

Supplement 1 to the agenda

Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 3 October 2024, 2.00 pm

Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE

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Title of report: Building Strong Connected Communities, Talk Community Strategy, 2024 - 2027

Meeting: Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: 3 October 2024

Report by: Community Wellbeing, Improvement and Development Consultant

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

All Wards

Purpose

To provide the opportunity for the scrutiny committee to consider the newly refreshed strategy for Talk Community.

Recommendation(s)

That the committee:

- 1. Comment on the refreshed strategy for Talk Community as the outcome of the Talk Community review (attached as Appendix A).**
- 2. Endorse the strategy and agree that officers will report annually on progress to the health and wellbeing scrutiny committee.**
- 3. Note the response to the recommendations made by the scrutiny committee of 29 January 2024 attached as Appendix B.**

Alternative options

1. Do nothing. The Talk Community strategy will be implemented without comment from scrutiny committee members.

Key considerations

1. In 2019 and 2020, the council provided seed funding for a network of Talk Community Hubs across the county and in 2021 established Talk Community as its asset-based community development function. Since Covid 19, the council and its partners have sought to harness the power and knowledge of Herefordshire's communities to design solutions that respond to local need that can be delivered closer to communities, especially given the rural nature of the county and transport challenges.
2. A strategic review of Talk Community was undertaken between November 2023 and May 2024. The aim was to develop a strategic framework for Talk Community going forward to ensure that the contribution to prevention and early help and building stronger communities would be maximised. Building Strong Connected Communities, Talk Community Strategy, 2024 – 2026 is the outcome of the review. The strategy and appendices are attached as Appendix A to this report.

The review was informed by:

- an analysis of the legislative framework and the strategy and policy landscape within which Talk Community operates;
 - an analysis and review of quantitative and qualitative data held by Talk Community to understand reach and impact;
 - the views from stakeholders, internal and external to the council
 - engagement with Talk Community hubs; and
 - assessment of the use and value of the Talk Community website and directory
3. A summary of the national and local legislative, policy and strategy landscape that is relevant to Talk Community is set out in Appendix 1 of the strategy. In 2019 the council identified a number of drivers for establishing Talk Community. These are still relevant today and include
 - rurality and transport challenges
 - the need to bring services and support closer to communities to increase participation in community life
 - increasing demand for health and social care and complexity of need
 - reducing public sector finance
 4. Between December 2023 and April 2024 a programme of stakeholder events were held to help, visits to hubs were made, interviews were conducted with statutory and community stakeholders and an audit of the hubs was undertaken. Details of the programme and feedback from stakeholders is set out in Appendix 2 of the strategy.
 5. The review concluded that
 - Talk Community is highly trusted by a significant element of the voluntary and community sector and plays a key role in supporting the sector to access funding
 - Talk Community has grown considerable community capital which contributes to communities being more resilient and has developed activities and programmes that maximise wellbeing and independence.
 - It acts as the 'glue' in building the capacity of VCSE organisations and hubs (some of which are more mature) than others to deliver support and activities at local level.

However,

- A lack of outcome measures means it has been a struggle to measure impact.

- Talk Community has not been delivering its work within a strategic framework, shared and understood by all stakeholders
 - Lack of understanding generally that Talk Community is more than just the hubs and the need to strengthen communication to ensure the whole service offer is visible
6. A refreshed vision and outcomes for Talk Community were developed collaboratively with partners, community organisations and councillors. The refreshed vision for Talk Community is

Working together to build strong and connected communities where people can thrive

With the **aim** of enabling stronger communities across Herefordshire, that are resilient and are empowered to input into decisions that affect their community. The **outcomes** that the council will achieve through Talk Community are :

1. Individuals and communities across all ages are supported to access early help through pro-active promotion and delivery of activities and programmes to prevent and reduce demand for health and social care.
 2. Communities are stronger with increased partnership working within communities and with statutory agencies.
 3. Communities are able to influence decision making and empowered to co-design solutions and services that meet identified need.
7. To deliver these outcomes, a series of actions are set out in the strategy for 2024/25 and 2025/26. These actions will form the basis of an annual delivery plan which will be monitored and adjusted to respond to emerging needs over the three year period of the strategy. These actions are set out below:

