

A G E N D A

Strategic Monitoring Committee

Date: **Monday, 26th April, 2004**

Time: **2.00 p.m.**

Place: **The Council Chamber,
Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

*Tim Brown tel 01432 260239 e-mail
tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk*

**County of Herefordshire
District Council**

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee

To: Councillor T.M. James (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors B.F. Ashton, W.L.S. Bowen, A.C.R. Chappell, J.H.R. Goodwin,
Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes, J. Stone, J.P. Thomas and W.J.S. Thomas

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on this agenda.	
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4. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW	7 - 10
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To inform Members of the further progress that has been made on implementing the recommendations of the Transport Cross-Service Review.	
6. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF THE INSPECTION, ADVICE AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SERVICE - STAGE 3 REPORT (TO FOLLOW)	
To consider the Stage 3 Report of the Best Value Review of the Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service.	
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PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Education, Environment, Health, Social Care and Housing and Social and Economic Development. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises Policy and Finance matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee held at The Council Chamber, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 9th February, 2004 at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Councillor T.M. James (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: B.F. Ashton, W.L.S. Bowen, A.C.R. Chappell,
J.H.R. Goodwin, Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes, J. Stone, J.P. Thomas and
W.J.S. Thomas

In attendance: Councillors Mrs. J.P. French, P.E. Harling, Mrs. J.E. Pemberton,
R.J. Phillips, D.B. Wilcox and R.M. Wilson

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A.R.C. Chappell declared a prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 11 as a Director of Community First.

50. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December, 2003 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. BUDGET MONITORING 2003/04 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2003

The Committee was informed of the position with regard to revenue budget monitoring for programme areas in 2003/04.

The report considered by Cabinet on 29th January, 2004 was appended to the report. At the Chairman's request an amended summary budget monitoring report was circulated showing amounts carried forward from 2003/2004.

The report concluded that the projected overspending for the year was within the Council's limit of 1%. The County Treasurer acknowledged that there was an underlying problem on the property budget, but the recovery plan and budget proposals sought to address the concerns.

In the course of discussion the following principal points were made:

- It was acknowledged that the underspending on e-modernisation was significant. However, it was expected that expenditure would accelerate during the remainder of the year and the resources could be carried over and spent in 2004/05.
- The reduction in rental income from the Cattle Market and the Butter Market was noted. Some concern was expressed about the way in which the rent review for the Butter Market had been dealt with. The Chief Executive advised that the Property Management Review would establish the robustness of the Council's

valuation process and whether this was an isolated event.

- It was also noted that deficit on income from the Industrial Estate had risen and that this was in the main due to loss of rental income. The County Treasurer acknowledged that there was an underlying problem on the property budget, but the recovery plan and budget proposals sought to address the concerns. It was noted that whilst rental income should increase if the Rotherwas access road was constructed it would take time for the benefits to accrue.
- The continuing pressure on the social care budget and the attendant risks were noted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

52. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2003/04 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2003

The Committee considered the Capital Programme forecast for 2003/2004.

The report considered by Cabinet on 29th January, 2004 was appended to the report. The County Treasurer advised that action was being taken to seek to ensure that no resources available to the Council on the condition that they were spent in the current year would be lost.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

53. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2004/2005 - 2007/08

The Committee was invited to comment on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The report submitted to Cabinet on 29 January 2004 had not been included with the agenda papers but was available at the meeting. The Chief Executive reported that the summary of budget pressures submitted to the Budget Panel had amounted to some £13 million. This level of expenditure could not be resourced. Cabinet was supporting the investment of £7 million over the four year period and had identified Social Care (Older People's Services), and ICT as priorities. Progress on ICT was, however, linked to decisions on the Council's accommodation. He outlined the priorities of the Plan as set out in paragraph 6 of the report on the revenue budget agreed by the Cabinet.

