

Leicestershire Communities Strategy

Leicestershire County Council working in
partnership with communities

October 2014



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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 introduce the Council's new approach to working with the communities of Leicestershire.

This is a time of change and challenge for all organisations in the public sector (the organisations that provide services to the public, including education, health, police and local government). There is less money, more people in need of services and customers expect more and more from those providing their services.

We have always worked with communities to help them to help themselves - to enable and empower communities to tackle the things that matter most to them. The current situation means that we need to make some difficult decisions and prioritise community activity that helps us to deliver our priorities, whilst doing what we can to continue to help communities to help themselves.

The Council is transforming the way it plans and delivers services. We are therefore asking our partners and the communities of Leicestershire to work with us to make sure that we make the most of the money that we have. Truthfully, this will mean communities doing more (for example running services and helping to find volunteers to support people in need), but will also mean that communities have greater influence over services and new opportunities to have a say. More importantly, it will give communities more control over their local area and the services delivered for and by them.

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 people aged 65 plus in the County, and the NHS estimates that by 2025 up to 15% of families within Leicestershire will experience some form of dementia.

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 and memory workshops at monthly meetings. Recently a 'Singing for Memories' group was established which meets on the first Tuesday of the month at the same venue.

Benefits

A new diagnosis of dementia is devastating and isolating. 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 and Voluntary Action South Leicestershire. On-going funding has been via a two-year sponsorship deal with Sainsbury's supermarket in Harborough which provided 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 Council's thinking about working differently with Leicestershire communities. We need to work differently because lots of people need services but there isn't enough money to provide everything that we currently provide. When we talk about 'communities' we mean both people in different places (communities of place/geography) and different groups of people (communities of interest) and we recognise that people belong to many different communities at any one time.
- 2.2** The Council has always helped communities to 'help themselves', including by helping people to understand what their needs are and develop their own solutions to these needs. Communities already help the council to deliver some services, for example snow, flood and heritage wardens, composting champions and Youth Offending Service volunteers.
- 2.3** We need to ensure that we are able to deliver the most important services and protect the most vulnerable people and communities (we talk more about who might be vulnerable – in need of support – later in the Strategy). The Council needs to work with other organisations, including District Councils, the police, health organisations, businesses and the voluntary sector, to reduce demand for services by supporting others in the community, including by helping to deliver services.
- 2.4** The Council's approach is captured in a new vision: **“Leading Leicestershire by working with our communities and partners for the benefit of everyone”**. The Council also thinks that it is extremely important to:
- 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 must focus on prevention and early intervention in order to keep costs down. Most of the time people won't ask for help until a problem has become too much for them to handle themselves and so the Council needs to encourage people to get help earlier (early intervention) and support people to help themselves so that more serious problems that cost a lot of money can be avoided (prevention).
- 2.6** The Council has identified three priorities (areas that are important) for working with communities:
- Priority 1: Unlock the capacity of communities to support themselves and vulnerable individuals and families - thus reducing demand on public services
 - Priority 2: Support communities to work in partnership with us to design and deliver services, including those currently delivered by the council
 - Priority 3: Develop voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in Leicestershire as effective providers in a diverse market which supports delivery of our (service devolution and support for vulnerable people) priorities
- 2.7** These priorities will help us to transform how we deliver services in Leicestershire. The rest of this strategy provides more detail about how we think we can do this. It includes case studies to show how things could be done differently and how the council can work with partners, communities and the voluntary sector to deliver real change across Leicestershire.

3. Why things need to change

Less Money

- 3.1** Leicestershire County Council has to save at least £110m (or a third of its budget) over the next four years. The scale of the funding cuts means that we must change the way in which we commission and deliver services, including by delivering some services in partnership with communities. Commissioning is the process of deciding how we use money and other resources so that they have the biggest impact on the things that we have said are most important.

Rising Demand for Services

- 3.2** Demand for services is growing. People are living longer, which means that when they need our services, they need them for longer and people are working for a smaller proportion of their lives. However, this also means that there may be more people who can volunteer and support people in communities.
- 3.3** The same people use services from different organisations at the same time so we need to make the system simpler - particularly where services overlap, for example when people move between hospitals, care settings and their own homes. Better care for elderly people in their own homes should mean that less people need to go to hospital. This would cost the National Health Service (NHS) less money but could cost the council more. This is why we need to work together to ensure that money is being spent in the right place at the right time and that we think about resources as a whole rather than in chunks. Ultimately, all partners must be able to reduce both demand for their services and the cost of those services.

