



Herefordshire
Infrastructure Consortium

**GROWING A STRONG VIBRANT AND
EFFECTIVE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY
SECTOR IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

**HEREFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE
CONSORTIUM**

**STRATEGY
2006 - 2016**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The voluntary and community sector (VCS) makes a major contribution to the economy and well being of Herefordshire and its residents.
- The **Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium (HIC)** was established in 2003 in response to government's wish to work closely with the voluntary and community sector and to increase its capacity to deliver high quality and sustainable infrastructure services.

The current members of HIC are

- Age Concern Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (CF)
- Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District (CVALD)
- Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (HCVYS)
- Herefordshire Voluntary Action (HVA)

A Wider Reference Group of 17 other organisations is in place

They have identified three key roles:

- Co-ordination of advice and support to voluntary organisations and community groups
- Advocacy to voluntary organisations and community groups
- Developing strong leadership for the sector

As individual infrastructure organisations, they undertake several functions:

- Start up and development support
- Information, advice and assistance
- Advocacy and representation
- Partnership building and brokerage
- Policy research

In June 2006, the following collaborative projects have been completed or are underway with funding from central government (See details in Section 3 The Role of the Consortium):

- Collaborative Consortium development, research and consultation
- Rural community planning and engagement
- Ensuring engagement of traditionally excluded communities
- Increasing activity, strength and opportunities in the Voluntary Sector Assembly (VSA)
- Building the ICT capacity of VCS Infrastructure organisations
- Creating accreditation for health and social care providers and create a register
- Increasing opportunities for social enterprise in Herefordshire through collaborative working

This Strategy aims to consolidate the work and will be reviewed on an annual basis. A Joint Infrastructure Services Delivery and Consortium Development Plan is in development to implement the Strategy.

**The Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium has a
VISION
OF A STRONG, VIBRANT AND EFFECTIVE VOLUNTARY AND
COMMUNITY SECTOR IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

OBJECTIVE 1	
Help voluntary organisations and community groups to influence local and regional strategy and policy	
We will achieve this by:	What we aim to achieve in the next ten years:
1a Facilitating and supporting the diverse 'voices' of the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of infrastructure needs of the sector • A Consortium that is respected and listened to by partners and stakeholders • Excellent support for VCS organisations, communities and networks to ensure local and regional influence
1b Driving forward strategy and policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear mechanisms to raise the profile of the VCS and its contribution to county, regional and national priorities • Identify and disseminate the contribution the sector makes in the county • An effective and proactive Influencing Strategy • Lobby funding bodies for longer term funding streams
OBJECTIVE 2	
Ensure that support services are fit for purpose and easily accessible	
We will achieve this by:	What we aim to achieve in the next ten years:
2a Leading and empowering start up and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial diagnosis/needs assessment, advice and support service available to all VCS organisations, social enterprise, geographic communities and communities of interest • Clear identification of needs • Effective response to identified needs
2b Co-ordinating information, advice and assistance to meet identified needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint Infrastructure Services Delivery Plan in operation • Information sharing and a signposting service in operation • High levels of satisfaction recorded • Joint performance management data in place • Sustainable delivery of high quality support to VCS organisations in place • Accredited standards and quality assurance frameworks in place as appropriate • Longer term funding arrangements in place for VCS
OBJECTIVE 3	
Build collaborative mechanisms to deliver the other two objectives	
We will achieve this by:	What we aim to achieve in the next ten years:
3a Building a consortium fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective membership and working practices • An open and trusting consortium • Joint planning of infrastructure services • Robust management • Strong infrastructure organisations with sustainable longer term funding • Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms • Effective marketing and communication plans

<p>3b Establishing strong links with partners and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wider Reference Group contributing effectively to HIC working • The wider VCS and other stakeholders and partners understand and value the role of the consortium • Clear and effective relationships with the wider VCS, other stakeholders and partners (including the Herefordshire Partnership which acts as the Local Area Agreement Partnership)
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HIC has adopted the following **Shared Principles:**

- Valuing voluntary action and community involvement
- Valuing an independent and diverse voluntary and community sector
- Striving for accountability, openness and honesty in its work
- Developing a co-operative and collaborative approach to its work
- Promoting diversity and best practice

1. THE CURRENT VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR CONTEXT IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Voluntary Sector Infrastructure

The physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support, develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote frontline organisations and community groups

Voluntary organisations and community groups make an essential contribution to the quality of life in Herefordshire. They range from very local groups of volunteers organising activities and events in their own communities to countywide organisations, employing paid staff and delivering key public services and embraces the growing role of social enterprise. Many of these organisations need advice, information and support of one kind or another at some time. They also need to have ways in which they can influence and contribute to how public services are designed and delivered now and in the future.

