package of support to assist those furthest from the labour market back into work.</p> <p>The efforts of volunteers are recognised, celebrated and rewarded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of volunteering to support the council’s services, including consistent communication, volunteer managers network and implementation of the council’s Volunteering Policy • Co-ordination of volunteering across Leicestershire through implementation of the partnership Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan • Recruit ‘Community Coaches’, ‘Difference Makers’ and other volunteers to support vulnerable people and service devolution • Explore non-financial incentives/benefits for volunteers e.g. training/rewards/recognition

Building Block 7: Physical and virtual community hubs

Role of communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>Ideally, in each community there is at least one physical hub, providing a focal point for a range of community activities and services, including those that support vulnerable people.</p> <p>Communities are encouraged and, where possible, supported to develop a virtual presence via the web, including through community websites.</p> <p>Communities/individuals make full use of the Think Leicestershire tools and resources</p>	<p>Wherever possible the council and partners actively support and use these 'hubs', exploring opportunities to harness their value by considering service co-location to bring together community and public services.</p> <p>Partners take decisions about the optimum effective network of hubs in Leicestershire in partnership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the 'hubs' in each community across Leicestershire • Explore further opportunities for co-location of services and devolved service delivery through community hubs • Remodel the community buildings advice service to reflect the council's priorities around vulnerability and service devolution • Develop a new Community ICT Strategy for 2015/16 onwards • Promote the Think Leicestershire I-Cheev virtual resources

Building Block 8: Access to support, advice and training

Role of communities	Role of the council	Actions
<p>Community and voluntary sector groups access a range of support in the form of on-line tools and information and face-to-face capacity building support (public and voluntary sector).</p> <p>The process of applying for funding is simple and transparent. Communities understand why we prioritise projects that tackle council priorities, particularly around service devolution and vulnerable people, and are effectively represented in decision making processes e.g. on grant panels</p>	<p>The council encourages communities to 'take charge' and resolve their own problems by providing a coherent package of tools/resources and focussing face to face capacity building support on the most vulnerable communities (of place and interest).</p> <p>Grant funding is targeted at priority activities and, where possible, joined up across departments and partner agencies. Duplication between funding streams has been eliminated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding to communities through two new Shire Community Grants schemes – Community Solutions and Participatory Grants. Explore opportunities to include other community grants (Council and partners) • Monitor the contribution of the council's grant funding to delivery of our transformation priorities and key outcomes • Investigate additional capacity building resource to support community and voluntary sector delivery of priorities • Explore other national and local funding opportunities and secure additional funding to enable delivery of our communities ambitions

Communities taking on services currently delivered by the County Council

CASE STUDY: EXPANSION OF BIRSTALL YOUTH CAFÉ

Leicestershire County Council's Big Society Grant Fund provided funding of £9,250 to assist with the expansion and development of Birstall Parish Council's youth facilities and activities, including their Youth Café which aims to work with 'hard to reach' young people

Summary

Planning permission was granted to extend the current pavilion and to expand the area for the Youth Café. The structural extension to the building has now been completed and the additional meeting and activity space is now in use.

The additional space allows wider activities to take place. The expansion also provided additional 'alternative curriculum' activities/services from the Centre, particularly for hard-to-reach and disaffected young people.

The counselling/education and skills work has now expanded into the areas of sexual health awareness, tobacco, drug and alcohol awareness and behavioural contracts.

The extended building also provides an attractive venue for other community groups, such as fun and family groups.

Who was involved?

All twenty Parish Councillors have taken an active interest in the project and the contractor companies have all been locally based. Four youth workers and many of the members of the youth café were actively involved in elements of the interior design (for example the flooring). They were also involved in the painting of the interior walls.

Outcomes and impact

The Big Society funding has enabled Birstall Parish Council to address key issues of concern to the community. The creation of the Youth Café has demonstrated that with the support of community leaders issues of concern to the community, in this case youth behaviour, can be addressed. One success of the project has been the notable reduction in anti-social behaviour.

Next steps

The Youth Café is now being used as a model for other parishes - Mountsorrel, Barrow upon Soar and Anstey are all keen to adopt the methodology successfully employed in Birstall.

You can view the latest information in a number of ways

Visit us online www.leics.gov.uk/communities_strategy

Our web pages will be kept up-to-date with the latest information and developments. You'll also be able to access the survey here.

Send an email to future@leics.gov.uk to register for the latest news and updates



Follow us [@leicscountyhall](https://twitter.com/leicscountyhall) for general updates from the council, including the developments on the budget.

Alternatively, you can telephone **0116 305 6977** to ask for information in printed or alternative formats.

This information is also available in Easy Read format



Call **0116 305 6977**
or email
future@leics.gov.uk

જો આપ આ માહિતી આપની ભાષામાં સમજવામાં થોડી મદદ ઇચ્છતાં હો તો 0116 305 6977 નંબર પર ફોન કરશો અને અમે આપને મદદ કરવા અવસ્થા કરીશું.

જેવર તુહાનું ઇસ જાનકારી નું સમજાવ વિચ્ચ રુચ મદદ ચાહીલી હૈ તાં વિરખા વરકે 0116 305 6977 નંબર કે ફોન કરે અહે અસીં તુહાડી મદદ છઈ વિસે દા પૂર્ણ વર દવાંગે।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে 0116 305 6977 এই নম্বরে ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات سمجھنے میں کچھ مدد درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر کال کریں
0116 305 6977 اور ہم آپ کی مدد کے لئے کسی کا انتظام کر دیں گے۔

假如閣下需要幫助，用你的語言去明白這些資訊，請致電 0116 305 6977，我們會安排有關人員為你提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji w Twoim języku, zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 6977, a my Ci pomożemy.