

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	12TH OCTOBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	LOCALITY WORKING – FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION
REPORT BY:	Sustainable Communities Manager

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To provide an update on progress on locality working and seek contributions and advice on its successful development.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: the report be noted.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This report describes progress in respect of locality working in Herefordshire over the last year and shares examples of best practice and challenges currently being faced.
- 2 Locality working aims to deliver the objectives of the Locality Strategy for Herefordshire, approved by Cabinet in March 2011 [Locality Strategy](#). Locality working is focused on four strategic objectives:
 - a) Strengthened community leadership - working together for the benefit of the local area;
 - b) Services meeting the needs of communities - designed and delivered to reflect local needs;
 - c) Joined up local services - sharing of resources and integrating services;
 - d) Working in partnership with empowered communities - local people involved in local decisions and given more control over local issues.
- 3 The first year has seen the development of practical arrangements to build up a picture of each locality to try to improve communication with Ward Members and other local community leaders and stakeholders, complete an asset mapping exercise within each locality, encourage multi-agency tasking where appropriate, as well as service areas using localities as a framework for greater engagement on the future of services.
- 4 It is clear that some localities are further ahead than others, in terms of levels of engagement and overall approach as well as developing a shared understanding of the principles and

opportunities of locality working. There are also a number of tensions being exposed when developing new ways of working at a time of decreasing resources.

Key Considerations

- 5 As part of the Locality Strategy, a common approach to localities has been developed by HPS working with wider partners. Nine locality areas were identified to help structure service delivery closer to communities and to better address local needs. HPS together with a number of other key organisations are actively working to shape how services can be delivered and communities engaged, on the basis of these nine areas.
- 6 The following principles of locality working were developed following consultation with key stakeholders, including parish councillors, ward members and Herefordshire Partnership partners:
 - Flexible approach to how each locality will operate
 - Focus on delivering the 4 objectives
 - Leadership and commitment from ward members, partner organisations and Council staff
 - Locality Networks develop, building on existing community structures
 - A reporting mechanism to capture issues and develop solutions is agreed and actioned
 - At least one event a year in each locality
 - Mechanism for sharing information and intelligence
- 7 In order to support this approach a number of practical arrangements have been put in place to support locality working:
 - Herefordshire Council allocated Locality Lead Officers (LLOs) in summer 2011. These senior officers have developed a dialogue with the local members in their locality, identified and engaged with key partners and have begun to develop an understanding of the locality and map key issues;
 - Resources have been assigned to support LLOs, to include additional officer support in some localities and sources of information by locality, such as parish plans, locality asset reviews and mapping of diversity issues. There are profiles for each locality which contain a range of statistics about the locality and any large distinct areas, highlighting key facts, either relative to the county as a whole or notable variations within the area [About localities - Facts and Figures](#). Further iterations of these profiles will provide updated information both from statistics and the wider intelligence which is being gathered.
 - A locality engagement toolkit has been compiled, to support improved engagement and community development, providing a set of pointers and practical guidelines to address issues raised within localities, using local case studies as examples and inspiration. The [Localities Engagement Toolkit](#) is available as an on line resource.
 - Some organisational partners have aligned their resources to locality areas, such as West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Division and General Practitioners.
- 8 Example activities, demonstrating locality working to date, are described below under each of the objectives:

Strengthened community leadership

 - Regular ward member briefings by LLOs and partner officers as appropriate in each locality
 - Locality networks developing with ward, town and parish councils, third sector and

some delivery partners. Some localities are using newsletters to aid communication in communities.

- At least one Lead Locality Officer at senior management level identified within Herefordshire Council for each locality [Lead Locality officers](#)
- 2011 Charter for joint working between Herefordshire Council and town and parish councils approved, recognising the key role of the councils in locality working.
- Neighbourhood planning seminars with ward members and parish councillors held in each locality, providing a model for further such events. Over half of parish councils attended events, with positive feedback received. A number of parish councils are showing an active interest in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for their area as a mechanism for deciding the future of the places where they live and work.
- Localities Engagement Toolkit drafted with support materials.

Services meeting the needs of communities

- Protocol being developed as part of Charter to support delegation and devolvement of services to a parish and town council level.
- Some individual services being identified by both town and parish councils and Herefordshire Council as having potential for delegation or devolvement
- Locality profiles, extrapolating variances in need have been completed and published on the Herefordshire Council website and shared with locality contacts and ward members.
- Localities Engagement Toolkit highlighting case studies where local community leaders have developed local solutions to service delivery e.g. Fownhope bus service, community libraries.
- Increasing number of services using the framework of localities to have local conversations on redesign and delivery of specific services, such as Children Centre conversations.
- Programme of community asset transfers, to provide base and revenue stream for community anchor organisations, as well as local venue for service delivery;
- Offers from service providers to discuss locality issues with local members such as Amey Wye Valley.
- Your community – your say initiative identifying local priorities to feed into the service planning process

Joined up local services

- Locality working arrangements such as Children's Services Multi Agency Group meetings, involving various partners.
- Multi-agency tasking and co-ordination (MATAC) joint working on anti-social behaviour and other community safety concerns, with intelligence provided on locality basis and tasking, if appropriate. Two example activities are the police working with community contacts in Leominster and working with young people to address alcohol related disorder through an effective partnership set up in Ross-on-Wye Town.
- Asset mapping exercise completed and reported to Cabinet, and used to aid discussions in some localities around future options. Use of assets has been discussed with other local organisations and arrangements put in place, such as the police working in localities through different buildings, including the Leominster Customer Service Centre.

