

Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2022 – 2027



1. Purpose

- Harborough District Council recognises the important contribution that the voluntary and community sector makes to communities across the Harborough District. Continued budget pressures has caused the Council to have to rethink how it delivers its services and through a transformational programme (BC25) is redesigning its operations and services.
- Community and voluntary organisations also continue to face challenges with sourcing funding and resources, with some seeking more collaborative ways of working with others to meet demands.
- The purpose of this strategy is to outline a framework and set of priorities to guide support and engagement with the voluntary and community sector from 2022 until 2027.

2. Vision for Harborough District

- Working with our communities, we will build a future for the people of Harborough district that gives them the best life chances and opportunities through:
 - Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place
 - Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices
 - Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations
 - Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy.

3. Voluntary and Community Sector

- **Definition.** For the purposes of this strategy the voluntary and community sector is used to define not for profit independent, voluntary and community groups or organisations formed by local people, or those with a local interest, to improve the quality of life for themselves and/or fellow citizens in Harborough District. These include registered charities, voluntary organisations and community groups, community interest companies and social enterprises. Parish Councils and Meetings are outside the scope of this strategy.
- **Voluntary and Community Sector in Harborough District.** Harborough District has always had a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector. This includes sports clubs, charities and social enterprises right through to local community groups which span a range of services and operate across the district as set out in Tables 1-3.

Table 1: Number of Groups

Type	Number
Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC)	17
Social Enterprise/CIC	49
Charity & Community Groups	295
Total	361

Table 2: Main Service of Groups

Main Service (Based on Charity Commission description)	Number
Accommodation	9
Animals	4
Armed Forces	1
Arts/culture/heritage	24
Criminal justice	1
Disabilities and Learning difficulties	9
Economic/Community Development	73
Education/training	82
Environment & Conservation	9
Health (Including Sport)	67
Overseas Aid	11
Prevention of poverty	25
Religion	44
Women	2
Total	361

Table 3: Organisations by Ward

Row Labels	Count of Ward
Billesdon & Tilton	21
Bosworth	21
Broughton Astley South & Leire	2
Broughton Astley-Primethorpe & Sutton	9
Dunton	10
Fleckney	14
Glen	15
Kibworths	25
Lubenham	10
Lutterworth East	19
Lutterworth West	9
Market Harborough-Great Bowden & Arden	29
Market Harborough-Little Bowden	20
Market Harborough-Logan	23
Market Harborough-Welland	20
Misterton	20
Nevill	14
Thurnby & Houghton	30
Ullesthorpe	21
#N/A	29
Grand Total	361

- **Volunteering.** Harborough District is estimated to have a high level of volunteering with around 30% of residents undertaking regular (once a month) formal volunteering. The volunteering community ranges from local branches of national charities to those individuals that want to make something happen in their neighbourhood. It is difficult to quantify the value of volunteers work but this would total £millions per year if hours were paid at the National Living Wage.
- **Covid-19.** The response from the VCS during Covid-19 has been phenomenal with many groups and first time volunteers stepping forward to help the most vulnerable in communities to access food, medicines and to stay connected with the outside world. The VCS in Harborough District has risen to this challenge with support from district charities, local foodbanks, community groups coordinating activity in their locality, and volunteers offering time to support the most vulnerable. Volunteering has assumed a significant role in supporting communities during the pandemic, with local people coming forward to offer their support in a variety of ways. A HDC survey of community groups during the first lockdown in 2020 suggested that 1,181 residents across the district came forward to offer support informally within their community and at least 705 of these offers were mobilised via district charities and local community groups. The experience of Covid-19 is another demonstration of the incredible role that the VCS sector and volunteers play at a local level in Harborough District. As a result, the potential for effective collaborative working has been clear for Harborough as an area.

4. Aims and Objectives

- **The Council will help enable the local voluntary and community sector to support the vision for Harborough District.**

Priorities

1. **To build effective partnerships with the VCS to support community leadership and place shaping at the district and community level.**

Key Actions to include;

- Enable investment in community facilities e.g. through s106 process or community asset transfer
- Grow the Harborough Lotto as an income source to local good causes
- Review HDC staff volunteering policy

2. **To learn from the community response to Covid and embrace new ways of working with the VCS.**

Key Actions to include;

- Work with partners to review the Community Hub and embed learning and new ways of working.
- Maintaining relationships with foodbanks and community networks to ensure district wide support.

3. To work with the VCS to meet the needs of the most vulnerable through prevention and early intervention.

Key Actions to include;

- Complete the review of VCS Grants
- Work with VCS to promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthy life choices.

4. To extend Council's services by building capacity through specialist partners.

Key actions to include

- Work in partnership to commission specialist services, such as support for Rough Sleepers
- Facilitate the provision of specialist services that meet local needs e.g. Crisis Café
- Review the VCS Accommodation Policy.

Principles

- **The Council will prioritise support for the VCS**
 - a) If there is evidence a local need – linked to a Council priority
 - b) If no other support is practically available
 - c) If they can evidence sustainability or a short-term projects necessity
 - d) If they can evidence value for money – cost, quality, or wider social impact
 - e) If they can use Council support to secure match funding from other sources

Key Legislation

- Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives the local authority the power to give support to organisation(s) which promote the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of their area, which includes incurring expenditure.

5. Action Plan, Monitoring and Review

- Harborough District Council will develop an action plan to support implementation of this strategy and keep this under review as part of business planning. The Strategy will be in a maximum of 5 years.