In response to questions the Chief Executive explained that it was not possible at this stage to say how the proposed additional expenditure over the four years might be allocated precisely to budgets because a number of other factors such as the Government grant each year had to be taken into account. In terms of the Council's accommodation it was important to quantify the cost benefits of rationalising accommodation and this exercise was underway.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

54. REVENUE BUDGET 2004/05

The Committee was invited to express a view on the Revenue Budget proposals for 2004/2005.

The report summarised the information which had been presented to Cabinet on the recommendations of the Budget Panel regarding the parameters for preparation of the Revenue Budget for 2004/05. It described Cabinet's priorities for the Medium Term Financial Plan; the application of the Medium Term Financial process to

Budget Policy and an assessment of risks faced by the Council both in terms of service delivery and the Council's status and reputation. It also set out emerging budget pressures and the composition of a standstill budget taking account of anticipated inflation and unavoidable commitments.

Advice was set out in the report on statements by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on the prospect of expenditure by authorities being capped.

It was noted that the initial proposal from Cabinet as a basis for further consultation was for a revenue budget of £176.4 million implying a Council Tax at Band D of £972.50. Supporting schedules detailing the budget for each programme area had been circulated separately subsequent to the despatch of the agenda papers.

The Chief Executive highlighted the need to balance what it was thought the Council could afford to spend with the management of the risks facing the Council. He also advised the Committee of the duty placed on the Treasurer within the context of the budget to give a professional advice on what would constitute an appropriate level of reserves. In giving this advice the Treasurer would have regard to the advice of the Authority's auditors. Whilst the Council could disagree with that advice it would have to provide a reasoned case for such a course. He also remarked upon the uncertainty over the approach the ODPM would take to capping authorities' expenditure.

The Committee raised a number of detailed questions. They noted in particular the proposed investment of £7 million over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the inability through the Plan to fund the assessed pressures which amounted to £13 million. The Chairman of the Committee sought an indication of the priority to be given to the listed bids given the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan proposals.

The Leader of the Council responded by recognising the balance to be maintained between Council Tax levels and the much needed investment. He referred to the priority given in the budget proposals to Social Care (Adults) (£1 million) and ICT (£700,000) against the totals over the period of (£5.3 million), and (£3.4 million) respectively. Whilst it would be important to maintain modest support for pressures in other areas it was his belief that those areas would remain the major priorities over the plan period.

There were a number of detailed questions on the reserves through which the need to concentrate on the usable reserve was stressed. It was noted that it was proposed to reinstate the reserves, in accordance with the Council's decision when setting the 2003/04 budget, over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan by utilising the additional income raised from second homes (circa £300,000) per annum. Some concern was expressed about the anticipated income which would be generated in response to which the County Treasurer advised that he believed the estimate to be prudent.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet be asked to consider the following observations on the Revenue Budget 2004/2005 before making final recommendations to Council on 5th March, 2004:

- (a) the Committee's concern registered over the levels of investment in Social Care (Adults), notwithstanding the proposed investment of £1 million and Cabinet be invited to reassess the risks of that approach;
 - (b) the impact of levying Council Tax at the proposed Band D level of £972.50 and the hardship that could be created for some sections of the community;
- and

- (c) support offered for the concept of fulfilling the commitment to replenish reserves by accumulating the additional revenues raised from second homes as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report.

55. 2004/05 SUPPORTED CAPITAL BORROWING AND OTHER AREAS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the extent and allocation of supported and unsupported borrowing for capital expenditure for 2004/05.

The report considered by Cabinet on 29th January, 2004 was appended to the report. This set out the Council's supported borrowing allocation for 2004/2005 applicable to schemes in the Education, Transport and Housing areas; the considerations relating to prudential borrowing to finance schemes in other areas and the position on the capital receipts reserve.

The County Treasurer presented the report noting that Cabinet was proposing prudential borrowing of £5 million and a de minimis limit of £10,000 below which expenditure would be treated as revenue rather than capital. The level of prudential borrowing would not allow all the current bids for schemes to proceed, with a number of schemes having to be deferred for consideration in future years.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

56. RACE EQUALITY SCHEME - PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received an update on progress made against the action plan designed to deliver the Council's race equality scheme.