Radical Reform

- 3.4** The Welfare State is changing and the amount of money available in benefits is shrinking. Schools and doctors now have more control over how to spend the money that they get from the Government. Communities, charities and businesses are being asked to deliver public services, and there is an increasing role for social enterprises and other social businesses in a number of areas. The Government has also introduced new tools, including asset transfers – moving buildings owned by councils into community ownership. All of this means that the role of local government (councils) and the wider public sector (including health organisations and the police) is changing.

Demand Management

- 3.5** Demand management means trying to ensure that fewer people need services and that the right services are provided first time. This is difficult to do. Since it was formed in the 1940's, the NHS has made people healthier - people live longer and fewer conditions kill us – but this has increased demand for health services.
- 3.6** Lots of money is spent on services for vulnerable people, including older people, people with physical and learning disabilities and/or mental health problems and looked after children. Reducing demand from vulnerable people will help the Council and partners to save money. We want vulnerable people to be able to get support from other organisations, groups and people, ideally in their own community. This will mean that they can seek help as soon as possible and go for longer without needing services.

Changing Services

3.7 Service users are now given a lot more choice about their services. “Personal budgets” are used by adults and the families of children with disabilities to buy social care services that meet their needs. People want to be cared for at home for as long as possible and to be able choose services within their local community rather than travelling to a central location.

Rethinking Public Services

3.8 These changes mean that fewer public services will be available to fewer people. We need to reach the people that need our services most and so there will be less money available to support ‘universal’ services - services for everyone.

3.9 This is why we are rethinking what we do, who does it and how it is done. We need to ensure that individuals, communities and those who represent them know what to expect. People need to know how things will change and we want to be clear that the council will be doing less but that we will support communities if they do more for themselves.

3.10 Communities have an important role to play in helping the council to decide what services are needed by people in Leicestershire. Communities can help us to identify who should be involved and help us to make decisions about what is most important for the local area. They can also help us to deliver services and tell us how well these services are working for individuals and for the community as a whole.

3.11 So, in summary, why have we developed a Communities Strategy?

- **We can't make the changes on our own** – there is a close relationship between our services and those provided by other organisations so we (public sector, voluntary sector and communities) have to work, plan and commission services together wherever possible.
- **We need communities to help us to identify who needs help and support** – and the problems that these people face, so that we can get to them before they need lots of services.
- **We need to support (build the capacity of) individuals, communities and voluntary organisations** to provide help to people who live in their local area or are part of their community of interest. This will enable us to get support to people earlier and stop them getting worse.
- **We need to make sure that our services reach the areas and people that need them most** - whilst doing all that we can to support everyone in Leicestershire to ‘help themselves’.
- **We want to deliver the ‘best possible services within the budgets available’** - by working the ‘Leicestershire pound’. This means making sure that funding and other types of support (e.g. volunteer time) are available within communities.

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

CASE STUDY: THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME: LONG CLAWSON

The Good Neighbour Scheme was partly funded by a £3,847 grant from the County Council. The scheme offers practical help to residents of Long Clawson in the following ways:

- Companionship for folks who would like a chat and a cup of tea.
- 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 8 am and 8 pm every day. This person 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 giving support at an earlier stage could help prevent people from needing expensive services in the future (for example, by helping to avoid a fall in the home which could result in a hospital stay). It also helps reduce demand on public services because people often only seek help from the council or health services when things become more serious.



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

CASE STUDY: EXPANSION OF BIRSTALL YOUTH CAFÉ

Leicestershire County Council 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 works with 'hard to reach' young people

Summary

Planning permission was granted to extend the current pavilion for the Youth Café. The structural extension 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 and the painting of the interior walls.

Outcomes and impact

The funding 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.

4. The Communities Model

- 4.1** We are not starting with a blank piece of paper. Individuals, communities and organisations (including Town and Parish Councils) are already showing that they are willing to work with us to help make changes to public services.
- 4.2** Each section of the Council needs to think about how things could be done differently and better with the help of communities and voluntary organisations. When a service has to be changed, reduced or removed, we need to look at how this service could be delivered in a different way, including communities supporting people so that they don't need to access services and/or communities designing and delivering this service in the future.
- 4.3** The County Council may need to provide funding and other kinds of support (including practical support and advice) to communities and the groups that represent them (including Parish and Town Councils), on an 'invest to save' basis. Invest to save means spending money now to help us to make changes that will save money in the future. This funding and support will help communities to take on their new role by building their ambition, knowledge and capacity (the ability to do things).
- 4.4** We will continue to talk to communities about the things that are most important to them and help them to understand what opportunities and risks there would be in doing things differently.
- 4.5** The diagram opposite sets out the four dimensions to our proposed approach to working with communities. These are described on the following page (bottom up):

Level 1: Individuals and communities help themselves and others

The bottom, 'foundation' level of the diagram is about how we encourage individuals to make better choices. This includes how to live healthier lives and how and where to live. We want to encourage people to take responsibility for themselves and others, including by staying physically and mentally healthy – well and happy. If people are able to support themselves then they will not need as much support from public services.