Working in partnership with empowered communities

- Incorporating evidence from town and parish plans into overall understanding of localities, together with supporting planning groups to develop and achieve actions they identify. [Parish Plans \(also known as Community Led Plans\)](#)
- Service providers working with parish planning groups to identify opportunities for service redesign and development.
- Participatory budgeting exercise within some parish councils to support local communities

- to be more involved in local activity.
- Projects are being developed through locality networks, for example the John Kyrle High School feasibility study.
- Localities Engagement Toolkit highlighting case studies demonstrating effective partnership working to develop local solutions to issues identified by local communities e.g. Belmont Pools, Tudorville Community Centre.

9 Challenges faced to date

- Responding to feedback received in 2011, a flexible approach to how locality working was implemented in each locality was agreed. There is therefore a lack of a level of consistency in how each locality is operating, including different levels of engagement across stakeholders and locality working developing at different rates in each locality. Accepting variance in approach by locality, a greater degree of consistency is to be addressed through development of minimum operating standards for Lead Locality Officers.
- Levels of officer support for each locality vary and there are significant differences in population size of localities, which also impacts on the number of potential stakeholders to engage with.
- There is constant activity being generated and driven by communities. This is happening regardless of any local or national policies or initiatives. However locality working provides an opportunity to provide on-going support at a local level. It has been recognised that further officer level support should be identified at a level below Assistant Director for each locality, by realigning resources and in so doing, providing development opportunities for current staff.
- The degree to which ward, town and parish councils are involved in locality working is also variable, with differences in understanding and approaches to locality working. Locality working can provide a context for ward members and other community leaders to share best practice and practical solutions.

10 Next steps

The Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey 2012 results [Herefordshire quality of life survey - Facts and Figures](#) have been drilled down to locality level and are being used to inform 'Your community – your say' community engagement exercise during September and October 2012. Lead Locality Officers are supporting engagement events in each locality and will build on this going forward as part of their locality role. 'Your community – your say', should provide a basis for developing engagement with communities and further opportunity for ward members and officers to have in depth conversations with their local communities around future service delivery options.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Review will be taking a cross cutting view on how we can better design services and work with providers with localities identifying priorities for services, more involvement by local providers of services (including parish councils and local voluntary and community sector groups) as well as local communities being empowered to do things for themselves from their own resources.

Steps have been put in place to ensure a more consistent approach to the implementation of locality working (see 9 above). This will be kept under review by Senior Management Team and HPSLT and reported to the Cabinet Member as appropriate.

An exercise will also be conducted to map progress of each locality and key stakeholders against the success measures (Appendix A). Whilst locality working will develop at different rates across the localities, a gap analysis will enable partners to assess whether any greater input might encourage greater progress.

Community Impact

- 11 Strong strategic links exist between Locality working and the Herefordshire Public Services Outcomes in the Corporate Plan;
- Enhanced local democracy and community engagement; and
 - Ways of working that reflect the needs and priorities of people and place.

The vision for locality working is clearly set out in the Locality Strategy:

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

To what extent this vision is taken forward in the future needs to be clearly agreed and supported. The fundamental principle behind locality working is working more closely and effectively with our communities. More work and understanding is required, to fully integrate this principle across all service areas within Herefordshire Council, in order to maximise resident satisfaction with service provision and make best use of the skills and resources, collectively available in Herefordshire.

Measuring impact: In order to be able to describe and measure progress in locality working, staged measures of success against outcomes have been compiled and are attached as Appendix A. This provides examples of what success will look like and the roles and responsibilities of both local communities and service providers if this vision is to be fully achieved.

Equality and Human Rights

- 12 The Equality and Human Rights team are providing an integral role in locality working. The team have provided valuable insight into diversity issues and profiles by locality and are helping to facilitate better engagement with those people who are ‘hard to reach’ in our communities and/or those who experience barriers to involvement. The Your Community, Your Say engagement will include specific targeting of sections of the community, in order to provide a picture across society in Herefordshire. All of the above demonstrate a proactive approach to delivering our public sector equality duty.

Financial Implications

- 13 All activities within locality working are met within existing agreed budgets and aim to make best use of assets and resources within Herefordshire Council.

Legal Implications

- 14 There are no legal implications.

Risk Management

15. Consideration should be given to:

Any misunderstanding of the aims behind locality working or treating it as a separate project, rather than a way of working with our communities looking to the future, would undermine the work to date. It could also minimise the advantages that a joined up approach to service provision and closer working with residents, charitable and business sectors could bring, through corporate programmes such as the Root and Branch review. Improved understanding of locality working, through clear communication and practical examples, will

help to align support, reduce duplication and increase opportunity.

Consultees

- 16 Consultation occurred with ward members, parish councils and organisations through Herefordshire Partnership during 2011. Feedback was incorporated to include a move from Locality Partnerships, to less formal networks, building on elected members' community leadership role and recognising locality individuality - 'one size does not fit all'.

Appendices

Appendix A – Locality working Success Measures

Background Papers

Locality Strategy for Herefordshire – March 2011 [Locality Strategy for Herefordshire](#)

Facts and Figures About Herefordshire – About Localities web pages, including profiles for each locality [About localities - Facts and Figures](#)

Introduction to Localities – webpages on locality working [Localities - Herefordshire Council](#)

Herefordshire Localities Engagement Toolkit [Localities Engagement Toolkit](#)