This strategy, developed in consultation with the sector and other stakeholders, describes the role of Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium (HIC) and the activities it will undertake to ensure that these support mechanisms are in place, are easily accessible across the county, make the best possible use of the resources available and are responsive to the needs of the voluntary organisations and community groups that they exist to serve.

The diversity of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) means that many different routes will be used to access these infrastructure services and to influence decision-makers. VCS organisations use the services of national bodies, regional and local networks, local public sector partners and the commercial sector (See diagram 1 below). The Consortium welcomes this diversity and sees it as source of a great strength.

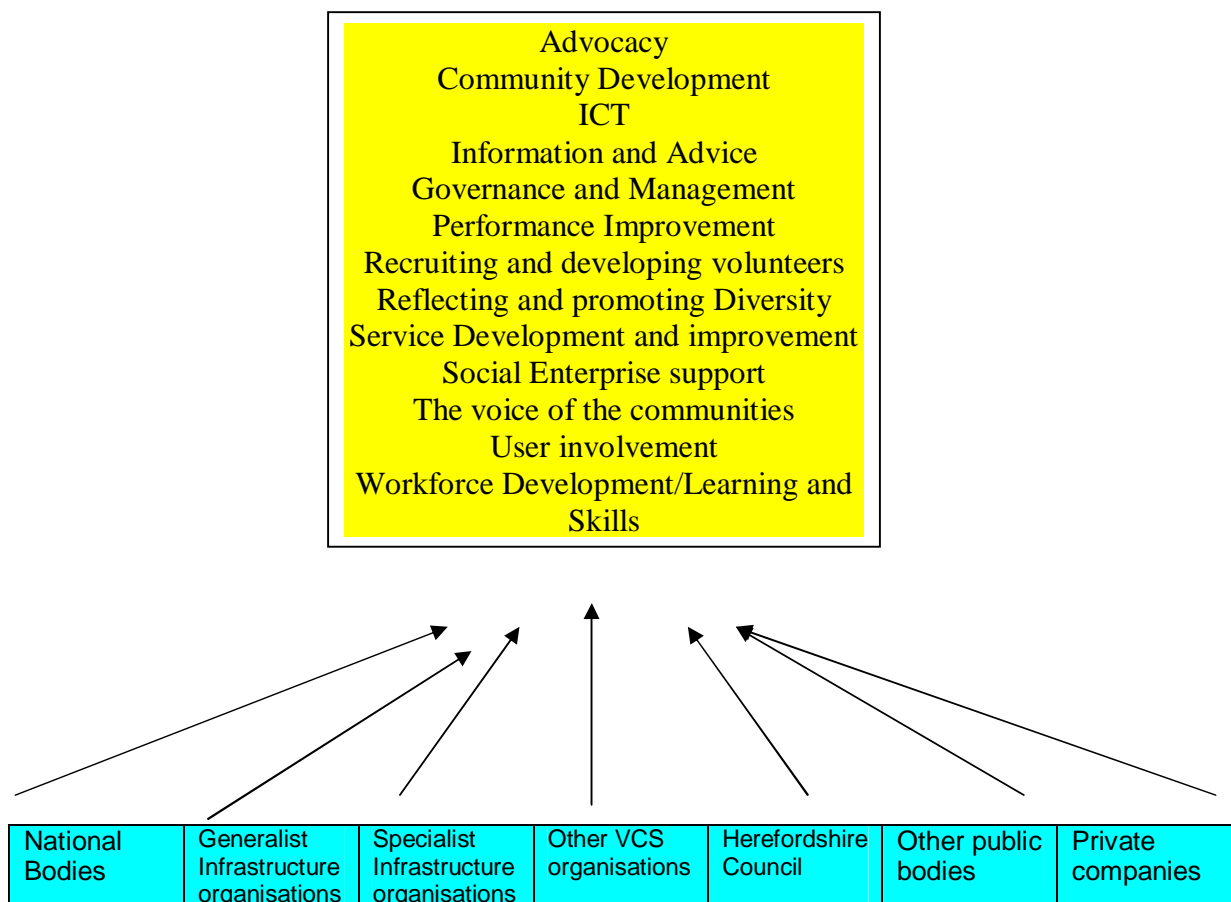
HIC has undertaken a mapping of infrastructure services to begin to build up a picture the current level of services that are available. Also a detailed Assessment of VCS Infrastructure Needs has been commissioned to examine in more detail the support needs of voluntary organisations and community groups. While it is difficult to determine exact numbers due to the nature of the sector, it is estimated that there are about 1500 voluntary and community groups in the county at least half of which are very small with incomes under £10,000 p.a.