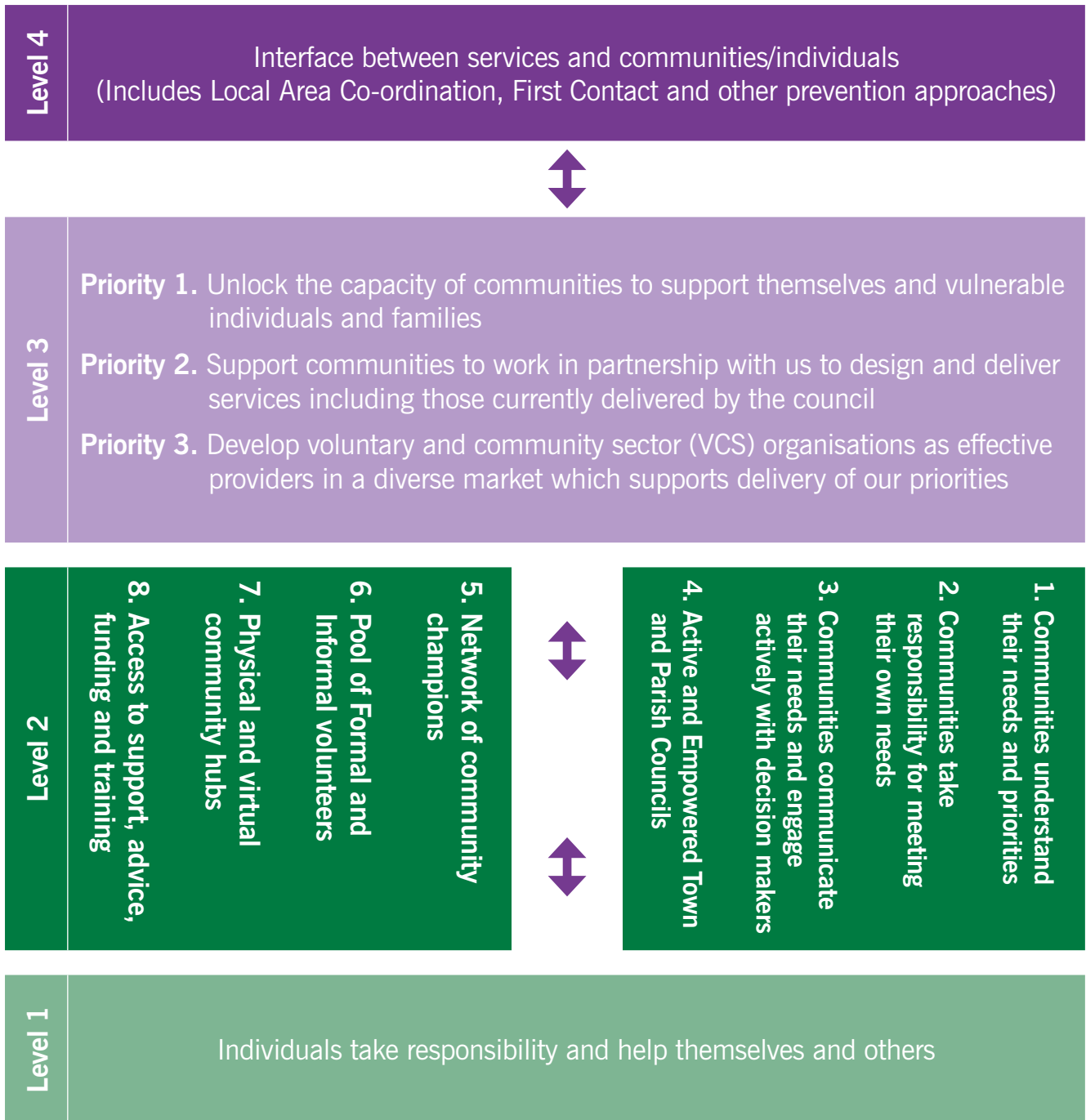
Level 2: The 'Building Blocks'

The second level shows the 'building blocks' of the Communities Strategy. The Building Blocks are the things that need to be in place in each community to enable them to support delivery of the three priorities. Each of these is described in more detail in Chapter Five, including proposed actions that we will take to make the strategy happen.

