

Rural Strategy Action List Update Report 2023-2028

The below table shows the activities undertaken in the first year of Rural Strategy split into the seven overarching strategic priorities.

RRL 1.1 Rural Community Priority

Activities	Progress	Lead / Team
Help Parish Councils and community groups to improve and widen the availability of information about services	Parish liaison meeting held in Quarter 3 23/24 with 22 parishes represented compared to 15 at the previous meeting. The Parish liaison is being delivered in partnership with LRALC which include additional meetings each year including Clerks meetings.	Community Partnerships
Engage and support village halls, community halls and other buildings to increase the accessibility and affordability high quality indoor community spaces in rural areas.	In both December 22 and September 23 two rounds of applications for the S106 funding - 11 local projects have received funding for which 6 were to Parish Councils to improve local facilities.	Community Partnerships
Create opportunities and facilitate closer comms and partnership working between the Police, Community Safety, parish councils and communities to reduce crime.	<p>Rural crime is specifically referenced within the community safety partnership plan and activities to help rural communities prevent crime take place throughout the year.</p> <p>The community safety team and partners ran an annual rural crime event in November where rural businesses and residents are invited along.</p> <p>There is also the annual national week of action that forms part of the forces rural policing plan.</p> <p>Schemes such as Farm Watch and Heritage Watch are supported in local villages and communities are encouraged wit be part of the Neighbourhood link to stay informed.</p> <p>The annual Rural Crime networking meeting took place in November 2023.</p>	Environmental services

RRL 1.2 Rural Environment Priority

Activities	Progress	Lead / Team
<p>Support parish councils and their communities to develop and deliver local climate change and carbon reduction initiatives, including enabling access to appropriate grant funding.</p>	<p>Parish and Town council Net Zero toolkit launched with LCC.</p> <p>Sustainable Warmth Competition completed with 28 properties receiving upgrades via Green Living Leicestershire</p> <p>EV car sharing scheme initiated seeing a growth in rural EV charging points.</p> <p>Environmental Grant introduced to help communities and parishes.</p>	<p>Environment Co-ordinator / Economic Development</p>
<p>Help to reduce fuel poverty by working with partners and communities to provide information and advice on saving energy and water, and by making new and re-developed homes more energy efficient.</p>	<p>Sustainable Warmth Competition completed with 28 properties receiving upgrades via Green Living Leicestershire</p>	<p>Environment Co-ordinator</p>
<p>Work with communities, police, and community safety partners on initiatives to reduce environmental crime including fly-tipping, graffiti, and dog fouling.</p>	<p>In the previous 4 years we have seen a steady decline in fly tipping reports. However there has been an increase in Q1 and Q2 2023/24 - with some hotspot locations. Action has been taken using CCTV and working with businesses and residents – this is being monitored.</p> <p>Harborough DC has been shortlisted again for an award for our campaign work in this area.</p>	<p>Environmental Services</p>

RRL 1.3 Rural Economy priority

Activities	Progress	Lead / Team
Ensure that Harborough District's villages and rural areas remain attractive and vibrant places to live, work, invest and visit.	<p>The new tourism leaflet has been printed and distributed through locations across the district.</p> <p>The bi-monthly newsletter produced for businesses show casing the district, grants, support etc.</p> <p>Publishing a residents newsletter inform residents about the work of the council, partners etc and also engaging with communities to promote/publish local events and initiatives.</p> <p>The footfall and free Wi-Fi in the Market Harborough town centre.</p>	Economic Development
Support rural businesses to access advice, support services, grants, loans, and other funding streams to support effective start up, expansion or diversification	The council was successful in achieving rural enterprise funding - these are being passported to support local businesses.	Economic Development
Work with local employers and support providers to increase apprenticeship opportunities and placements within rural industries.	<p>The Council hosted an event in February 2023 at the Harborough Innovation Centre to promote apprenticeships and educate employers.</p> <p>HDC has carried out job fairs through out the year across the district for local employers.</p> <p>HDC continues promote and run apprenticeship opportunities.</p>	Economic Development and HR
Work with partners to enhance connections to information, guidance and support to access employment and training.	<p>Career activities have been carried out in partnership between the Economic Development Team and HR/Learning and Development Business Partner.</p> <p>The Council's Economic Development Team have arranged job fairs throughout 2023 - HR team attended a couple of the events to promote HDC roles and opportunities.</p> <p>The Council hosted an event in February 2023 at the Harborough Innovation Centre to promote apprenticeships and educate employers.</p>	Economic Development and HR