The Chief Executive reported that the Audit Commission had been critical of the action taken by local authorities in addressing race equality issues and highlighted that performance in this area would increasingly be focused on in inspections of the Council's service delivery.

It was noted that a research report commissioned from University College, Chichester would be completed in June 2004.

RESOLVED: that the actions taken and progress to date be noted.

57. ANALYSIS OF HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S INPUT INTO THE HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP - INITIAL TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered a report setting out the terms of reference for an analysis of the nature and scope of the Council's input into the Herefordshire Partnership, the level of return the Council currently received and could receive and how the analysis would be taken forward.

Members expressed the view that the report should seek to provide evidence of the Partnership's achievements and what difference the Partnership had made.

RESOLVED: That the action set out in the report be agreed.

58. COMMUNITY FIRST FUNDING SUPPORT

(Councillor A.R.C. Chappell having declared a prejudicial interest left the meeting for the duration of this item.)

The Committee considered a report setting out a proposed means of reviewing the funding support for Community First within the context of an overall review of the support to the voluntary sector in Herefordshire.

RESOLVED:

- That (a) **the change in approach to the structure of the review of support to the voluntary sector as set out in the report be agreed;**
- and
- (b) **that Community First be included in the Review along with other infrastructure bodies.**

59. PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT UPDATE

The Committee received a report on the latest performance against the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and the second round of PSAs to be negotiated with the Government.

The report to Cabinet on 18th December 2003 was appended to the report.

The Chief Executive reported that the Government Office for the West Midlands had invited the Council to be considered as a pilot for the second round of PSAs. Members requested that lessons learned from the Council's experience in relation to the current PSA should inform any negotiations for a second agreement.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

60. PERFORMANCE MONITORING - CORPORATE HEALTH

The Committee considered the Council's corporate performance in relation to the Best Value Indicators from 1st April, 2003 to 30th November, 2003 and proposals to improve reporting arrangements during 2004/2005.

The report to be considered by Cabinet on 12th February, 2004 was appended to the report.

It was reported that the Head of Performance Management was reviewing performance reporting arrangements across the Council with a view to introducing an improved and more consistent approach to performance monitoring during 2004/2005.

The Committee also noted the modification of the Council's meeting timetable to provide for four programmed meetings of the Scrutiny Committees each year. It was assured that arrangements would be made to ensure that relevant Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen would continue to receive regular performance monitoring reports, in particular at the end of 8 months which was a critical time for allowing remedial action to be taken.

RESOLVED: That the Council's corporate performance from 1st April to 30th November 2003 and proposals to improve reporting arrangements during 2004/2005 be noted.

61. MID-YEAR ASSURANCE REPORT

The Committee considered the key internal control issues identified in the annual audit assurance report and the action taken in response to them.

The report considered by Cabinet on 18th December 2003 was appended to the report.

The County Treasurer advised that there were no issues of major concern.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

62. SCRUTINY ACTIVITY REPORT

The Committee noted the work being undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees.

63. WORK PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered its work programme and those of the Education and Environment Scrutiny Committees.

It was noted that the Committee's work programme would have to be amended to reflect the Committee's decision to commission reports on the Herefordshire Partnership and Community First.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the Committee's Work Programme as appended to the report be approved as amended;

and

(b) the work programmes of the Education and Environment Scrutiny Committees be noted.

The meeting ended at 1.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW

Report By: Lead Support Officer

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on the progress of the review against the agreed timetable.