Delivery in 2024-2025:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● implement a Talk Community communications strategy by November 2024 to ensure stakeholders receive the information they need in a timely way and in a format that meets their needs ● Invest £2 million capital funding to strategically improve community infrastructure inviting bids from community organisations, including but not limited to existing Talk Community hubs to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ transform and better utilise existing/unused buildings for community benefit ○ improve spaces for communities to connect and for events and activities to be delivered at local level ○ increase opportunity for people to access integrated services in their community ○ targeting areas of health inequalities and deprivation ● develop an outcomes and evaluation framework for Talk Community to enable the council to measure impact ● strengthen the early help and prevention offer for all, through co-production but particularly for children, young people and families and seek funding to support community based activities designed through co-production ● improve the information and advice service to ensure residents can access the support they need and self-help and that it is compliant with the Care Act 2014

- establish an evidence base for each locality combining top-down analysis of vital statistics with systematic 'bottom-up' intelligence from residents and Talk Community staff embedded in our communities
- design a mechanism for 'community intelligence' gathered at hyper-local level to be fed up the system to influence strategy, service design and commissioning

Delivery in 2025-2026

- build on the existing capacity in Talk Community to provide advice to VCSE partners to maximising income and fund-raising
- review Talk Community performance and impact in 2024/25
- agree priorities and an annual planning and delivery (organising) framework for each locality which will be sufficiently flexible to enable inclusion of projects and activities in response to new community needs and external events that may occur within the year

Community impact

8. The delivery of the council's community based asset development function within a shared and understood strategic framework will ensure that maximum community benefit is achieved and the opportunity for local communities to influence service development will be increased.

Environmental Impact

9. Increasing the availability of services at local level will reduce the need for travel and impacts on the environment.

Equality duty

10. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

11. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.

12. The Talk Community review identified a weakness in that the council have not agreed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the work. As a result the data on beneficiaries does not enable a robust understanding of how we are meeting our equalities duties. A key action in the first year of the strategy will be to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework, this will ensure that equalities data is embedded in the framework and the link to health inequalities will be explicit.

Resource implications

13. There are no immediate resource implications. The strategy will be delivered within the Talk Community budget.

Legal implications

14. There are no legal implications

Risk management

15. The decision to carry out a strategic review of Talk Community was informed by the need to better understand the value of the work and the contribution to council priorities.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Maximise the contribution of Talk Community to building community resilience and through that, reducing demand for health and social care	Implementation of a vision and strategic framework shared and understood by all partners.
The council is not able to evidence the impact of the investment in Talk Community.	An outcomes and impact measurement framework will be developed.
The contribution of Talk Community to council priorities may not be clear.	Development and monitoring of an annual delivery plan.

16. If the recommendation is approved, the relevant risks will be managed and entered in a risk register at a service level. Risks will be escalated in accordance with the council’s Risk Management Plan.

Consultees

17. As part of the strategic review of Talk Community consultation and engagement took place with Herefordshire’s voluntary and community sector, other council services, health providers, Talk Community volunteers and hubs and councillors.

Appendices

- Appendix A Building Strong Communities, Talk Community Strategy 2024-2027
- Appendix B Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses
- Appendix C Talk Community hubs

Background papers

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd	Click or tap here to enter text. Date 25/09/2024
Finance	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Legal	Click of tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Communications	Click or Luenne Featherstone	tap here to enter text.Date 19/09/2024
Equality Duty	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Approved by	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Talk Community Strategy 2024 - 2027

Building strong connected communities

Introduction

Herefordshire has a vibrant and active voluntary and community sector, consisting of c3,000 organisations who deliver activities to benefit their communities. Since 2019, the council, partners and our communities have come together in response to floods, the pandemic, the impact of Brexit and the cost of living crisis demonstrating the power and benefit of communities being involved in designing and delivering solutions for themselves. During this time, the council strengthened its efforts to support Herefordshire's communities through Talk Community.