Level 3: Our Three Priorities

The third level in the diagram is our three priorities:

Leicestershire Communities Model



Priority One:

Unlock the capacity of communities (including local assets and networks) to enable them to support themselves and vulnerable individuals and families

BACKGROUND:

The Bishop of Leicester has developed a definition of vulnerability that focuses on three areas – poverty of resources, poverty of relationships and poverty of identity. Through our consultation, people identified a wide range of people who might be vulnerable (for example elderly people, carers, lone parents, people in debt, socially isolated, with disabilities, health issues and homeless), but just belonging to one of these groups does not make someone 'vulnerable'. Everyone is likely to be vulnerable or in need of support at some point in their life and it is usually a combination of things/events that make someone vulnerable. There is also a difference between short term/temporary vulnerability, for example because something has happened, and long term, more permanent vulnerability.

Our aim is to enable communities to understand who might need support and what support they could provide. We also want to help vulnerable people themselves to identify their strengths and networks – particularly if this means that they can then support others who need help. We know that working with communities will help us to reach more vulnerable people and families before they reach the point that they need services, particularly by reducing isolation and loneliness, although there will be some people who need specialist care and support that it may not be appropriate for communities or the voluntary sector to provide.

We already support this Priority by...

- ✓ Managing the Leicestershire Welfare Provision Scheme
- ✓ Managing an Innovation Fund
- ✓ Funding the Leicestershire and Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureaux to support vulnerable people through advice (including money advice) and advocacy services
- ✓ Running the 'First Contact' scheme – a multi-agency approach to making sure that vulnerable people receive the right support
- ✓ Supporting initiatives such as Dementia Friendly Communities and Keep Safe Places

ROLE OF COMMUNITIES:

Communities understand what might make individuals and families in their community vulnerable - in need of help or support - at different points in their lives. There is a range of informal help from friends, family and communities for people who need support, and community activities and events help people to stay well and happy and enhance community cohesion.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

County Council staff, partners and those who provide services on behalf of the Council understand vulnerability and the things that might make people vulnerable at different points in their lives. There are clear 'referral pathways' – routes through which people can be linked into other services - including First Contact, Local Area Co-ordination, Leicestershire Welfare Provision, Dementia Friends, Keep Safe Places etc.

Priority Two:

Support communities to work in partnership with us to design and deliver services, including those currently delivered by the Council

BACKGROUND:

Through the consultation, we identified a number of Council services that people thought might be suitable either to be delivered in partnership with or devolved to (i.e. taken over by, usually with no budget or much less budget) communities or the voluntary sector. These include highways (defect reporting and minor works), libraries, recycling and reuse, youth services/work, grass cutting, community transport, some home care services including meals, low level care and befriending, public health services, mental health support and country parks/open spaces.

We know from the consultation that communities, Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector want to be able to see as full a picture as possible of the service changes, reductions and cuts that are planned. The Council needs to be clear which services may not be suitable for delivery by communities because they are statutory, although often parts of these services could be devolved or delivered in partnership.

We already support this Priority by...

- ✓ Funding Social Enterprise Support and providing small grants to start and grow social enterprises
- ✓ Supporting market development, particularly in relation to personal budgets for Adult Social Care

ROLE OF COMMUNITIES:

Community groups, Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector help us to design and deliver services, including those devolved from, or delivered in partnership with, the County Council. Communities have a clear understanding of their role and level of accountability and responsibility. Groups receive an appropriate level of advice, training, support and funding (see Building Block 8).

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

Councillors and staff consider alternative and innovative service delivery models when thinking about how services could be delivered differently. There is an ambition to design and deliver the services in partnership with communities/the voluntary sector that they are best placed to deliver. A range of tools are in place to support service devolution.

Priority Three:

Develop voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations as effective providers in a diverse Leicestershire market

BACKGROUND:

A wide range of groups and organisation make up the voluntary and community sector in Leicestershire – small community groups, medium sized organisation delivering services on behalf of the public sector, infrastructure organisations that support and grow the rest of the sector and local branches of national charities, for example the Princes Trust or Age UK. The consultation told us that people felt that the voluntary sector in Leicestershire is most needed to 'support older people to live independently', 'support people with mental health problems' and 'support vulnerable families'.