Financial Implications

2. None identified.

Considerations

3. At its meeting on 8 December 2003, Strategic Monitoring Committee agreed the terms of reference and timetable for the in-depth scrutiny review of property management.
4. Progress against the timetable is broadly on target, the details being shown in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Appendix 1

Timetable

Activity	Target	Completion
Agree approach, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/dates	December 2003	December 2003
Collect current available data	December 2003	December 2003
Collect outstanding data	By end January 2004	Mid February 2004
Analysis of data	By mid-Feb	End Feb
Final confirmation of interviews of witnesses	mid-February 2004	10 February 2004
Carry out programme of interviews	By end March 2004	17 March 2004
Agree programme of site visits	mid February 2004	mid February 2004
Undertake site visits as appropriate	By end March 2004	Not concluded will be completed by 18 th May 2004
Update to Strategic Monitoring Committee	April 2004	26 April 2004
Final analysis of data and witness evidence	April 2004	On target
Prepare options/recommendations	May 2004	On target
Present Final report to Strategic Monitoring Committee	June 2004	On target
Present options/recommendations to Cabinet	June 2004	On target
Cabinet response	June/July 2004	
Implementation of agreed recommendations	July 2004 onwards	

TRANSPORT CROSS-SERVICE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT - PROGRESS REPORT

Report By: Director of Environment

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform Members of the further progress that has been made on implementing the recommendations of the Transport Cross-Service Review.

Financial Implications

None as a result of this report.

Background

2. A Cross Service Best Value Review of the transport services undertaken by the Council was undertaken to examine the scope for improving the services provided and considered the potential for closer co-ordination and integration. This Committee considered a Third Stage report for the review on 17th May 2002 outlining the key findings and recommendations from the review. This report identified a number of issues requiring further work and implementation as part of an improvement plan for the service that were endorsed by the Committee.
3. The recommendations of the Strategic Monitoring Committee were reported to the Cabinet at its meeting on 13th June 2002. Cabinet resolved that a Project Board be established to undertake the further work and oversee the implementation of the recommendations. Cabinet also endorsed a number of detailed actions for implementation by the Project Board.
4. A Project Board was established chaired by the Director of Environment and includes the Director of Education and Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing. The Lead Planner (Transportation) is the Project Manager for the project and a Project Team draws membership from the three Directorates.
5. Progress reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Cross Service Review were considered by the Committee at its meetings on the 10th February, 1st April 2003 and 13th October 2003. The report considered on 1st April 2003 set a number of targets and milestones to be achieved during the implementation of the project. This report seeks to update Members on the current progress towards meeting these targets.
6. The Transport Cross Service Review Implementation Project seeks to implement improvements that will help the transport services currently provided by the Environment, Education and Social Care Directorates meet transport needs in a quality and cost effective way through better co-ordination and integration.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Richard Ball, Lead Planner (Transportation) on 01432 260965

Considerations

7. The project is continuing broadly in accordance with the original programme.
8. The following table identifies the original milestones and targets and, where appropriate, revised targets that have been adopted to guide the implementation of the project. Further details of what has been achieved so far and the reasons for any amendments to targets and milestones are presented below.

Key Targets / Milestones	Target / Milestone as reported 13th October 2003	Status / Revised Target
Develop and Implement Improved Co-ordination and Integration		
1. Potential IT systems examined and demonstrations held	30/5/03	Achieved
2. Change Management Strategy Developed	1/6/04	Ongoing
3. Change Management Strategy Approved for Implementation	1/8/04	Ongoing
Identify and Procure Scheduling Software		
1. Potential IT systems examined and demonstrations held	30/5/03	Achieved
2. Budget Approved to procure appropriate software	30/6/03	Achieved
3. Software Installed	1/3/04	Achieved
4. Commence Review of Contracts <i>and use of the system for demand responsive transport provision</i>	1/4/04	4/5/04 (Staff Training currently underway)
Review Discretionary Policies		
1. Draft Revised Policies Considered by Cabinet to approve for consultation	On hold	Project Elements transferred to be dealt with by Education Scrutiny Committee Transport Working Group
2. Publish Revised Policy	On hold	
3. Revised Policy Takes Effect	On hold	
Pilot Projects for Staggered Opening Times for education and social care establishments		

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Richard Ball, Lead Planner (Transportation) on 01432 260965

1. Identify suitable area for trial	28/2/03	Achieved
2. Complete desk top study prior to trial implementation	31/7/03	Achieved
Brief LEA Governors on School Transport		
1. Briefing held for Governors	30/4/03	Achieved

Commentary

Develop and Implement Improved Co-ordination and Integration

9. As reported to the Committee in October 2003, the Project Team has been concentrating upon installing the scheduling software. The team will to consider the potential of further IT developments to coordinate other parts of the work of the service as part of developing the Change Management Strategy.
10. In September, the Social Care Transport Team relocated to the Education and Conference Centre. This co-location with the Education Transport team has further strengthened links and made joint working easier, particularly in relation to the installation of the scheduling software.