For more than a decade, Herefordshire, in common with other local authorities, has been grappling with the triple challenge of ever-increasing complexity of needs, growing demand for services, and continuing reduction in resources. Many councils are trying new approaches to manage demand, increase their focus on prevention and early intervention, by working more closely with communities. A number of studies and think pieces by national think tanks such as Nesta, New Local and Demos amongst others make a compelling argument for 'shifting the power'. There is now a body of evidence that given the tools and the opportunity, local people can change the things they believe need changing in their community better than anyone else.

If we are to maximise community assets the council needs to move from "providing to" communities to empowering communities to be part of the solution, encouraging the development of community networks, listening and working together. Talk Community's approach is one of empowering communities.

Talk Community is valued by our communities and partners but no service can stand still and, as social trends change, technology develops, demand continues to increase and communities grow, so must our service.

The county council undertook a review of Talk Community with the aim of developing a strategic framework for our work with communities going forward to ensure that the contribution to prevention and early help and building stronger communities would be maximised. This strategy is the outcome of the review.

We undertook a wide range of research and engagement, including:

- an analysis of the legislative framework and the strategy and policy landscape within which Talk Community operates;
- an analysis and review of quantitative and qualitative data held by Talk Community to understand reach and impact;
- gathering views from stakeholders, internal and external to the council



- engaging with Talk Community hubs; and
- assessing the use and value of the Talk Community website and directory.

Herefordshire

Herefordshire is a great place to live, work and thrive. The county is safe and welcoming, with residents reporting a strong sense of belonging where communities support each other. Herefordshire’s natural environment is rich and varied, providing opportunities for, and supporting a wealth of, outdoor activities and interests. We have a rich and vibrant heritage, and being located on the Welsh and English border, deep connections to both cultures and histories. All these characteristics together are essential ingredients to good health and wellbeing for all residents.

Key population statistics



**188,700
residents
(mid-year 2022)**



**58% of
residents are
aged 18-64**



**26% of
residents are
aged 65 and
over**



**Rural county,
with the fourth
lowest
population
density in
England**



**11
neighbourhoods
are in the 25%
most deprived
nationally**

95% of Herefordshire is classified as ‘rural’ which is home to over 50% of its population. Transport links are an issue in the county, with more than half of it being classified as amongst the worst in England in terms of geographical access to services.



Vision, aims and objectives for Talk Community

Talk Community delivers the council's asset based community development function, working with communities and statutory partners to identify ways to support individuals and communities to thrive, be more resilient and improve their health and well-being. An asset based approach means helping people to identify what matters to them and build upon their own strengths and resources to achieve that, so that they can be independent. It is the catalyst for bringing organisations together to work in a different way and creating places to better connect with the community.

In developing our vision, aims and objectives and the actions in this strategy we have taken account of the local and national legislative and policy context to ensure the strategy explicitly takes into account the extent to which Talk Community underpins other strategies. This is set out in Appendix 1. The drivers for change for the Talk Community review and a summary of feedback from our stakeholders is set out in Appendix 2.

Our **vision** for Talk Community is:

Working together to build strong and connected communities where people can thrive

With the **aim** of enabling stronger communities across Herefordshire, that are resilient and are empowered to input into decisions that affect their community. The **outcomes** that the council will achieve through Talk Community are to:

1. Individuals and communities across all ages are supported to access early help through pro-active promotion and delivery of activities and programmes to prevent and reduce demand for health and social care.
2. Communities are stronger with increased partnership working within communities and with statutory agencies.
3. Communities are able to influence decision making and empowered co-design solutions and services that meet identified needs.

Talk Community in action



Talk Community Development

The role and approach of the Talk Community Development Officers is seen as a considerable strength by stakeholders. They have contributed to strengthening networks at local level, connecting voluntary and community organisations and statutory services as well as supporting co-design of solutions in response to expressed community need. Stakeholders stated that Talk Community was the ‘glue’ in strengthening community resilience and capacity.