There is work to be done to ensure that the support needs of the VCS are adequately met and sustainable through the acquisition of longer term resources and that the best use is made of resources available. The focus of the work of HIC therefore, is to bring together those voluntary sector organisations that deliver infrastructure services in Herefordshire, to co-

ordinate the delivery of those services and to drive forward improvements in the level, spread, quality and range of the support services that are available within the County.

In addition to the voluntary sector agencies, there are about 20 other organisations delivering infrastructure services in Herefordshire including the Council, the Association of Local Councils and the Partnership as well as national bodies and peer groups. Not all of these are members of the core group of the Consortium that has a small membership. A Wider Reference Group has been established. (See Membership paragraph below). The Consortium has identified criteria for eligibility for membership and will actively review membership and encourage applications from other organisations.

Diagram 1 VCS INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT SERVICES IN HEREFORDSHIRE



The voluntary sector infrastructure organisations in Herefordshire are both generic (offering general support and advice to all comers) and specialist (offering services to specific groups, such as those organisations focussed on older or younger people or focussed on specific activities, such as health and social care, the environment, sports and arts). They also directly deliver services such as transport schemes.

A 'Mapping of Services to the Community and Voluntary Sector in North Herefordshire' study was completed in March 2006 and by extension provides a valuable picture of the whole county. 29 services were mapped, most of which operate countywide. That work together with the work done to date by HIC reveals some important starting points for this strategy.

- Local accessibility of services is important to local groups, particularly smaller groups with few resources and those in rural areas.
- There are some gaps in geographic provision; in particular areas of the rural hinterland that fall outside the market towns and the Golden Valley area suffer a lack of services. Gaps were also identified in Hereford city and Hereford city north.
- The services least covered by infrastructure organisations appear to be work with minority groups, mentoring and peer support, volunteering, tendering and contracting and library services (although it was noted that the internet now provides availability of information). Physical facilities were also identified but community buildings in most areas provide these.
- Gaps in ICT facilities and monitoring and evaluation were also identified. ChangeUp resources have been directed to a shared database pilot and website development.
- There is a perception by the public agencies of duplication of infrastructure services by different agencies but more generally it is felt that they offer complementary services. There is however some confusion and lack of information about which organisations deliver what and underdeveloped mechanisms for sign posting between organisations.
- The activity funded under the Change-Up programme has strengthened the relationships between the infrastructure organisations and has resulted in some good examples of collaborative projects. These have been both strategic (e.g. the development of a Volunteering Strategy) and practical.
- There are some examples of collaborative work with public sector partners and of representatives from infrastructure organisations being involved in decision-making mechanisms. It is felt however that this work could be more effective.

- The main issues for the wider sector are improving support for the recruitment of volunteers, resources and the promotion of the value, status and independence of the sector.

The recommendations of the research were therefore to

- Improve the clarity and scope of the communication of available services to the sector
- Provide resources to develop mentoring systems
- Increase ICT (Information Communication Technology) investment
- Increase resources to support volunteering
- Increase funding availability
- Expand and develop community based transport schemes
- Improve the image of the sector

2. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Over the last few years a great deal of activity has taken place nationally, regionally and locally to address the capacity of the voluntary and community sector within the UK.

The Compact is a framework for partnership working between government and the VCS. It recognises the contribution the sector makes to our society and is the result of consultation.

