

Locality master plans – Golden Valley

1. About Golden Valley Locality

The Golden Valley locality is the largest of the localities covering 424 km² in the south west of the county, bordering Powys to the west and Monmouthshire to the south. The map below shows the ten LSOAs³ that fall within the locality; all are classified as 'rural village & dispersed' except for 'Clelonger', which is 'rural town & fringe'. It has 14,200 residents (8% of the county's population) and consists of 41 rural parishes. Kingstone, Clelonger, Madley and Peterchurch are the largest villages, but there are a number of smaller villages that also act as service centres. These include Ewyas Harold, Dorstone and Pontrilas.

The area is remote having limited transport links compared to other areas of the county, particularly in the west of the locality which borders the Black Mountains. This area contains some of the least densely populated areas in the county. The east of the locality is served by a number of A-roads. The north east of the locality is close to Hereford City, whereas areas to the west are closer to the town of Hay-on-Wye. In the south, Abergavenny and Monmouth are the closest towns.

2. Services required

As a rural area, Golden Valley serves the needs of its immediate residents. In asset terms there is a requirement for Council services (including a library service, customer services, primary and secondary education and children's and family services), blue light services and voluntary services. Parish and town councils are also likely to have more responsibility for the delivery of services needed by local communities and their needs need to be explored through the emerging Locality Partnerships. A location plan of assets and a legend of facilities are supplied as part of this paper.

Two retained fire stations at Ewyas Harold and Peterchurch, both will remain. There is a police station is based in Peterchurch.

3. Steps already taken

Further to the Hearts of Herefordshire work undertaken during 2009, there has been little progress in terms of asset planning as there are only a small number of public sector properties within the locality and there have been no major initiatives in terms of service redesign which have impacted upon their use.

Dorstone's Front Room originated in 2008 when the village of Dorstone was informed that its small rural post office was closing. The community decided to replace what they were losing and this facility has a meeting place, displaying and selling local craft products as well as being a tourist information centre.

A project to refurbish St Peters Church Centre was completed in 2009 and is seen as being an exemplar of extended church use and partnership working. The building now houses the Golden Valley Children's Centre, as well as a public library, which is stocked and managed by the council and run by volunteers. Other services regularly provided include family support, healthy eating sessions, skill building and Jobcentreplus and benefits.

For some time, there have been several attempts at accessing external funding to provide a multi-use community centre at Peterchurch to serve the wider communities of the Golden Valley. A business case to AWM was made and initial funding was agreed. Following the downsizing and eventual demise of AWM, funding for the project was withdrawn. There remains the basis of an initiative to explore other funding opportunities to deliver this project albeit in a modified form. Such a facility could support the presence of a number of public services on a part time or clinic basis. There remains interest in pursuing this kind of model should an appropriate funding stream be identified.

At present due to the lack of council/NHS premises, there are no opportunities identified to foster collocation. Initial discussions with the Fire & Rescue Service have identified space capacity at their Peterchurch site which might be used for temporary/mobile accommodation should this become a necessity. The police are also looking at possible collocation with the Fire & Rescue Service.

NHS Herefordshire has investigated a number of potential sites within the Golden Valley to house locality staff but to date have been unable to source a suitable value for money solution. The current locality team aimed at supporting outreach services, are temporarily housed at Belmont. The council owns a property in Peterchurch which is used as

a day centre through a lease arrangement with Age Concern. This building is limited in its adaptability to house other front facing public services.

4. Asset reviews

A series of asset reviews have been undertaken within the county over the past 12 months. Potential options including the identification of opportunities for services to co-locate, as well as those properties no longer suitable for service delivery and therefore surplus to operational requirements and available for disposal (either to achieve a capital receipt or a community asset transfer) have all been assessed with the following objectives:

- More effective/efficient use of assets
- Improved public access to services
- Increased co-location and co-working across all sectors
- Reduced revenue expenditure by sharing and redesigning services
- Reduced county carbon footprint

5. Proposed work programme for locality

- The concept of a modern, multi-use community facility should continue to be explored.
- Discussions are taking place in Longton, and Ewyas Harold to consider the potential for supporting community libraries.
An approach has been received from Dorstone.
- The locality network may wish to undertake a scoping exercise to ascertain what form local service delivery might take, particularly in relation to the viability of the aforementioned facility.

6. Other work underway

- Peterchurch and Dorstone along a number of other parishes in the locality, have already produced a Community Led Plan. 8 others (including the second iteration of a plan for Peterchurch) are currently being produced.
- Initial discussions with the Fire & Rescue Service have identified space capacity at their Peterchurch site which might be used for temporary/mobile accommodation should this become a necessity.
- The police are also looking at possible collocation with the Fire & Rescue Service.