Talk Community Development Officers facilitate Community Action Networks (CAN) meetings every six weeks in each Primary Care Network (PCN) footprint. The primary purpose of the CAN is to bring together community, third sector and statutory services to connect with peers and share ideas and experiences within the local PCN area, meeting regularly to share knowledge, collectively identify and prioritise local challenges and formulate collective ways forward.

A referral came from the local authority for a man who had been ill and had to take time off work. He was suicidal, threatening to jump on the railway track. We were able to give him immediate food and working alongside other agencies we ensured he was able to claim the benefits he had not claimed and sort the debt he had amassed. As his health improved he was able to go back to work and his financial situation was resolved.

Amanda*, who had been homeless for two months, visited a TC hub seeking a place to charge her phone and find warmth. She shared her circumstances with a volunteer and received immediate support. The hub connected her with the food bank for a food parcel and helped her find temporary accommodation. Amanda also received warm clothes and expert assistance in claiming Universal Credit, which she didn't know she was entitled to. Furthermore, she was helped to apply for financial assistance through the Household Support Fund to cover her fuel costs.

Talk Community Hubs



The Talk Community hub network now numbers 77 hubs across the county, run by volunteers.

The original vision of the hubs was that the local community would develop and run their hub to meet their local needs and outcomes with facilitation and support from the Talk Community team. The audit of hubs recently undertaken has evidenced the value of places and spaces available locally for the community to connect and deliver activities of benefit to their residents. They clearly meet one of the factors identified as being important in strong communities – providing community spaces which allow opportunities for connection.



Volunteers in the hubs have received training in mental health awareness, first aid, provision of financial advice and how to signpost people to information and advice on the Talk Community website. Each hub acts as a digital access point for people where they may not have a computer. Drop in sessions take place in some hubs in direct response to community need with statutory agencies and VCSE partners offering services, increasing access especially given the challenges of Herefordshire's rurality.

However, the hubs range widely in terms of the spaces from which they operate and their volunteer capacity. This directly influences the opening hours and programme of activity each hub can offer – the majority of the hubs are part-time. Over 50% of the hubs only offer information, advice and signposting, under 30% also have space to support events and activities and less than 20 hubs have space to support services to be delivered at local level. Appendix 3 shows the distribution of hubs against these three levels.



The best thing about being involved [with The Hub] is the sense of purpose it gives me as someone suffering with isolation and depression, and the feeling of returning something to the place that helped me so much while I was shielding in lockdowns! Café volunteer 2022.

The Talk Community Directory

The Talk Community website is the council's strategic response to the duty under the Care Act 2014 to 'provide information and advice'. The website serves as a one-stop-shop for information and advice, listing over 700 services and organisations.

The website also offers digital toolkits on topics such as falls and financial hardship with hard copy information available on these and a range of other useful information. Through the website and the Talk Community weekly newsletter, residents are connected to statutory and community organisations, services and events.

Developing our strategy to meet future needs

Delivery in 2024-2025:

- implement a Talk Community communications strategy by November 2024 to ensure stakeholders receive the information they need in a timely way and in a format that meets their needs
- Invest £2m capital funding to strategically improve community infrastructure inviting bids from July 2024 from community organisations, including but not limited to existing Talk Community hubs to
 - transform and better utilise existing/unused buildings for community benefit
 - improve spaces for communities to connect and for events and activities to be delivered at local level
 - increase opportunity for people to access integrated services in their community
 - targeting areas of health inequalities and deprivation
- develop an outcomes and evaluation framework for Talk Community to enable the council to measure impact
- strengthen our early help and prevention offer for all, through co-production but particularly for children, young people and families and seek funding to support community based activities designed through co-production
- improve our information and advice service to ensure residents can access the support they need and self-help and that it is compliant with the Care Act 2014
- establish an evidence base for each locality combining top-down analysis of vital statistics with systematic ‘bottom-up’ intelligence from residents and Talk Community staff embedded in our communities
- design a mechanism for ‘community intelligence’ gathered at hyper-local level to be fed up the system to influence strategy, service design and commissioning