As part of their **Strategic Review 2002**, HM Treasury held a Cross-Cutting Review of the role of the VCS in service delivery. This explored how central and local government could work more effectively with the sector to deliver high quality services. The review was underpinned by recognition of the substantial contribution that the VCS makes to the delivery of services, the core independence of the sector and the mutual interest of the sector and government in building the capacity of the sector to deliver a full range of co-ordinated high quality services.

In response the Home Office published **ChangeUp**, a cross-government framework for capacity building and infrastructure in the VCS, developed in partnership with the sector. Its aim, backed up by 8 objectives, is that within the next decade the needs of frontline organisations will be met by support that is

- Available nationwide
- Structured for maximum efficiency
- Offers excellent provision
- Accessible to all
- Reflecting and promoting diversity
- Sustainably funded

ChangeUp describes the architecture of support needed by frontline organisations and investment in the sector has been made at national, regional and local levels to catalyse modernisation of provision.

Government Office for the West Midlands have taken a lead role in delivering the ChangeUp agenda in the region and local Consortia have been established to implement the aims of ChangeUp.

Much has been achieved, but key challenges remain including a lack of focus for sector ownership of implementation, complex fund management and strands of investment, a lack of a strong evidence base and clear mechanisms to turn the commitment to diversity into tangible results.

In order to address these concerns, the **Capacity Builders** Agency has been established with further investment for 2006 –2008. The agency will

- Provide a sector-led focus for the accountability and ownership for ChangeUp
- Take ownership of the fund management
- Ensure programme co-ordination and joined-up working
- Mainstream diversity issues into the design and delivery of activity
- Ensure real time action and longer term evaluation

Capacity Builders started work in the West Midlands on April 1 2006 and will accept applications for funding from all voluntary sector infrastructure organisations as well as from consortia.

In rural areas, Defra have also contributed funding to ChangeUp activity and VCS service delivery, most recently through the **Rural and Social Community Programme** which aims to empower and enable VCS organisations, Rural Community Councils and Parish Councils to build on their work to develop community capacity and to identify and address the problems that cause social exclusion in all its forms. The funding is also intended to stimulate co-operation between the VCS and statutory bodies.

HIC is encouraging public sector bodies to identify the distinction between

- Infrastructure capacity building
- Infrastructure service delivery
- Delivery of frontline services

And ensuring that public bodies recognise their responsibilities to and the benefits of investing in infrastructure services. (See Herefordshire Council report ' A Voluntary and Community Sector Fit for Purpose – defining the role of Herefordshire Council'. below)

The local context

Herefordshire Council and the Herefordshire Partnership, the local strategic partnership, have both been active in working with the local VCS to progress activity and build on good practice in ChangeUp. In addition, the Herefordshire Compact is being developed from the specific Health and Social Care Compact that has been signed between Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and The Alliance.

Herefordshire Council commissioned the report 'A Voluntary and Community Sector Fit for Purpose – defining the role of Herefordshire Council'. The report resulted in a commitment by the Council to work with the sector to deliver four objectives

- Supporting community-based activity that builds strong and self-reliant communities
- Opening up opportunities for the sector to deliver more public services
- Investing in support and development services that build the capacity of the sector
- Building a strong relationship with the sector and helping the sector to engage fully and equally in developing partnership based policy, service planning, service delivery and review

An Action Plan has been developed to guide the implementation.

A Herefordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA), based on a shared understanding that all partners are responsible for delivering the objectives of the Community Strategy, is currently beginning its first year of operation. Partners include Herefordshire Council, the Primary Care Trust, the local Learning and Skills Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) as well as the voluntary sector. Partners are responsible for effective voluntary and community sector involvement in governance, service delivery and social capital across the county. The Herefordshire Partnership is leading this work.