Identify and Procure Scheduling Software

11. Negotiations for the procurement of appropriate scheduling software within the available budget were concluded in December 2003. Trapeze Software Ltd are currently in the process of implementing their "PASS" software for the service which will provide a dynamic scheduling tool to enable the efficient use of vehicles for education, social care and public transport demand responsive trips. The implementation process involves upgrading hardware, loading new software, transferring existing data, inputting new data, installing map data and intensive staff training.
12. The installation process is going well. The software was loaded in February and data transfer and staff training are currently underway and will be completed shortly. It is hoped to be able to go-live with the demand responsive elements of the software for use by public transport, social care and special educational needs transport by May 2004. The Council is working with Trapeze Software Ltd to tailor the software to specifically meet our requirements for the planning of mainstream education transport. Once these modifications have been completed, a programme for reviewing current mainstream contracts will be put in place to enable opportunities for further efficiency improvements to be identified.

Review Discretionary Policies

13. The Education Scrutiny Committee considered the issue of discretionary transport provision at meetings in July and September 2003. In September, the Government announced a national review of school transport rules and published an action plan for consultation. The Education Scrutiny Committee established a working group to conduct a thorough review of current provision, consult stakeholders and consider the implications of the draft Education Transport Bill that was published in March 2004. This group is due to report back to Education Scrutiny Committee in June this

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Richard Ball, Lead Planner (Transportation) on 01432 260965

year. These elements of the Transport Cross Service Review Implementation Project have therefore been transferred to this working group. The Lead Planner (Transportation), Project Manager for this project, is a member of the working group to ensure consistency across the service and with this project. This will also enable the conclusions of the working group to be fed back into this project if any further action is required.

Conclusion

14. The above report highlights the good progress that is being made to implement the recommendations of the Transport Cross Service Review. The project continues to demonstrate the success of close working relationships between the Environment, Education and Social Care Directorates. The introduction of Scheduling Software will bring significant benefits for the service and improve efficiency. Attached at Appendix 1 is a copy of the current programme for the project. A further progress report will be submitted in six months time.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the progress with the implementation of the Transport Cross Service Review be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

