

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Through conversation with rural residents, rural businesses, community organisations, charities, and other rural stakeholders we identified the following priority actions for communities across the district.

Rural Community



Priority Action	What difference will it make (Outcomes)	How we will measure success (Performance Measures)
Encourage, enable, and support communities to strengthen social connections and support networks in rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More connected and resilient communities with improved health, wellbeing, and prosperity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in community based formal social and support networks. • More residents feel part of and supported by their community.
Help parish councils and community groups to improve and widen the availability and dissemination of information about services, facilities, activities, and events in rural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents feel well informed, which will strengthen connections and resilience across rural communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the ongoing review and monitoring of the Communications Strategy. • Engagement with Parish Councils and community contacts.
Engage and support village halls, community halls, and other buildings to increase the accessibility and affordability of high-quality indoor community space in rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More residents will be able to access local community facilities for a broader range of activities and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of funding to support the development and improvement of community facilities. • Number of new or enhanced facilities.
Create opportunities and facilitate closer communication and partnership working between the Police, Community Safety, parish councils and communities to reduce rural crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents feel safer and reassured that crime and disorder is being tackled. • Communities are more aware of initiatives and measures to protect themselves from crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new or expanded community led initiatives (e.g., rural or neighbourhood watch) • Increased satisfaction with policing and other enforcement activity.

Rural Environment



Priority Action	What difference will it make (Outcomes)	How we will measure success (Performance Measures)
Work with communities to preserve the natural environment and protect important wildlife habitats in and around rural settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important habitats and wildlife protected and enhanced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from rural communities. • Data from environmental and wildlife surveys.
Work with communities to protect and enhance public green (grass and woodland) and blue (water) spaces by ensuring appropriate maintenance and encouraging use by a wide range of people and groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural communities have access to the public open spaces that they require. • More residents will be able to access open spaces for a broader range of activities and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from rural communities. • Data returned from the annual parish liaison meeting.
Support parish councils and their communities to develop and deliver local climate change and carbon reduction initiatives, including enabling access to appropriate grant funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. • Reduce energy consumption in the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new/expanded initiatives. • Amount of investment into initiatives.
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce energy consumption in the district. • More households out of fuel poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of installations carried out. • Monitoring of data contained within the annual Climate Local progress reports.
Work with communities, police, and community safety partners on initiatives to reduce environmental crime including fly-tipping, graffiti, and dog fouling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness of environmental crime. • Better enforcement of fly-tipping, dog fouling and graffiti. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of fixed penalty notices and prosecutions. • Public awareness of campaigns and initiatives.

Rural Economy



Priority Action	What difference will it make (Outcomes)	How we will measure success (Performance Measures)
<p>Ensure that Harborough District's villages and rural areas remain attractive and vibrant places to live, work, invest and visit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district continues to be a place that is attractive to live in, visit and invest in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in empty properties. Increase in Council Tax and business rates. Feedback from village centres and rural tourist destinations.
<p>Support rural businesses to access advice, support services, grants, loans, and other funding streams to support effective start up, expansion or diversification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural businesses will be able to access advice and support to support their growth or diversification journey. Harborough's reputation as a District supporting rural businesses is maintained. Improve understanding of the needs, aspirations, and potential of rural businesses. Increase in job opportunities for residents in rural areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of business events. Workshops and seminars. Increase in number of new, expanded or relocated businesses in the district. Business satisfaction survey.
<p>Review the capacity, occupation rates and demand for rural workspaces, small scale rural logistics sites and business parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve understanding of the premises needs of rural businesses. Inform planning policy and the future development of new rural business sites in the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in number of new, expanded or relocated businesses in the district. Business satisfaction survey.
<p>Work with local employers and support providers to increase apprenticeship opportunities and placements within rural industries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in job opportunities for residents in rural areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of kickstart and apprenticeship placements within the district.
<p>Work with partners to enhance connections to information, guidance and support to access employment and training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce rates of unemployment and increase skills and employability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor unemployment rates within the district. Monitor job vacancies and recruitment patterns within the district.