3. THE ROLE OF THE CONSORTIUM

HIC was formed in December 2003 in response to a Defra initiative and funding with the initial purpose of drawing together and implementing an Infrastructure Investment Plan funded through the ChangeUp programme. Further funding has been obtained from Active Communities and ChangeUp. The investment programme, led by HIC, The Alliance, Partners for Social Enterprise and some external consultancy, has been running since the Plan was agreed in June 2005 and includes the following current and completed projects:

- **Collaborative Consortium development, research and consultation:** led by Herefordshire Voluntary Action (HVA), a project to map infrastructure functions, identify existing provision and possible gaps; led by Age Concern, the development of protocols for collaborative working; the development of a county-wide Diversity Strategy for infrastructure organisations; led by HVA, research to gain a clearer picture of the needs of voluntary sector organisations and inform planning; a contribution to the social economy research 'Valuing the Voluntary Sector' commissioned by HIC and Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium (WIC) which also has contributions from Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council .

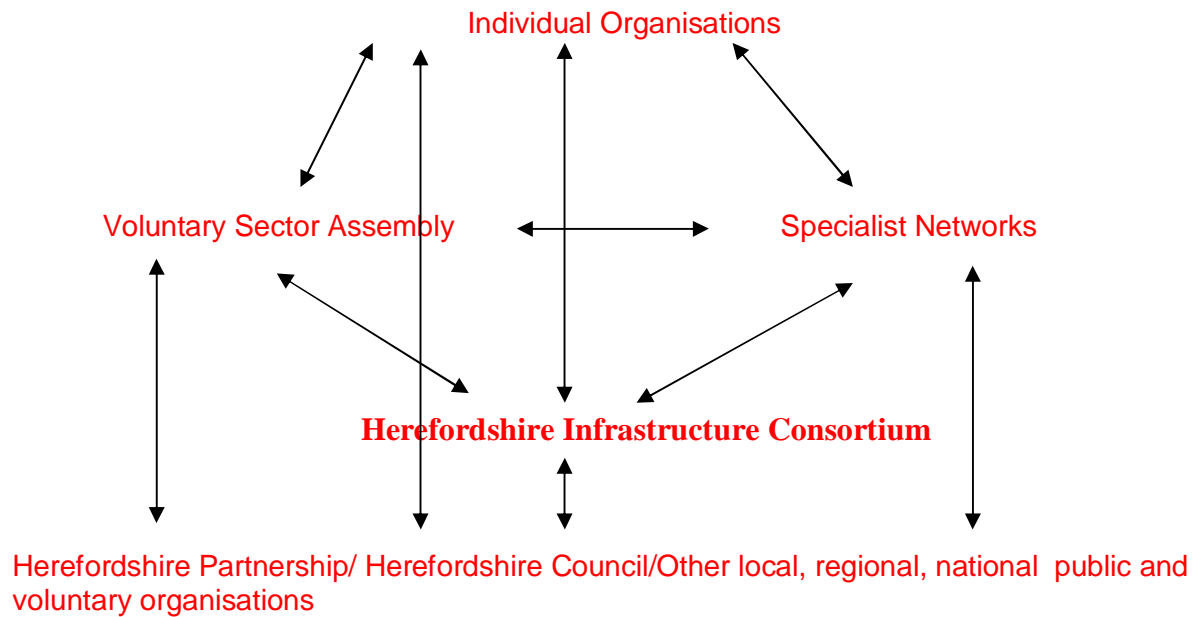
A further project has enabled the development of sound Consortium processes for commissioning work and monitoring progress, for managing and accounting for funds and developing its membership, its relationships with strategic

agencies and partnerships. It has enabled this Strategy and the Action Plan to be developed.

- **Rural community planning and engagement** : led by a Community First (CF), Parish Plans Co-ordinator ensuring that Parish Plans influence the Herefordshire Community Strategy, ensuring effective communication between service providers and rural communities, liaising with the Parish Plans Steering Group. Also increasing participation in and outreach by the Voluntary Sector Assembly (VSA) through a series of road shows led by HVA.
- **Ensure engagement of traditionally excluded communities**: building on the findings of an initial scoping study, developing older people's forums with links to other local groups, organisations and statutory bodies led by Age Concern; evaluating the operation the Parish Planning process on groups at risk of exclusion and recommending good practice and support provision, led by CF.
- **Building the ICT capacity of VCS Infrastructure organisations**: led by CF and involving all partners, improving their effectiveness and efficiency in delivering services, including a consortium website and extranet, developing the joint database and upgrading equipment and support.
- **Creating accreditation for health and social care providers and a register of approved providers**: led by The Alliance, the register will enable providers to demonstrate their fitness for purpose, the added value of their service delivery and give commissioners a strongly performing pool of providers from which to secure services.
- **Increase opportunities for social enterprise in Herefordshire through collaborative working**: led by Partners for Social Enterprise (PSE), this project will increase opportunities for the voluntary, community and not-for-profit sectors and social enterprise to be enterprising, diversify their income base and achieve sustainability. It also includes the development of a PSE website, a conference, procurement of research and increased expertise in consortium member's organisations.
- **Increasing activity, strength and opportunities in the Voluntary Sector Assembly (VSA)**: led by HVA and Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District (CVALD) - supporting and developing the independent role of the VSA to engage in consultation and influencing service delivery and planning; supporting volunteering, promoting volunteering to potential volunteers; developing a county-wide Volunteering Strategy; encouraging collaboration through a Volunteering forum and raising the awareness of the value of volunteering.

