

# LOCALITY STRATEGY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE

## PREFACE

This document sets out our vision and objectives for locality working within Herefordshire. It is about developing local solutions and empowering and working in partnership with our communities.

### Local context

There are a number of key strategic developments and major change programmes currently underway through the public sector and the Herefordshire Partnership in relation to improving delivery of services to communities and the role local people play in this.

The implementation of the Shared Services Venture, the new Mental Health service and the Integrated Care Organisation are all changing the face of public sector services in the county. Furthermore, the implementation of the Herefordshire Pathfinder GP Consortia and the role of GPs as providers in their neighbourhoods are intended to bring a more local focus to decision-making on health priorities.

In addition, the comprehensive Rising to the Challenge transformation programme being undertaken by Herefordshire Public Services (HPS) has identified 'localities' as being key to one of its five transformation programme themes.

The review of the Herefordshire Partnership aims to not only streamline partnership structures and processes, but also integrate and share services in relation to intelligence, commissioning and engagement and future development of the county. Consideration will also need to be given to whether issues need to be addressed at a locality or a county level.

Early in 2010, nine localities were identified within the county to aid in the design and delivery of services to different parts of Herefordshire and to assist in the co-location of providers as we move towards achieving the most efficient uses of resources through maximum integration.

The following tiered approach was endorsed by the Herefordshire Partnership:

- Tier one – Rural areas (Weobley, Golden Valley and Mortimer - serving the needs of their immediate customers);

- Tier two – Market towns (serving the needs of their customers, as well as those of the rural areas surrounding them); and
- Tier three – Hereford City (providing a broad range of facilities and serving both the needs of its customers as well as those of the county).

A number of partners are actively working to shape how services can be delivered and communities engaged on the basis of these nine areas. For instance, locality working arrangements have been introduced for Children's Services and Health and Adult Social Care.

It is acknowledged that services are provided by organisations across public, voluntary & community and private sectors. The tiered approach being taken will reflect this. In addition, where communities are referred to, this includes the residential and business communities.

Enhancing the role of elected members has been tested through Reaching the Hearts of Herefordshire in five pilot areas (Bromyard, Kington, Golden Valley, Mortimer and Belmont). Local democracy continues to flourish with the local councils and their use of participatory budgeting, community led planning and increasing the number of robust action plans produced. One of the key learning points from the Hearts pilots was the positive difference made through members working with their parish councils.

A tiered approach to devolving services or budgets through a corporate and partnership policy framework will be a key to Herefordshire's locality strategy and to achieving its aims and objectives. Taking a partnership approach to decisions being made at the closest possible point to communities will be instrumental in gaining an understanding of how devolution (of decisions, budgets or services) could work, what this means in relation to local people and communities having a say about services that matter most to them and the location of future development both to support and in response to the new pattern of service provision.

## **National Context**

The Big Society aims to put the community at the heart of taking action in their area by encouraging volunteering and involvement in social action, making funds available for social projects through the Big Society Bank, giving communities a greater say over local

planning and saving local services, piloting a new National Citizen Service for 16 year olds, creating trained community organisers and giving a general power of competence to local councils.

The recently published Localism Bill sets out a radical shift of power from central government to local communities with the intention of:

- Giving local authorities new freedoms and flexibilities,
- New rights and powers for communities
- Reform to make the planning system clearer, more democratic and effective,
- Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

The essential actions (summarised above) aim to shift power away from central and local government and move it back to people and communities - thus creating the Big Society.

It will be essential for local collaboration and conversations with communities to identify and agree the red tape which is costly, unnecessary and restricting local action. This will create the right environment and give the right messages about involving local people directly in what happens in their community. The challenge will be around gaining consensus of all interested and democratically elected parties about what red tape should be removed.

More decisions will be taken within communities about how public money is spent and raised. This will give people more choice and a better standard of service as the way public services are delivered changes. These actions are central to the government's plan to sustain the proposed decentralisation and recognised in such measures as the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Information should be made available to local people about how money is being spent and used, and what difference it is making to them and the wider community. Local government will be held more accountable to its communities. This will give local people opportunities to take control of the process of decentralisation.

The Sustainable Communities Act challenges local authorities to inspire involvement in local democracy by talking with their communities about new ideas on ways in which their area can be improved. Local authorities can ask central government to remove barriers that are stopping action being taken.