It was felt that the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Leicestershire still needs support to help it to diversify – take on new roles – and to secure funding and other resources from sources other than the public sector. All contracts between the Council and the sector must support delivery of the priorities set out in the council's strategic plan and this communities strategy.

We already support this Priority by...

- ✓ Funding infrastructure support for Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations

ROLE OF COMMUNITIES:

Voluntary sector organisations (local, county-wide and national) provide important services, including those that the Council can no longer deliver. The voluntary sector understands what is important to the Council and its partners. The VCS understands and has an opportunity to influence and shape LCC commissioning priorities.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

LCC staff commission effectively from the voluntary sector and community groups based on a shared, population based view of needs and clearly defined outcomes. For example, Leicestershire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16, published in January 2013, is based on a robust understanding of the health needs of the population. This Needs Assessment is refreshed regularly and will be updated in 2015, a process regularly informed by stakeholders from across the VCS. The VCS operates as part of a vibrant and diverse Leicestershire market that also includes individuals, communities, social businesses and the private sector. Our role is help to stimulate this market where possible – for example we have market development teams that work with the voluntary sector and promotes collaboration for bids and we have changed the way we fund smaller pieces of work, moving away from formal tenders to grants for things like lunch clubs and social groups.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS TO DELIVER THE THREE PRIORITIES:

- A Vulnerability Toolkit and Training package to ensure wide understanding of vulnerability and the needs of vulnerable people in Leicestershire, including 'how to' guidance and case studies
- A communication campaign to highlight what communities and individuals can do to support vulnerable people/families and help to reduce future vulnerability
- A package of prevention-based support for vulnerable people that is easy to access and includes straightforward referral pathways – ways to link people into other services if needed
- Introduce Local Area Co-ordination at eight learning sites from September 2014
- Information about vulnerable people is managed and shared appropriately and effectively
- All Council Departments actively consider different ways of delivering services
- A clear and co-ordinated approach to engaging communities, Town and Parish Councils and voluntary sector organisations in planning and redesigning services
- Explore the idea of establishing a network of 'Parish and Community Liaison Officers'
- A package of 'service devolution' support (including models, a toolkit, templates, examples of good practice and named contacts for information and advice)
- When services are changing, the Council will provide clear guidance about what support (short and long term) will be available for communities and the voluntary sector
- Equality and Human Rights 'proofing' of all key proposed service changes
- An agreed approach to Right to Challenge and Right To Bid
- An agreed approach to supporting social business models, including social enterprises and staff 'spin outs' from the Council to deliver services previously delivered 'in house'
- Commissioning from the voluntary sector prioritises LCC transformation priorities, including around early intervention/prevention and service devolution, and delivers added 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 VCS in Leicestershire
- Support communities and the voluntary sector to bid for funding, including tenders and grants
- Ensure that specialist advice is available and accessible as needed

Level 4: The interface between services and communities/individuals

This level represents how the public sector works with communities and individuals. There are a number of different 'enablers' – things that help something to happen - that sit at this level (between services and communities), including Local Area Coordination (LAC).

LAC will be introduced in Leicestershire from autumn 2014 in eight learning sites across the two Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) areas. Local Area Coordinators (LACs) are based in the community, have close links to local services (including GPs), and work with between 50-65 people and their families at any time. They provide an important link between individuals/families who need support and their communities and, if necessary, relevant services. They will underpin more intensive support such as the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) programme.

They are a single point of contact who identify and support vulnerable individuals and families, particularly those with disabilities, frail older people and those with mental health issues, before they hit crisis – the point where they need health and social care and other services. They will also help people to move out of services. Safeguarding vulnerable adults, children and young people will be an important part of the programme.

LACs are an important part of the new Leicestershire unified prevention offer (set out in our Better Care Plan) – a joint approach to supporting people in need and trying to make sure that they don't need to access services for as long as possible.

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

CASE STUDY:

THE ANSTEY AND THURCASTON FOOTPATH

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

Background

Two Parish Councils - Ansteley and Thurcaston & Cropston - set up a joint committee for the organisation and delivery of the project. Ansteley 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 villages now benefit from being accessible by pedestrians, including parents walking children between villages, dog walkers, joggers and children walking home to Thurcaston from Ansteley Martin High School (rather than relying on lifts from parents). There is now safe pedestrian access to the riding school and traffic has been reduced along Ansteley Lane.

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

LCC 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 LCC.