(For the role of the VSA, see 5 Relationships and Links)

Diagram 2 VCS VOICES IN HEREFORDSHIRE



The focus of HIC work so far has been on developing and delivering these strategic and practical projects. HIC is now ready to move to the next stage and has developed this longer-term strategy for ensuring a more coherent and collaborative approach to the future delivery of infrastructure functions in the County.

HIC has thus identified **THREE KEY ROLES**

1. **Co-ordinator of advice and support** – to act as the co-ordinating body for voluntary sector infrastructure organisations, working together to develop and maximise resources to meet identified needs of the sector.
2. **Advocate** – helping strengthen and support the ‘voices’ of the sector and contributing to the development of strategy and policy.
3. Enabling the development of **Strong Leadership** for the sector

4. MEMBERSHIP

HIC membership is open to any voluntary sector organisation that provides at least 3 of the following 5 functions to voluntary organisations and community groups:

1. Start up and development support
2. Information, advice and assistance
3. Advocacy and representation
4. Partnership building and brokerage
5. Policy research

Individual infrastructure organisations that are currently not members should identify whether they are eligible and whether they wish to become members or to become members of the Wider Reference Group. Should they decide they wish to do so, they should apply for membership to the consortium who will then consider the application. HIC will actively seek to encourage applications.

Under ChangeUp funding, there has been no direct funding available for members to contribute the time and resources to support consortium working.

The core members are

- Age Concern Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (CF)
- Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District (CVALD)
- Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Service HCVYS)
- Herefordshire Voluntary Action (HVA)

In line with the agreed protocols, CF is currently acting as the Accountable Body for HIC

There is also a Wider Reference Group comprising

- ABLE
- Cultural Consortium
- Churches Together
- Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)
- Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Herefordshire Community Foundation
- Herefordshire Council
- Herefordshire Equality Partnership
- Herefordshire Partnership
- Herefordshire Sports Council
- Herefordshire Voluntary and Community Sector Learning Partnership
- Herefordshire Voluntary Sector Assembly Steering Group (VSA)
- Partners for Social Enterprise Herefordshire and Worcestershire (PSE)
- Rural Media Company
- Statutory Youth Services
- The Alliance
- Welcome to Our Future

To date, the Wider Reference Group has participated in the mapping of infrastructure services in the county and was given the opportunity to highlight priorities and comment on the original Investment Plan.

The Consortium will ensure that the group are fully engaged and able to participate in the further development of the Consortium in a meaningful way. This will include consultation on this Strategy and the Action Plan.

5. RELATIONSHIPS AND LINKS

The role of the Consortium in representing and promoting the Voluntary and Community Sector will be developed in the context of the existing structures in the County. It is not the job of the Consortium to act as a single voice, although it will take the lead on identifying and promoting the need for appropriately resourced infrastructure services. The Consortium will actively encourage and consider applications for membership from other county infrastructure organisations as not all voluntary sector infrastructure organisations in the county meeting the membership criteria are currently involved.

HIC will work closely and collaboratively with **the VSA** that aims to be a voice for the VCS in Herefordshire, to represent the interests of the sector especially in the long term planning of services and to raise its profile. The VSA is independent and made up of elected representatives who meet twice a year to tackle issues of concern. The Consortium can help to facilitate a vehicle for this voice to be heard by and to influence external bodies including the local authority. (See Diagram 2 above). Similarly the VSA can act as a voice for HIC and can be a voice to HIC from the community and voluntary sector. The VSA and HIC are developing joint processes to ensure effective communications, positive promotion of each other and improved consultation and involvement with VCS organisations, complementing each others work and voices.