Delivery in 2025-2026

- build on the existing capacity in Talk Community to provide advice to VCSE partners to maximising income and fund-raising
- review Talk Community performance and impact in 2024/25
- agree priorities and an annual planning and delivery (organising) framework for each locality which will be sufficiently flexible to enable inclusion of projects and activities in response to new community needs and external events that may occur within the year

Appendix 1: The national and local context for Talk Community

Local and national legislative and policy context

Local

Our new Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-28 sets out how the council will contribute to achieving a better and more successful Herefordshire; with the vision of “delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do.”

The council’s new plan has been developed with residents, partners and stakeholders across the county. We consulted widely to gather feedback on our priorities for the next four years. Nearly 1,000 people took part in the consultation via a range of mechanisms. Our vision is

Delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do.

Our priorities are

PEOPLE



We will enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and to be part of great communities that support each other. We want all children to have the best start in life.

PLACE



We will protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire is a great place to live. We will support the right housing in the right place and do everything we can to improve the health of our rivers.

GROWTH



We will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county; attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development and provide the right infrastructure.

TRANSFORMATION



We will be an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money.

UNDERPINNING THEME - PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Partnership working is central to Herefordshire Council's success and to delivering the best results for our residents. We are stronger together and the council will always work to build strong, effective partnerships to ensure our county is much more than the sum of its parts.

Under the People priority, the council's objectives are to:

- Support all children to have the best start in life.
- Support all residents to live healthy lives within their communities.
- Tackle inequality and improve social mobility through timely intervention and prevention activities which allow residents to live independent and fulfilling lives.
- Enable people to support themselves and each other by providing the right help at the right time.
- Work with residents and partners to build connected and resilient communities.
- Support people to feel safe and respected in their communities

Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2033

The strategy recognises that statutory agencies need to work with their communities to deliver the ambition and has agreed eight priorities, with two identified as core. The core priorities are

1. 'Best start in life for children'
2. 'Good mental wellbeing throughout life'

Early Help and Prevention Strategy, Herefordshire Council, 2023

Vision - working together to ensure Herefordshire is a great place for families to thrive and that our children and young people get the best start in life

Physical Activity Strategy 2021 to 2026, Herefordshire Council, Public Health

The Herefordshire physical activity strategy sets out the priorities for physical activity in Herefordshire over the next five years, underpinned by the vision:

In Herefordshire every person has the opportunity to: get moving, be active, feel better, keep well and enjoy healthier lives as part of everyday life in their local community.

Herefordshire, Health and Well-being Board, Inequalities Strategy, 2023-2026

The vision is that Herefordshire residents are resilient; lead fulfilling lives; are emotionally and physically healthy and feel safe and secure. To achieve this it requires health outcomes between different groups of people to be reduced, particularly within rurally dispersed, travelling population and unregistered individuals.

NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Part of the [Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System](#) (ICS) with responsibility for improving health outcomes for our local population, reducing health inequalities, and supporting broader social and economic development. Working with people and communities that experience health inequalities is a key part of addressing unequal and unfair access to services, and health outcomes across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

National

Care Act 2014

The council has key responsibilities around prevention, wellbeing and partnerships as detailed in the Care Act 2014.

These general duties are:

- promoting individual wellbeing
- preventing needs for care and support
- promoting integration of care and support with health services
- providing information and advice
- promoting diversity and quality in provision of services
- co-operating
- safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect

Next Steps for integrating primary care: Fuller Stocktake report, NHS May 2022

Sets out a framework for shared action. “At place level, bring together teams on admissions, avoidance, discharge and flow – including urgent community response, virtual wards and community mental health crisis teams. Focus on community engagement and outreach, across the life course.”