APPENDIX 1 – TRANSPORT CROSS SERVICE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT PROGRAMME

ID	Task Name	Start	Finish	2003				2004				2005					
				Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	
201	TCSR Implementation Project	Tue 26/11/02	Wed 03/08/05														
202	Develop and implement improved co-ordination and integration	Tue 26/11/02	Wed 03/08/05														
203	Examine existing models of co-ordination and integration	Tue 26/11/02	Thu 01/04/04														
204	Examine potential IT systems	Tue 26/11/02	Fri 30/05/03														
205	Review Transport Co-ordination Study results	Mon 06/01/03	Thu 01/04/04														
206	Consider the final report to examine opportunities for improving the serv	Mon 06/01/03	Thu 01/04/04														
207	Further Examination of IT Systems	Mon 01/03/04	Tue 01/06/04														
208	Develop Change Management Strategy	Fri 02/04/04	Wed 02/06/04														
209	Seek approval for model for co-ordination and integration	Mon 02/08/04	Mon 02/08/04														
210	Commence Implementation of Change Management Strategy	Wed 01/09/04	Wed 03/06/05														
211	Identify and Procure Scheduling Software	Tue 26/11/02	Mon 02/05/05														
212	Consider IT Support Requirements	Tue 26/11/02	Mon 03/02/03														
213	Approve budget for IT Support	Tue 04/02/03	Tue 04/02/03														
214	Examine available software and develop specification	Mon 10/02/03	Fri 30/05/03														
215	Approval for procurement of software	Mon 02/06/03	Fri 27/06/03														
216	Procure and install software	Mon 30/06/03	Fri 09/04/04														
217	Undertake staff training	Mon 02/02/04	Fri 30/04/04														
218	Commence review of contracts	Tue 04/05/04	Mon 02/05/05														
219	Review Discretionary Policies	Thu 02/01/03	Tue 30/09/03														
220	Examine costs and benefits of existing policies in Education and Public Trans	Thu 02/01/03	Fri 28/02/03														
221	Review approaches taken by other authorities	Mon 03/03/03	Thu 08/05/03														
222	Task transferred to ESC Working Group	Tue 30/09/03	Tue 30/09/03														
223	Pilot projects for staggered opening times for schools and social servi	Mon 06/01/03	Thu 03/03/05														
224	Identify suitable areas for pilot projects	Mon 06/01/03	Fri 28/02/03														
225	Undertake Desktop Study of Implications	Mon 31/03/03	Tue 24/06/03														
226	Contact and secure agreement of relevant establishments	Mon 12/04/04	Fri 11/06/04														
227	Agree revised transport services and opening times	Mon 14/06/04	Thu 09/09/04														
228	Undertake Monitoring of Initial Contracts	Fri 10/09/04	Tue 04/01/05														
229	Prepare report detailing outcomes	Wed 05/01/05	Thu 03/03/05														
230	Develop policy and practice regarding developer contributions	Tue 26/11/02	Wed 31/03/04														
231	Raise issue at the Development Impact Group	Tue 26/11/02	Wed 31/03/04														
232	Include transport in SPG for Planning Obligations	Tue 26/11/02	Wed 31/03/04														
233	Brief LEA Governors on school transport	Tue 26/11/02	Wed 30/04/03														
234	Prepare guidance info for Governors	Tue 26/11/02	Fri 31/01/03														
235	Undertake annual briefing for Governors in relation to LEA transport policies	Mon 03/02/03	Wed 30/04/03														
236	Reporting on Progress	Mon 10/02/03	Mon 26/04/04														
237	Report to Strategic Monitoring Committee February 2003	Mon 10/02/03	Mon 10/02/03														
238	Report to Strategic Monitoring Committee April 2003	Tue 01/04/03	Tue 01/04/03														
239	Report to Strategic Monitoring Committee October 2003	Mon 13/10/03	Mon 13/10/03														
240	Report to Strategic Monitoring Committee April 2004	Mon 26/04/04	Mon 26/04/04														

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT UPDATE**Report By: County Treasurer****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the position with regard to the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets.

Financial Implications

2. As detailed in the attached Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004.

Background

3. The report on the Public Service Agreement considered by Cabinet on 18 March 2004 is appended.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT**
- (a) **the contents of the attached Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004 be noted;**
- and**
- (b) **the Committee considers whether there are any issues it wishes to be brought to Cabinet's attention.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet report dated 18 March 2004.

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT UPDATE

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

18TH MARCH 2004

Wards Affected

None.

Purpose

To note the latest performance against the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets and receive an update to the second round of LPSAs to be negotiated with the Government.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Reasons

Members need to be regularly updated on the performance against the LPSA targets in order to agree any decisions required to be taken in service areas where performance is lower than expected.

Considerations

1. This report is split into two parts, the first updating Cabinet on performance against the current LPSA and the second updating the progress made to negotiating the second round of LPSA due to start next year.