The links with **the Wider Reference Group and the wider VCS** are not well developed and the role of HIC is not sufficiently understood. This strategy recommends that these communications should be improved and work is underway to develop partnership arrangements with other key organisations and networks such as PSE and The Alliance.

HIC is determined to address the need to work closely with all **stakeholders** including the statutory authorities and work is underway to improve partnership arrangements with key organisations and networks. HIC will work to influence and work collaboratively with local, regional and national voluntary and public organisations. The Consortium will focus on adding value to existing mechanisms, acting as a troubleshooter when relationships are weak or not working, as they should be, but not cutting across existing relationships where these are working well. The job of the Consortium is to make sure these routes are working well, so that the 'voices' of the sector are strong and clear and the VCS has strong leadership.

HIC will take particular account of mechanisms that link the VCS into the Herefordshire Partnership, Herefordshire Community Development Partnership, other

public bodies and the work on the Local Area Agreement. It has set up regular meetings with those officers responsible for infrastructure service delivery in Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Partnership. Herefordshire Partnership is leading the Local Area Agreement and it has been agreed that the Chair of the Consortium will attend Partnership board meetings. The structure of the Partnership is currently under review. The board membership also includes representatives from the VSA and HALC. One of the HIC members sits on Herefordshire Partnership Performance Management Group.

6. THE STRATEGIC VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium has a VISION OF A STRONG, VIBRANT AND EFFECTIVE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN HEREFORDSHIRE

HIC's contribution to growing this will be to

OBJECTIVE 1

Help voluntary organisations and community groups to influence local and regional strategy and policy

We will achieve this by

- 1a Facilitating and supporting the diverse 'voices' of the sector**
- 1b Driving forward strategy and policy development**

Part of the infrastructure function is to support the ways in which voluntary and community groups influence both local and regional strategy and policy. HIC will articulate issues and concerns of VCS organisations, local communities and beneficiary groups where it is best placed to do so, or support other networks if that is the most appropriate route. It will contribute to the identification of needs and solutions through research and by drawing on the VCS experience on the ground. It will also work to raise the profile of the VCS, including contributing to building evidence of the VCS role in the achievement of others' strategic objectives.

OBJECTIVE 2

Ensure that support services are fit for purpose and easily accessible

We will achieve this by

- 2a Leading and empowering start up and development**
- 2b Co-ordinating information, advice and assistance to meet identified needs**

Co-ordinating the access to infrastructure services is the key focus for HIC. Despite the fact that there is a growing recognition of the importance of these services for the well being of voluntary organisations and community groups and for delivering the objectives of public sector bodies, resources remain scarce. HIC members are

committed to making the most of what is available by working collaboratively, by co-ordinating services, delivering jointly or delivering from a single point, whichever is most appropriate. Increased access to ICT is providing new opportunities for infrastructure organisations to share information, signpost between organisations and provide more coherent and more accessible services to the frontline organisations and communities.

OBJECTIVE 3

Build collaborative mechanisms to deliver the other two objectives

We will achieve this by

3a Building a consortium fit for purpose

3b Establishing strong links with partners and stakeholders

HIC needs to ensure that it has the right structures, membership, working practices and sustainable funding to fulfil its role and achieve its objectives. It will put in place robust mechanisms to measure its performance and impact. It will also develop a communications strategy that will ensure that its work is focussed on the needs of the VCS organisations and that will build strong relationships with public sector partners, particularly those involved in the Local Strategic Partnership and the Local Area Agreement and with other voluntary organisations and their networks (e.g. PSE).

SHARED PRINCIPLES

The members of HIC share a commitment to

- Valuing voluntary action and community involvement
- Valuing an independent and diverse voluntary and community sector
- Striving for accountability, openness and honesty in its work
- Developing a co-operative and collaborative approach to its work
- Promoting diversity and best practice

7. KEY RISKS AND BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

The 10 year outcomes for the strategy are ambitious and challenging. The Consortium has identified a number of high-level risks that it will address as part of its activity planning. These are:

1. **Lack of resources and capacity** among the Consortium member organisations to take forward the strategy and development plan.
2. **Resistance to change** among Consortium member organisations, especially where the achievement of Consortium collective ambitions could have a negative impact on individual organisational ambitions in the short or medium term.