## **LOCALITY STRATEGY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE**

### **Our Vision**

**To strengthen communities by increasing choice and control over service delivery in their area, and enabling them to take responsibility for local issues.**

### **Our Approach**

We will do this through greater connection with communities, strengthening the role of citizens, enhancing local democracy and encouraging service providers to work better together, so that we achieve better outcomes for people and places together.

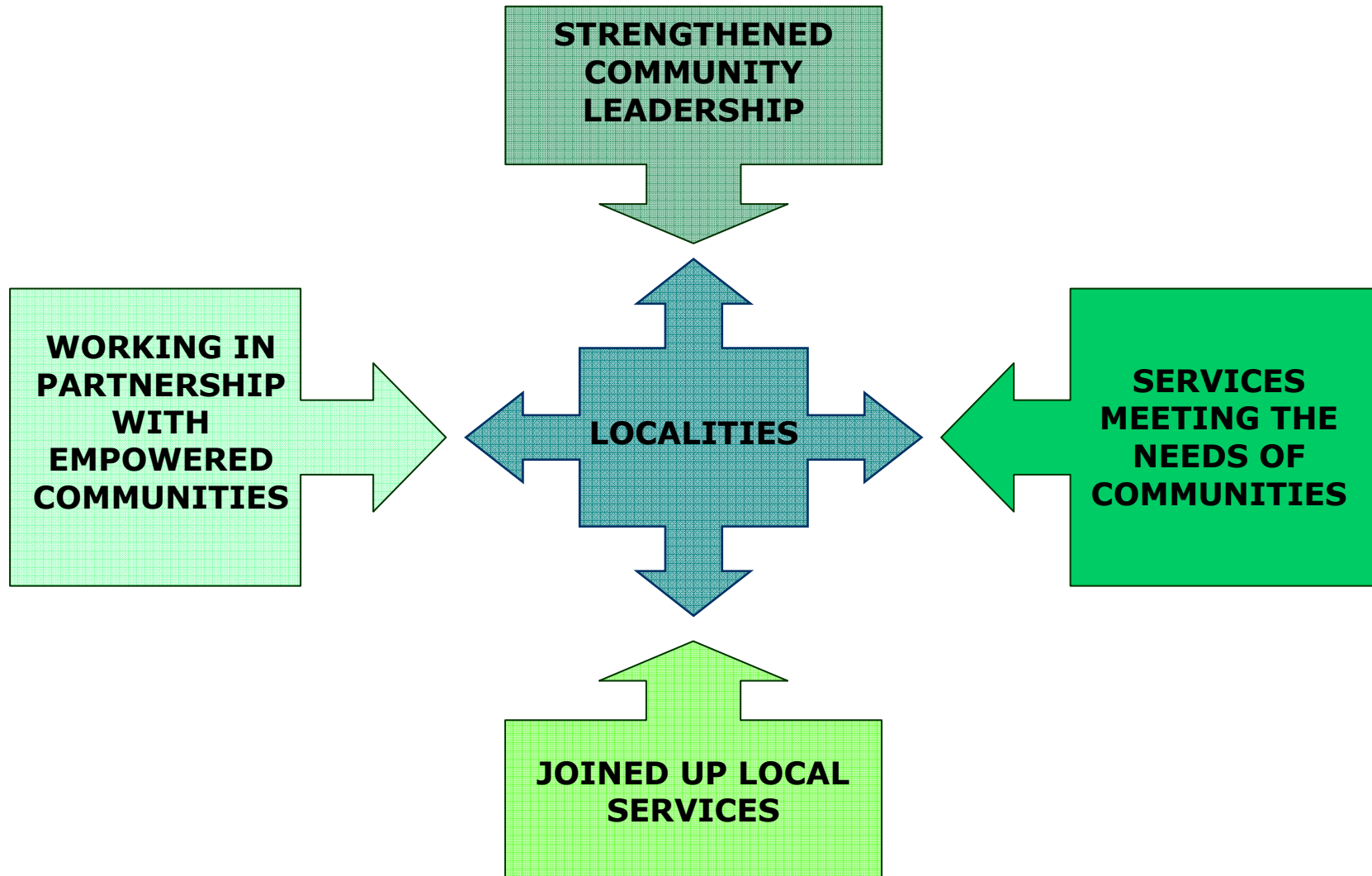
### **Our Objectives**

- Strengthened community leadership;
- Local service delivery meeting the needs of communities;
- Joined up local services; and
- Working in partnership with empowered communities.