RRL 1.4 Rural Wellbeing Priority

Activities	Progress	CMT Lead / Team
Work with GP's and other health providers to improve communication and awareness of the routes to access different health information, advice & services from rural areas	HDC Health & Wellbeing team are an active member of the Harborough Integrated Network Team (HINT). The council has links with Groups including the Rural Community Council (RCC) Primary Care Networks (PCNs), HDC Community Safety Partnership and local Doctors and Pharmacies to deliver roadshows across the district and provide important advice	Community Partnerships

	<p>and guidance to residents in hard-to-reach rural areas – these include:</p> <p>Houghton on the Hill: attendance of 150</p> <p>Medbourne: attendance of 107.</p> <p>There was clearly great networking between partners, charities and groups that would not have happened if we hadn't worked together to set up the sessions.</p>	
<p>Expand and promote Healthy Harborough Walks and Cycle Routes.</p>	<p>Active Harborough promote Cycling and Walking groups and deliver a range of health walks in several areas around the district that are led by volunteers within our community.</p> <p>Following the adoption of LCCs Cycling and Walking Strategy and Action Plan in 2021, work continues to develop Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for the county towns and the urban areas surrounding Leicester city. These will set out the vision and priorities for cycling and walking improvements in each of the areas to create convenient and practical cycling and walking networks to help and encourage people to travel more sustainably.</p> <p>HDC provides feedback on the current draft cycling and walking network plans that will help shape the Market Harborough Area to help influence the cycling and walking network, by informing what improvements to cycling and walking routes we would like to see specifically around the draft cycling and walking network and types of infrastructure improvements on the cycling and walking network – e.g. dedicated cycle lanes, junction improvements, benches etc.</p>	<p>Community Partnerships</p>
<p>Encourage, enable, and support volunteers and the voluntary & community sector to establish and deliver more community led health & wellbeing services within rural areas</p>	<p>HDC Health and Wellbeing officers work across the district supporting and enabling community led health and wellbeing services with the support of local volunteers, such as coaches.</p> <p>Work is also underway to develop a Harborough District Health and Wellbeing Volunteer programme. The aim, to ensure our volunteers live, work and look after their health wellbeing in their communities – and being perfectly placed to engage and inspire residents to look after their wellbeing. The programme is intended to engage with and recruit individuals who volunteer to support others journeys to better health and wellbeing. Each with an inspiring story to tell.</p> <p>Expected outcomes will be that our ambassadors have supported participants who access the GP Exercise Referral Scheme, be at our local events and provide signposting information to local health and</p>	<p>Community Partnerships / Economic Development</p>

	wellbeing services and give information on healthy lifestyles.	
Increase people's overall wellbeing and resilience by supporting activity to reduce isolation, loneliness, and other mild mental / social health issues.	<p>Since January 2023, we have been running several boccia sessions within the areas sheltered accommodation settings including Brooklands Gardens Independent living in Market Harborough. We have partnered with Voluntary Action South Leicestershire to deliver physical activity sessions for their community and provided social opportunities and improved the mobility of residents taking part.</p> <p>The participants have enjoyed the sessions and have created a boccia court within the independent living setting. using a basic Asset Based Community Development process (ABCD) They have a designated scorer/adjudicator for sessions. The sessions have now become self-sustaining and are being delivered by the Brooklands community champion.</p> <p>Since taking part in the sessions, several participants have mentioned how great it is to come together weekly and how much they have improved since they started playing boccia. The sessions have proved to be popular attracting 10-15 participants weekly, because of its success we are working with other partners to deliver similar sessions elsewhere in the district</p>	Community Partnerships
Review the quality and accessibility of sports and leisure facilities in rural areas including community managed facilities and associated clubs/groups.	We support this work through the Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies commissioned by Harborough District Council, they inform us through support of NGBs on demand within the area.	Community Partnerships
Secure investment into new and/or improved playing fields, recreation grounds, play equipment and other outdoor recreation space	Our S106 process allows our parishes to consider if there is a need for facilities and apply for funding to help deliver much needed provision across the whole of the district (Subject to development and acceptable planning)	Development Management Strategic Planning Environment Community Partnerships

RRL 1.5 Rural Connectivity Priority

Activities	Progress	Lead / Team
Increase the digitisation of services across the Council.	This feeds into the new HDC Transformation Plan, which aligns to the Corporate Plan.	HDC ICT
Expand and increase accessibility of infrastructure for electric vehicle charging within rural communities.	<p>Tilton on the Hill EV car club up and running with 2 EV chargers.</p> <p>Funds for further chargers in 24/25.</p> <p>Links with LCC charger strategy made.</p>	Environment Co-ordinator