3. **Lack of support from partner organisations**, especially potential funding agencies.
4. **Changes in national or regional context**, especially if these result in the demise or reduction of funding for consortium development and activity.
5. **Failure to secure increased or stabilised funding** for the delivery of infrastructure services.
6. **Damage to Consortium reputation and/or credibility**, especially if there are perceptions of conflicts of interest in either the setting of priorities or commissioning of work.

8. KEY AREAS OF CONSORTIUM ACTIVITY

A Joint Infrastructure Services Delivery and Consortium Development Plan is in development to implement the Strategy to achieve the vision and objectives. The plans contains the following key elements:

OBJECTIVE 1	
Help voluntary organisations and community groups to influence local and regional strategy and policy	
We will achieve this by:	What we aim to achieve in the next ten years:
1a Facilitating and supporting the diverse 'voices' of the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of infrastructure needs of the sector • A Consortium that is respected and listened to by partners and stakeholders • Excellent support for VCS organisations, communities and networks to ensure local and regional influence

1b Driving forward strategy and policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear mechanisms to raise the profile of the VCS and its contribution to county, regional and national priorities • Identify and disseminate the contribution the sector makes in the county • An effective and proactive Influencing Strategy • Lobby funding bodies for longer term funding streams
OBJECTIVE 2 Ensure that support services are fit for purpose and easily accessible	
We will achieve this by:	What we aim to achieve in the next ten years:
2a Leading and empowering start up and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial diagnosis/needs assessment, advice and support service available to all VCS organisations, social enterprise, geographic communities and communities of interest • Clear identification of needs • Effective response to identified needs
2b Co-ordinating information, advice and assistance to meet identified needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint Infrastructure Services Delivery Plan in operation • Information sharing and a signposting service in operation • High levels of satisfaction recorded • Joint performance management data in place • Sustainable delivery of high quality support to VCS organisations in place • Accredited standards and quality assurance frameworks in place as appropriate • Longer term funding arrangements in place for VCS
OBJECTIVE 3 Build collaborative mechanisms to deliver the other two objectives	
We will achieve this by:	What we aim to achieve in the next ten years:
3a Building a consortium fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective membership and working practices • An open and trusting consortium • Joint planning of infrastructure services • Robust financial management • Strong infrastructure organisations with sustainable longer term funding • Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms • Effective marketing and communication strategies and plans
3b Establishing strong links with partners and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wider Reference Group contributing effectively to HIC working • The wider VCS and other stakeholders and partners understand and value the role of the consortium • Clear and effective relationships with the wider VCS, other stakeholders and partners, Herefordshire Partnership and other stakeholders

9. ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABBREVIATIONS

- HIC Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium
- CF Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- CVALD Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District
- HCVYS Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
- HVA Herefordshire Voluntary Action
- HALC Herefordshire Association of Local Councils
- PSE Partners for Social Enterprise Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- VSA Voluntary Sector Assembly

§ VCS (voluntary and community sector)

For the purposes of this document the voluntary and community sector is not tightly defined. It is intended to be wider in scope than general charities or the voluntary sector, inclusive of small, informal or community based organisations or those reflecting the characteristics of social enterprise, but narrower in scope than 'not for profit' or 'third sector'.

§ Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure

The physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support, develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote frontline organisations and community groups.

§ Generic Infrastructure

Infrastructure organisations that provide support to all front line organisations within a particular geographic area.

§ Specialist Infrastructure

Infrastructure organisations that provide support to a particular "sub-sector" of the voluntary and community sector, or offer a specific area of expertise.

§ Front line organisations

Voluntary and community organisations that work directly with individuals and communities in order to provide services, offer support and campaign for change.

§ Social enterprises

Businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.

§ Public services

Services that are wholly or partly publicly funded and are delivered by public, voluntary and community or private sector agencies.

§ **Resources** Includes physical, financial, human and in-kind resources.

§ Community Development

Community Development Exchange definition: 'Community development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect.'

It is about changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participation in the issues that affect their lives."