Rural Wellbeing



Priority Action	What difference will it make (Outcomes)	How we will measure success (Performance Measures)
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce inappropriate/unnecessary use of NHS, public health, and other emergency services. • Improve health and wellbeing of rural residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with NHS and other public health providers.
Expand and promote Healthy Harborough Walks and Cycle Routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are more physically active. • Reduce reliance on private vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation in physical activity.
Encourage, enable, and support volunteers and the voluntary & community sector to establish and deliver more community led health & wellbeing services within rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce pressure on NHS, public health, and other emergency services. • Improve health and wellbeing of rural residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new/expanded community led services. • Liaison with NHS and other public health providers. • Number of attendances and outreach activities
Increase people's overall wellbeing and resilience by supporting activity to reduce isolation, loneliness, and other mild mental / social health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce loneliness and low-level mental health issues among residents. • Create more connected and resilient rural communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new/expanded community led services. • Number of attendances and outreach activities.
Review the quality and accessibility of sports and leisure facilities in rural areas including community managed facilities and associated clubs/groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the evolving leisure requirements of the community are addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation in physical activity.
Secure investment into new and/or improved playing fields, recreation grounds, play equipment and other outdoor recreation space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance outdoor recreation space that is accessible by all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new or refurbished outdoor recreation spaces.
Increase accessibility and availability of facilities, services and support for families, children, and young people at parish level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the evolving needs of families, children and young people addressed. • The right conditions are created to enable children and young people to be safe and flourish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in safeguarding referrals related to children and young people. • Number of attendances and outreach activities.

Rural Connectivity



Priority Action	What difference will it make (Outcomes)	How we will measure success (Performance Measures)
Support the expansion of high quality 4G, 5G, and superfast broadband connectivity into all rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better connected homes and communities with increased use of smart technology. Less need to travel and increased opportunity for home/remote working and online service provision. Increased efficiency and productivity of rural businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from rural households and businesses. Monitoring of mobile and broadband coverage data.
Increase the digitisation of services across the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance remote access for residents in areas remote from Market Harborough and other key service centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of transactions submitted through online portals.
Explore new/innovative transport solutions to meet the travel needs and priorities of rural individuals and households without access to a private vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce reliance on private vehicles. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Improve rural connectivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new initiatives.
Enable rural communities to influence transport reviews and other policy changes that impact their local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The right conditions are created to enable resident to voice their views and highlight their needs and priorities. Better informed travel and transport policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents feel like they are listened to and engaged with. Monitoring of traffic and transport data for the district.
Expand and increase accessibility of infrastructure for electric vehicle charging within rural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase viability of electric vehicle use in rural areas. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new installations. Data on electric car ownership.
Increase provision of safe walking, cycling and horse-riding routes within and between rural settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents are more physically active. Reduce reliance on private vehicles. Improve rural connectivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation in physical activity. Monitoring of traffic and transport data for the district. Feedback from rural residents.

Rural Housing



Priority Action	What difference will it make (Outcomes)	How we will measure success (Performance Measures)
<p>Use local planning policies to drive an increase in housing quality to make sure that new and re-developed rural homes are fit for the 21st century.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved energy and water efficiency in homes. • Lower household bills and reduced risk of fuel poverty. • Better connected homes with increased use of smart technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of planning applications determined in accordance with the Local Plan and relevant Neighbourhood Plan(s).
<p>Ensure there is appropriate and abundant provision of affordable housing in rural settlements, evidenced by a robust Housing Need Survey, and including starter and retirement homes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents can choose a place to live from a range of accommodation that is appropriate to their needs. • People can afford to remain living in and/or return to rural communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of rural housing needs surveys completed. • Number of affordable housing units delivered.
<p>Involve parish councils and communities in the development of planning policy and informing decisions on development impacting their area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents feel empowered to help shape the development of their area. • People feel more positive about future development in their community. • Providing communities with a greater say over future planning decisions in their locality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation levels in public consultation and engagement activity. • Number of made Neighbourhood development plans.
<p>Encourage housing development that supports good community connections and engagement between new and existing residents, where possible incorporating community led housing schemes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More connected and resilient communities with improved health, wellbeing, and prosperity. • More diverse and inclusive communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in community based formal social and support networks. • More residents feel part of and supported by their community. • Monitoring changes and trends in the demographics of rural settlements.
<p>Work with developers and communities to ensure new housing development includes appropriate investment in infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural communities have access to the infrastructure and services that they require. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of planning applications determined in accordance with the Local Plan and relevant Neighbourhood Plan(s). • Feedback from rural communities. • Data returned from the annual parish liaison meeting.

Rural Equity



Priority Action	What difference will it make (Outcomes)	How we will measure success (Performance Measures)
Develop and adopt a consistent process for rural proofing policies, strategies and decisions made within Harborough District Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More effective decision and policy making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development or adoption of a rural proofing toolkit.• Rural needs and priorities more fully considered in policies and decisions.
Broaden the involvement of young people in informing decision making around planning, policy & development by better seeking and exploring their needs, views, and opinions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The right conditions are created to enable young people to voice their views and make a difference in their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people feel like they are listened to and engaged with.