Tackling Neighbourhood Health Inequalities Supplementary Guidance, NHS, April 2023

“Supporting at place level the work to achieved integration of primary care with secondary and community services. By working in collaboration with peer organisational HI leads. They will support driving change which will help mitigate issues of inequality and unmet need. Also actively engaging with other place based partnerships, including Health and Wellbeing Boards.”

Health and Care Act, 2014

The legislation has two key objectives: To improve the quality of care and outcomes for patients and to reposition the mode of provision so that health service provision becomes more patient-centred and facilitates choice.

Health Improvement and Disparities Guidance: Community Centred Practice: applying All Our Health, 2022

Reducing health disparities requires a complex system approach that puts communities at the heart through

- greater involvement of communities in decision making, delivery and evaluation
- scaling integrated community-centred provision at neighbourhood levels
- developing community roles and staff skills in community-ways of working
- investing in and valuing the voluntary and community sector
- developing long term relationships with communities to build trust shifting mindsets and organisational cultures towards community-centred practice



What makes strong communities?

The term 'strong communities' has been used in policy and practice for many years. However the key characteristics of a 'strong' community have not been well defined. The importance of communities in responding to the pandemic has prompted many local authorities to focus on the factors that contribute to strong communities. Recent work undertaken by the Mayor of London as part of their 'Building Strong Communities' programme has identified the factors below:

- there are accessible community events and activities
- there are active voluntary groups and charities
- strong relationships exist between people in the community
- people come together to work toward shared causes
- people trust one another
- people trust in and feel represented by institutions
- there are opportunities for communities to be included in decision making
- people feel a sense of responsibility towards improving their community
- public services respond to local needs
- funding from private and charitable sources is available and there is a sustainable local economy
- community spaces allow opportunities for connection
- people feel secure and happy where they live

There is no single definition of community. Community means different things to different people. Communities are dynamic entities that extend beyond geographical boundaries, encompassing various groups and interests that contribute to the fabric of local life. Broadly speaking, ways to define a community include:

Communities of Place

Are characterised by a defined geographical area with tangible boundaries, such as a village, parish, or primary care network within Herefordshire. These communities may share common concerns and interests regarding issues that affect their local area.

Communities of Interest

Are defined by shared interests, experiences, or circumstances. Examples include groups such as young people, disabled individuals, council tenants and those concerned with specific issues like climate change who unite around common themes or activities.

Communities of Identity

Are defined by how individuals identify themselves or are recognised by society, often based on demographic characteristics such as age, faith, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Given that individuals often associate with multiple communities simultaneously based on their living arrangements, employment, and personal interests, it's crucial to empower them to define the communities they wish to be part of.

Herefordshire Council understands that each community possesses unique needs and perspectives that must be considered when designing and delivering services and initiatives. Talk Community serves as a vital conduit for facilitating engagement with communities, providing mechanisms for people to actively participate in shaping the services that meet their needs.

Appendix 2: Drivers for change for Talk Community review and summary of stakeholder feedback

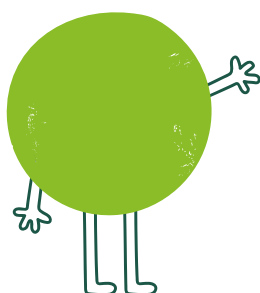
The challenge, drivers for change and stakeholder feedback

The Challenge

In defining the challenge we have considered the Herefordshire context, strategic drivers for our work with communities, the performance of Talk Communities and consider research and feedback from a number of key sources.

Drivers

In 2019 the council identified a number of drivers for establishing Talk Community. These are still relevant today.



- rural dispersed nature of Herefordshire's population, limited infrastructure present challenges to local people in accessing the support they need close to where they live or work
- new facilities and models of delivery are needed to bring services and support closer and increase participation and engagement in community life
- Herefordshire has a substantially low wage economy and associated challenges to social mobility
- the need to address health inequalities
- Herefordshire has an ageing population with numbers in older age groups growing at a disproportionately high rate.
- to reduce the number of families in crisis and young people becoming looked after, greater preventative work, early help and participation within communities are all required
- increasing demand for health and social care and reducing finances
- increase in complexity of need

Since 2022 cost of living pressure has also been a significant driver impacting the quality of life for Herefordshire's residents.