5. Delivering The Communities Strategy

We have identified eight ‘building blocks’ - the things that need to be in place in communities for them to be able to support vulnerable people and support service delivery. The tables below set out the role of both communities and the County Council and include examples of potential actions. A detailed delivery plan will be developed to support the delivery of the Strategy and further engagement with communities, Town and Parish Councils and partners will help to inform this plan.

In order to unlock the community capacity – the skills, ability and competence - that we know exists in Leicestershire communities, we believe that communities need to have four things - the willingness to do things, an understanding of what works, support to get started and support to keep going.

Building Block 1: Communities understand their needs and priorities

This Building Block is about the information and evidence that communities need so that they understand what’s most important to the members of that community – their priorities

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Supporting the LSR Online Website, www.lsr-online.org including interactive mapping tools

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>Communities of ‘place’ (in different areas), including Town and Parish Councils, and ‘interest’ (people with a shared interest) have a clear understanding of the needs and priorities of all sections of their community, particularly the most vulnerable and hardest to reach.</p> <p>Communities also have the right information about existing resources, services and groups</p>	<p>Information about community needs/ priorities is shared effectively. This helps the council and its partners to make decisions on the basis of needs and evidence, rather than services or organisations.</p> <p>‘Community champions’ are people within communities who can help and support. They help LCC to gather information about communities (including ‘soft’ intelligence) which helps us to make decision about future services and changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and support to communities about the best ways to collect information about community needs • Help communities to understand the range of information already available to them • Help communities to use this information about needs to identify and agree priorities • Share this evidence and information with partners and use it alongside a range of other insight, to make evidence-based decisions about the future of key services

Building Block 2: Communities take responsibility for meeting their own needs

This Building Block is about how communities meet local needs and priorities and the support that they might need to find innovative solutions to problems and issues in their community.

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Funding the new Community Capacity Building contract (from January 2015)
- ✓ Funding initiatives like the Leicestershire Healthy Schools Programme where local schools, using local evidence and adopting best practice, plan, manage and review initiatives that seek to change behaviour and improve children and young people’s health and wellbeing.

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>Communities use evidence of needs to prioritise community activity, effort and funding.</p> <p>The right information also helps them to understand who might need help in their community and what help they might need.</p> <p>Communities encourage and enable individual community members to help themselves and others.</p> <p>Communities learn from each other and share examples of how things have worked in their community.</p>	<p>The council provides expertise to unlock the capacity of communities and help them to help themselves. This includes access to support, advice and information and examples of good practice.</p> <p>The council makes it easy for communities to access the information that they need to get community projects going via the Council’s website and through the Customer Service Centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities to gather further information about community needs and priorities through effective engagement and consultation • Help communities to define the right actions to tackle their priorities • Provide some of the practical help that communities need to get started and keep going through Building Block 8 • Use our communication channels to promote the best ways of doing things and help communities and groups in communities to learn from each other

Building Block 3: Communities communicate their needs and engage effectively with decision makers

People told us that they would prefer to engage with decision makers ‘by email’, ‘by attending public meetings/events based on local priorities/issues’ and ‘through representative groups’. This building block is also about the communication within and between communities.

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Funding a new Representation, Engagement and Equalities Challenge contract (from January 2015)
- ✓ Funding a ‘VCS Voice’ strand through Infrastructure Support for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations contract
- ✓ Implementing our Consultation, Engagement and Communications Strategy, including regularly updating communities on important news through Leicestershire Matters
- ✓ Focussing our engagement on the issues that are most important to particular communities e.g. the libraries consultation

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>Communities have regular opportunities to tell the public sector about how changes will affect them before key decisions are made and put forward ideas for doing things differently</p> <p>Communities share information effectively within their community.</p> <p>Events are held to bring communities and voluntary sector organisations together as relevant.</p> <p>Communities feel that they have on-going, honest conversations with the Council. 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>A network of “community champions” acts as a link between service providers and the community.</p>	<p>We talk to people in communities about things that are important – to us and to them.</p> <p>‘Public’ meetings are held on issues identified by LCC and the community as important. We work together to plan these meetings to make sure that people don’t feel overloaded with information.</p> <p>The Council and its partners are much better at helping communities to understand who does what.</p> <p>Information from consultations tells us what people want future services to be like and helps us to decide how these services should be provided (commissioned).</p> <p>Community champions help us to get key messages out into the community, including to encourage people to behave differently.</p> <p>The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group is supported to challenge and ask questions about how things are changing from an equalities perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All LCC services use a new engagement model – a different approach to involving communities • Agree the best way of talking to and working with communities about service changes and opportunities to take on services • Provide the VCS with a range of opportunities to tell us the ‘community voice’ • The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group provides robust challenge of all proposals for changes to policies and services. This includes looking closely at Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments • Develop a Communities Communications Plan – this is a plan that says how we will communicate with and get information to and from communities using the ‘channels’ that they find most useful and accessible.