Part 1: Performance Update

2. Cabinet last received a performance update against the individual PSA targets in December. Appendix 1 contains the latest update and this has been provided in a graphical format so members can see more clearly where performance against each target is heading.
3. Previous Cabinet reports have highlighted concerns services have had in progressing towards targets where either statutory targets or definitions for performance indicators have changed. To this date the Council has had negligible success in re-defining some of the more problematic issues and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has maintained a rigid stance in line with the contents of the original agreement.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Andrew Tanner, Assistant County Treasurer, on (01432) 260162

4. Performance Reward Grant (PRG) is shared out equally amongst the sub-targets so if the Council is failing on one sub-target it will not jeopardise the success of others. PRG is only available having reached at least sixty per cent of the stretch in each target. As a reminder, the PRG is payable in two equal instalments in 2005 and 2006. The amount for each target is £272,000 adding up to a total amount available of £3,500,000. Where there are several indicators within each target, the PRG is split equally. Officers will continue to be mindful of those areas requiring marginal increases in resources to obtain the PRG. Many of the targets are on course to achieving a significant element of the PRG. It is difficult, however, to forecast the overall financial benefit to the authority as a majority of the targets are only measurable in the last year. Listed below are the targets which at this time have an element of certainty in their achievement.

Targets which are highly likely to be met include:

- Avoiding harm for older people.
- Deaths and injuries through accidental fire.
- Reducing vehicle crime and road accidents.
- Reducing absenteeism from school.
- Increasing electoral participation (already achieved).

Targets which at this time are unlikely to be met include:

- Domestic burglaries.
- GCSE attainment for children in care.
- Resettlement support for homeless households.

5. Overall there have been some significant gains for the Council and its partners through the LPSA process and it has provided a focus for successful partnership working leading to real performance improvement. There have also been lessons learnt from the first round, particularly in terms of clarity of target achievement with the ODPM, which will be important in the next round of negotiations.

Part 2: PSA - 2nd Generation

6. Members were provided with details of the main changes for the second generation of LPSAs in the December report. To recap, the new agreements will be more focused on local issues with a strong evidential base required for improvement. To this extent, the Council has made some initial enquiries with some of our partners including the Learning and Skills Council, the Primary Care Trust and also the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM). These particular discussions have centred on formulating an agreement, which could in theory be very different to the current one, which is a prescribed structure from the Government. For example, the Council may wish to consider only a few targets related to some major themes or targets which have outcomes of a more long-term nature extending beyond three years.

7. In tandem with this more radical approach to the next round of LPSA negotiations, officers are also investigating potential targets from across all services within the Herefordshire Partnership. An introductory report will be considered by the Partnership Board at its meeting on 12th March. The product of this initial exercise will be a scoping document for initial discussion with the GOWM to assess its validity within the national LPSA process. More detailed work will then be carried out before Cabinet approval in early summer. The Council has elected for negotiation with the Government in the second tranche of local authorities in July.

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Risk Management

Failure to reach the stretched targets will result in the loss of potentially significant Performance Reward Grant for the Council.

Consultees

None identified.

Background Papers

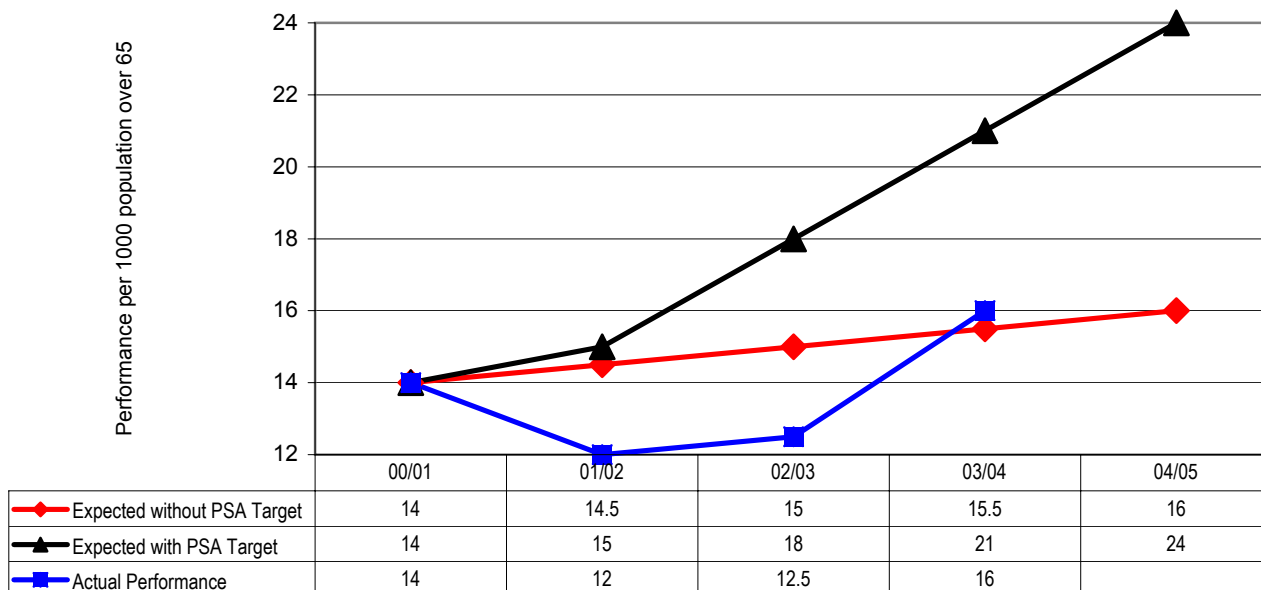
None identified.

