

**Challenges in Rural Services  
Delivery  
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# Rural Services Delivery

## About Herefordshire

### Challenges

- **Service Delivery and additionality of costs**
- **'Fair' Funding?**

### Opportunities

- **Tailored solutions to rural challenges**

# About Herefordshire



- 🕒 189,900 residents across 2,180 square km
- 🕒 One of the largest local authority areas covering a small rural population
- 🕒 223 residents per square mile
- 🕒 Fourth lowest population density of all English upper-tier local authorities
- 🕒 95% of Herefordshire classified as 'rural'
- 🕒 53% of residents live in rural areas
  - 🕒 two thirds clustered around city and market towns
  - 🕒 one third scattered across rural areas
- 🕒 Herefordshire's age structure is older than nationally
- 🕒 Lowest county tier productivity (GVA) per hour in England and second lower in the UK
- 🕒 Average wages 13% below national average

# Challenges in Service Delivery in a rural county



## Recruitment and retention

*Location, rurality, lack of major road network/transport infrastructure are barriers to recruitment – particularly in roles which rely on physical presence*



## Transport & Infrastructure

*Home to School Transport: fees include charges for 'dead mileage' due to rurality, lack of sufficiency increases out-of-county placements*

*Upkeep of extensive rural road networks*



## Procurement activity

*Limited market competition, increased costs across remote/less populated areas, Reduced number of bidders, competition and choice = reduced VFM*

*Few or no bidders!*



## Delivery of home care services

*Distribution of service users means increases travel times and different rates for home care with real cost implications for 'remoteness' +15% in rural areas*



## Waste collection

*Narrow rural lanes and difficult road surfaces require a unique approach and mix of vehicles*

*Increased distance between collections*

# 'Fair' (?) Funding for Rural Counties

- Loss of Rural Services Grant in 2025/26
- Total allocation of £110m redirected to areas with 'greater need'
- Deprivation as a proxy for assessing need
- Fair Funding Review 2.0
  - Rural residents pay 20% more council tax per head than urban
  - Urban councils receive 40% more in Government Funded Spending Power per head than rural councils
- Funding formulae indicators and Remoteness adjustment to reflect higher costs in remote authorities

# Tailored Solutions to Rural Challenges

- Talk Community – connecting residents in partnership with communities, businesses and residents
- Locality models of service delivery
- Partnership working - effective engagement with health, education, leisure and culture partners across Herefordshire
- Active supplier and market network engagement
- Enhanced recruitment and retention offers
- High quality intelligence and data to inform understanding of additionality
- Robust financial controls to enable timely planning of response
- Transformation and creativity!

TALK COMMUNITY



 Spirit of  
Herefordshire