Building Block 4: Active and Empowered Town and Parish Councils

This Building Block is about Town and Parish Councils, also known as ‘Local Councils’. Local Councils are a tier of local government, alongside County and District Councils, and cover most of the County, excluding the main towns and market towns

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Funding support for Town and Parish Councils through the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC)
- ✓ Providing regular updates in the LRALC Newsletter
- ✓ Holding an Annual Liaison Meeting with Town and Parish Councils

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>Town and Parish Councils are actively involved in supporting vulnerable people and delivering services with the Council or services delivered by the Council in the past (devolved from the Council).</p> <p>A number of Councils are identified as ‘vanguard councils’. These Councils work with us to develop innovative projects to tackle the issues that are important to communities. 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 Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils and individual Councils.</p> <p>There is on-going dialogue with Town and Parish Councils through regular meetings and events. We can show that Local Councils are involved in both designing and delivering some priority services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils contract on LCC 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, including new quarterly workshops/events • Communicate with Local Councils through the agreed routes, giving as much time as possible for Councils to consider and respond

Building Block 5: Network of Community Champions

This Building Block is about ‘Community champions’ – people who lead on community projects, support local groups and charities and Town and Parish Councillors. These community based champions work alongside County and District Councillors and play a vital role in their communities as role models. It is important that they represent the whole community and essential that they don’t act as ‘gatekeepers’.

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Recruiting a network of digital community champions
- ✓ Supporting the Think Leicestershire project and on-line resources

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>Within each community is a number/ network of voluntary ‘community champions’. These community role models are supported to work with more formal champions (including County Councillors) to champion community and individual needs and help people to access other services and organisations. They are seen as the ‘eyes and ears’ on the ground.</p> <p>County, District and Town/Parish Councillors lead their communities through change and stimulate action on the ground to tackle community priorities.</p>	<p>This network of champions is valued by the Council. The Council and its partners work with these champions to get information to and from communities.</p> <p>Using the knowledge and connections that the champions have helps LCC and partners to better understand and respond to community needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and support for County Councillors to enable them to lead and champion communities • Identify a network of volunteer community ‘champions’ or community role models to work alongside the network of 55 County Councillors • Explore what training, information and support these community champions might need to fulfil the role of community role model

Building Block 6: Pool of formal and informal volunteers

This Building Block is about volunteers, both those who provide help informally for their neighbours and other members of the community (for example lifts, shopping or small jobs around the house) and those who take part in more 'formal' volunteering schemes. We know from the consultation that the main barriers to volunteering are 'lack of time', 'fear of liability' and 'family/caring responsibilities'.

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Funding support for Volunteering through the 'Infrastructure Support for VCS organisations' contract
- ✓ Supporting the 'Get Set' programme which supports young people into work
- ✓ Supporting a Timebanking initiative through the Better Care Fund

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>There is a range of volunteers within each community who provide informal support for individuals/families or community activities and take part 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. It is easy for them to volunteer and they feel valued and supported in their volunteering role.</p> <p>Vulnerable people are encouraged and supported to volunteer because of the social and health benefits.</p>	<p>Council Departments and partners value and support volunteers and work together to provide a joined up selection of volunteering opportunities. We most want people to volunteer to deliver services and/or support vulnerable people.</p> <p>Volunteering can be a really good way to support people who are out of work and help them get the skills that will help them back into work.</p> <p>We support the 'sharing economy' and encourage communities to get involved in initiatives such as Timebanking.</p> <p>The efforts of volunteers are recognised, celebrated and rewarded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering to support Council services is supported in the same way by all departments. This includes how we tell people about volunteering opportunities and help them choose which one would be best for them and how volunteers are supported by Council officers • Explore ways of engaging new groups of people in volunteering, including young people and those trying to get back into work/training • Test different approaches to promoting volunteering including local events and taster sessions • Explore the need for additional professional resource within the Council to support volunteering • Explore the costs and benefits of an employee volunteer scheme or volunteering challenge • Co-ordinate volunteering across Leicestershire by delivering the actions in our Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan • Think about non-financial incentives for volunteers e.g. free training/community volunteer accreditation scheme/ recognition e.g. through awards ceremonies • Explore the potential to further develop the 'sharing economy' in Leicestershire • Explore ways to reduce concerns about liability amongst volunteers

