

## Priority 2

### Working with communities to deliver local services

32% (approx. 208,000) of Leicestershire's population live in rural areas, of which 80,500 residents live in villages, hamlets or isolated dwellings. In some districts such as Melton and Harborough this is much higher with approximately 46% and 71% living in rural areas, respectively.

A more challenging financial climate means that there is now less money to cope with an increasing demand for services. The effect of these changes on communities, especially those rural communities with an increasing older population, will be that fewer services will be available to fewer people.

In response to this, Leicestershire County Council has developed a new Communities Strategy thinking about the role of Leicestershire communities in a new public service environment which will ensure that the most vulnerable individuals and communities are protected whilst fulfilling its ambition to build community capacity. The Strategy aims to help individuals, families and communities to have greater independence, thus strengthening local capacity and resilience to help alleviate demand on public services.

It is therefore essential that the LRP works in partnership with the County Council, the Stronger Communities Board along with key public, private, voluntary and community sector partners to help deliver this Strategy in rural areas.

Good local facilities and services are critical to thriving and sustainable rural communities, ensuring that there are meeting places where people can socialise and share 'informal' advice and local information. Local shops, post offices, and pubs are essential to these interactions, but have been

struggling over recent years due to changes in the way people shop and socialise. The LRP aims to help support these small enterprises through these changes so that we minimise closure within our rural settlements.

There are real opportunities for local communities to generate funds through Community Benefit Schemes, whereby income from small-scale renewable projects can be used to support local initiatives.

#### Delivery

The LRP will work with the Stronger Communities Board and partners to ensure that the most vulnerable within rural communities are protected and supported. We will support communities to gain the knowledge, skills and where necessary funding to develop local projects that will deliver the outcomes below.

#### Outcomes:

- Increased community capacity to deliver services and solutions which support vulnerable people
- Improved community buildings providing a range of services and groups
- Retaining village services e.g. shop, post office, pub and libraries
- Communities have access to superfast broadband
- Communities supported to deliver small-scale renewable energy schemes

#### Case Study



#### Wymondham Windmill

Wymondham Windmill received a Rural Capital grant which it used towards the expansion of its tea room, doubling the capacity and adding extra facilities.

The tea room is an integral part of the windmill's visitor offer, which includes a number of craft and gift shops, and plans for the development of log cabins to complement their caravan park plus an improved recreation area and outdoor facilities further widening their tourism offer.

The work supported by this grant has enabled 3 additional jobs to be created and 1 to be protected as well as bringing in over £40,000 in leverage.