### **By delivering our objectives we will achieve**

- Empowered local people who have influence over local decision making and who participate in and feel part of their community;
- Services delivered in each locality which reflect the needs and priorities of local communities;
- Better engagement with communities by working with them to create opportunities that are relevant to them and their area;
- More efficient use of resources through the maximum integration of services;
- A reduction in local bureaucracy by removing barriers and reducing the burdens that currently prevent community action; and
- Increased involvement of communities in local democratic processes.

## LOCALITY STRATEGY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE – OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



## **OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**

### **What we aim to achieve**

- Decision making at a local level;
- Elected members and town and parish councils working together with their communities; and
- Local community leaders working together for the benefit of their area.

### **How we aim to achieve this**

- Nine locality based partnerships established bringing together both tiers of local government, delivery partners and community representatives to discuss and agree local priorities;
- More residents participating in local democratic processes and more people engaging with their ward members and parish and town councils and standing for election;
- Identifying senior managers to support the nine locality based partnerships;
- Developing and implementing the 2011 Charter 'A Shared Community – working relationships in Local Government in Herefordshire';
- Improving the support and training for parish and town councillors and elected members; and
- Developing Reaching the Hearts of Herefordshire across the county to continue to strengthen the role of elected members as community leaders.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: SERVICES MEETING THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES**

### **What we aim to achieve**

- Services designed with the customer in mind;
- Town and parish councils and local organisations delivering local services;
- Local services reflecting local need as well as being offered more choice over how these services are delivered;
- Improved local access to services; and
- Improved 'ownership' of decisions by local communities.

### **How we aim to achieve this**

- Offering opportunities for town and parish councils and other local organisations to deliver services in their area and influence decisions affecting them;
- Producing nine locality profiles and plans;
- Ensuring that communities know how to access the services they need in their localities;
- Using community led planning, with the support and involvement of service providers leading to the production and implementation of town and parish plans;
- Community asset transfers; and
- Greater choice on how to access services through the provision of different service delivery channels.

## **OBJECTIVE 3: JOINED UP LOCAL SERVICES**

### **What we aim to achieve**

- Maximum integration of services in localities;
- Sharing of resources; and
- Community budgeting in localities.

### **How we aim to achieve this**

- Creating service delivery teams in localities with front line staff producing solutions together;
- Locality working arrangements introduced as appropriate;
- Completion of asset mapping and rationalisation exercise leading to the creation of co-location/integration service delivery hubs and shared customer contact centres;
- Commissioning appropriate services from the voluntary and community sector to support the localities strategy; and
- Service and financial planning in the public sector to be undertaken with the customer in mind. Services to be delivered in the locality, where appropriate.



## **OBJECTIVE 4: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES**

### **What we aim to achieve**

- Better communication with our communities;
- More people actively involved in their community;
- Appropriate, accessible and co-ordinated community engagement;
- Local people involved in local decisions; and
- Services that are more responsive to local need.

### **How we aim to achieve this**

- Locality based partnership arrangements in place across the county;
- Giving people the opportunity to come together and discuss barriers that could be removed by local and central government to improve their area;
- Acting in partnership with local communities, whilst balancing the needs of the wider county;
- Encouraging partner organisations to come together to engage and consult with localities and then share the results as appropriate;
- Community led planning producing updated Parish Plans with all town and parish councils supported to produce and implement a local plan;
- Develop community led planning so that communities within localities have a say about where new houses, businesses and shops should go and what they should look like;
- Testing the use of participatory budgeting as a way of encouraging communities to get involved with their locality based partnerships;
- Develop and implement a tiered policy framework setting out how decisions can be taken at the most local level;
- Third sector support services review and implementation; and

- Implementing the engagement framework which will change the role of front line workers and the way in which they work within localities.

## **How will we know what difference we are making**

Our local measures of success that we will use to hold our ourselves accountable to Herefordshire's communities will be developed as part of an action plan.