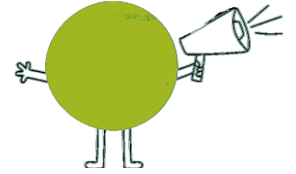
Stakeholder feedback

Between December 2023 and April 2024 we hosted a programme of stakeholder engagement to help develop this strategy. This included

- stakeholder workshops were held virtually and face to face with attendance, ranging from individuals, representatives of statutory partners, councillors, Town and Parish council's, Talk Community hub volunteers and Talk Community staff



- presentations were given to One Herefordshire Partnership, Herefordshire council officers from all departments, Children's and Young People Partnership Board and the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- Talk Community hubs were invited to complete a questionnaire
- visits were made to Talk Community hubs across the county
- guided interviews were conducted with statutory and VCSE partners



We are grateful for the constructive engagement of stakeholders and partners, and for the feedback, issues and ideas raised. The headlines from stakeholder engagement and the review of Talk Community performance are set out below:

- CAN meetings have performed well against the stated purpose of providing an opportunity for networking and listening to the voice of local communities
- a survey of CAN attendees in 2023 rated CAN meetings 4.3 out of 5
- at local level, Talk Community is a trusted and valued partner and there is much good practice on which to build

The need for Talk Community support in Ledbury is as acute as it has always been. Arguably, there is a need for closer coordination of TCH efforts across the Town and County.

The ability to help individuals by signposting them to relevant support organisations does not exist elsewhere, so the importance of an effective Hub network cannot be overstated.

Ledbury Town Council

- the role and purpose of Talk Community was not clear and understood by stakeholders, internal to the council, statutory partners and VCSE organisations
- the Talk Community brand has sometimes confused stakeholders about the relationship with the council
- there is a lack of a shared and understood strategic framework for Talk Community
- stakeholders have not been clear about the role, purpose and impact of Talk Community
- understanding of the impact of Talk Community has been hampered by the lack of an outcomes measurement framework
- there has been a lack of clarity about expectations and the role of hubs
- however, the hubs are seen to offer an important network of community spaces
- the volunteer run hub model means that many of the hubs are only open part time
- all hubs offer access to information and advice and volunteers are trained in signposting

- the spaces and volunteer capacity of the hub network currently has resulted in an inconsistent offer and limited ability of statutory agencies and partners ability to offer services at local level to improve access
- evidence of effective partnership working is mixed, partnership working at local level is stronger than at strategic level
- the focus of Talk Community was perceived to be more on adults but there has been considerable delivery of programmes to support children, young people and families
- a survey of users of the Talk Community website found
 - achieved average ratings against meeting user needs, ease of finding what users are looking for, visual appeal and trust in the information
 - the site is clean and uncluttered and holds a wide range of content
 - it is hard to find information and the search facility is not good

Appendix B
Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses
Scrutiny Committee: Health, Care, and Wellbeing
Date: 29-01-2024

Recommendation 1	Herefordshire Council works with partners to identify funding for community-based services.				
Executive Response	The Talk Community strategy sets out an action in 2024/25 to strengthen our early help and prevention offer for all, through co-production but particularly for children, young people and families and seek funding to support community based activities designed through co-production				
Action –	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Agree co-production framework for Community Wellbeing	Service Director, All Age Commissioning	End November 2024	1. Co-production framework agreed with toolkit and resources.	Draft co-production framework in place September 2024	
Implement co-production activity in 3 localities to address social isolation and loneliness, poverty and early help for children, young people and families to prevent the need to progress for formal mental health services	Talk Community Lead	January 2025	1. Co-production activities delivered 2. Co-produced services/ solutions designed 3. Resources to implement co-production services/solutions identified		

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Recommendation 2	The service further develops its management information concerning the activity and outputs of Talk Community hubs.				
Executive Response	The Talk Community strategy sets out an action to develop an outcomes and evaluation framework for Talk Community to enable the council to measure impact				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