Building Block 7: Physical and Virtual Community Hubs

This Building Block is about physical hubs – buildings which are focal points for community, voluntary and public services – and virtual hubs – web based forums, groups and networks where people communicate on-line

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Funding a Community Buildings Support Services through the Rural Community Council
- ✓ Supporting community and local council websites, including The Jitty (young people), Leicestershire Rural Partnership (rural communities) and Leicestershire Parishes (Parish Councils)

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>Ideally, in each community there is at least one building (a physical hub) that provides a range of community activities and services, including those that support vulnerable people.</p> <p>Communities are encouraged and, where possible, supported to use websites and social networks (virtual hubs) to tell people about their work and encourage people to get involved.</p> <p>Communities/individuals make use of Think Leicestershire tools and resources which are all about thinking, planning and achieving goals</p>	<p>Wherever possible the council and partners actively support and use these 'hubs', exploring opportunities to make them more useful through different organisations sharing the building. The aim of this is to bring together community and public services.</p> <p>Partners take decisions together about how to make the most of these community hubs.</p> <p>The Council does what it can to support community groups to use new technology to develop projects and communicate what they are doing to others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the 'hubs' in each community across Leicestershire • Explore further opportunities for different organisations to share space in the same building (co-location of services) and how services could be delivered differently through community hubs • Change the Community Buildings Advice service so that it supports delivery of the Councils vulnerability and service delivery priorities • Develop a new Community ICT Strategy for 2015/16 onwards • Promote the Think Leicestershire virtual resources – information that is available on-line

Building Block 8: Access to Support, Advice, Training and Funding

This Building Block is about the practical tools that communities need in order to get started on community projects. People told us that 'funding', 'training' and 'access to advice/expertise' were the most important, followed by 'help to engage and retain volunteers', 'networks' and 'clear referral paths into services'.

We already support this Building Block by...

- ✓ Funding the new Community Capacity Building contract (from January 2015)
- ✓ Running a Shire Grants Programme, which includes Shire Communities Solutions Grants (grants up to £10,000) and a new participatory 'Your Shire' Grants programme (grants up to £2,500)
- ✓ Supporting the Leicestershire Funding Toolkit www.fundingtoolkit.org
- ✓ Supporting the Community Foundation to establish a funding programme that secures funding from private donors to support local projects

Role of Communities	Role of The Council	Possible Actions
<p>Community and voluntary sector groups access a range of support in the form of on-line tools and information. They can also access face-to-face support to help build their capacity.</p> <p>The process of applying for funding is simple and clear. Communities understand why projects that tackle LCC priorities, particularly around service devolution and vulnerable people, are important.</p>	<p>The council encourages communities to 'take charge' and resolve their own problems by providing information, advice and support in a number of ways. Face to face capacity building support is targeted to the most vulnerable communities (of place and interest).</p> <p>Grant funding is targeted at the most important areas of work and, where possible, we work with partners (including District Councils) to provide funding for communities. This will help us to make sure that we are not all giving money to the different organisations for the same activities in an area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to join community grants together across both LCC departments and partners • Make sure that we know how each of the projects that the Council funds helps to deliver our priorities • Explore other national and local funding opportunities and try to secure more funding to help to deliver the Communities Strategy • Develop closer links to the private sector and explore how businesses could work with us to support local communities through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes • Use the planned engagement around the Delivery Plan to identify general (e.g. leadership) and specific training needs relating to delivery of the three priorities • Explore the opportunities for additional community funding offered by community renewable energy schemes

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

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 are all useful. The organisation also needs access to the necessary expertise to handle legal issues including data protection and safeguarding.

We have around 50 volunteers, mostly retired people but not exclusively so. Two volunteers are 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 can reserve over 6 million books online.
- 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% and 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](#))

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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



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This information is also available in Easy Read format



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

ਜੇ ਆਪ ਆ ਮਾਫ਼ਿਨੀ ਆਪਨੀ ਆਖਾਮਾਂ ਸਮਝਵਾਮਾਂ ਥੋੜੀ ਮਦਦ
ਓਝੜਨਾਂ ਡੋ ਨੋ 0116 305 6977 ਨੰਬਰ ਪਰ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰਥੋ ਅਨੇ
ਅਮੇ ਆਪਨੇ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਔਵਥਾ ਕਰੀਥੁੰ.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ
ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0116 305 6977 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ
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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
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a my Ci pomożemy.