Agree a brief to secure an external enabling help from a university partner to support the council to develop the framework	Director of Public Health	End November	Brief agreed and potential partners identified	
University partner secured	Talk Community Lead	End December	Partner starts work in January 2025	
Outcomes and evaluation framework agreed	Director of Public Health	End March 2025	Framework implemented from April 2025	

Recommendation 3	Talk Community develops a communications strategy to provide a clear understanding of the service's purpose.			
Response	The Talk Community Strategy sets out an action to implement a Talk Community communications strategy by November 2024 to ensure stakeholders receive the information they need in a timely way and in a format that meets their needs			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Officer working party to oversee the development of communications strategy	Talk Community Lead	October 2024	Working party convened and meeting	
Audit of current communications activity and stakeholder engagement	Talk Community Lead	October 2024	Audit and stakeholder engagement completed	
Communications strategy approved	Talk Community Lead	End November 2024	Strategy approved and implemented	

Recommendation 4	Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee reviews the forthcoming draft strategy.
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Executive Response	The Talk Community strategy will be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 3 rd October				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

Recommendation 5	The draft strategy explicitly takes into account the extent to which Talk Community underpins other strategies.				
Executive Response	Appendix 1 of the Talk Community strategy sets out explicitly the national and local policies and strategies that Talk Community delivery seeks to meet				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

Num	HubName
1	Aspire Community Hub
2	Belmont Community Centre
3	Challenge Church
4	Christian Life Centre
5	Close House
6	EF Bulmer
7	Flip Out Hereford
8	Hereford County Hospital
9	Hereford Football Association
10	Hereford Football Club Community
11	Hereford Rugby Club
12	Hereford Veteran Support Centre
13	Hinton Community Centre
14	Holme Lacy Village Hall
15	Leisure Centre Holmer Road
16	Leisure Pool, Hereford
17	LwB Well-being cafe, Lugwardine
18	Pegasus Juniors Ground, Roman Road, Hereford
19	Putson Baptist Church
20	Saxon Community Centre
21	St Johns Methodist Church
22	St Martins Church/ Food Share Locations (MOBILE)
23	St Paul's School, Hampton Dean
24	St Peter's (SPSJ) Community Hub, St Peters Sq, Hfd
25	St Thomas Cantilupe
26	The Courtyard
27	The Living Room
28	The Pavilion, Castle Green
29	The Space (Horizon Training)
30	Whitehouse Community Hub
31	Wye Circus
32	Age UK Sheds Together Cookery Club
33	Bishops Frome Village Centre
34	Bosbury Brew
35	Bromyard Food Bank (Previously St Peters Church)
36	Bromyard Halo
37	Bromyard Methodist Church
38	Burley Gate, Meet at The Gate
39	Colwall Library Community Hub

Num	HubName
40	Colwall TCH Hub
41	HOPE Bromyard
42	Ledbury Food Bank
43	Ledbury Methodist Church
44	Ledbury Parent Hub
45	Ledbury Rugby Football Club
46	Ledbury Swimming Pool
47	Whitbourne Hub
48	Burghill
49	Eardisley- Village Hall
50	Kington Weekly Market @Market Hall
51	Leintwardine
52	Leominster Community Centre
53	Leominster Food Bank
54	Leominster Leisure Centre
55	Leominster Town Council/ Barons Cross
56	Marden Parish Council
57	Staunton on Wye
58	The Lion Café
59	Wellington
60	Yarpole
61	Black Hill Communities Network
62	Bridstow Village Hall
63	Dinedor Parish Council
64	G. V. Community Hub
65	Garway Community Centre
66	HALO
67	Lea
68	Llangarron
69	Llanwarne Village Hall
70	Madley PC
71	Ross Community Garden
72	Ross Good Neighbours (used library for postcode)
73	The Hub at St. Peters
74	Walford
75	Whitchurch and Ganarew TC Hub