Target 1

Enabling older people to live as independently as possible in the community - by providing community services.

Target 1.1 - PSS PAF Indicator B11

Intensive Home Care as a proportion of intensive home care and residential care

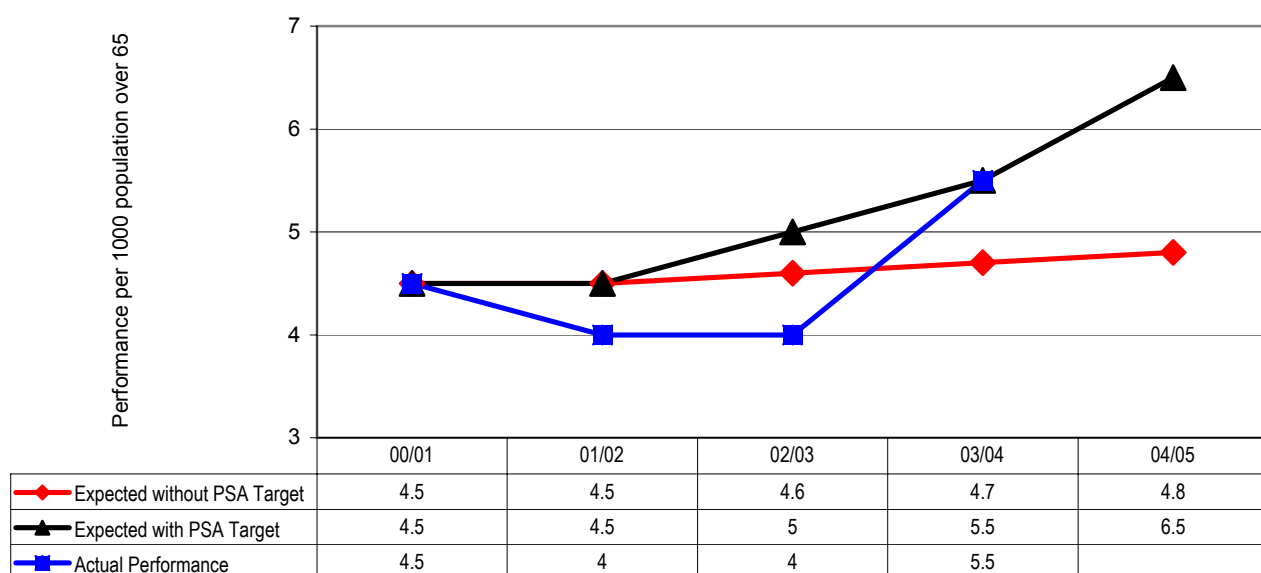


Report **Target 1.1** 😞

Feb-04 Progress is being made against this target by re-focusing in-house homecare to reablement and changes in contracting with the independent sector towards volume purchasing. This has diverted people from care homes and hospital to intensive home support.

Target 1.2 - PSS PAF Indicator C28

Intensive Home Care



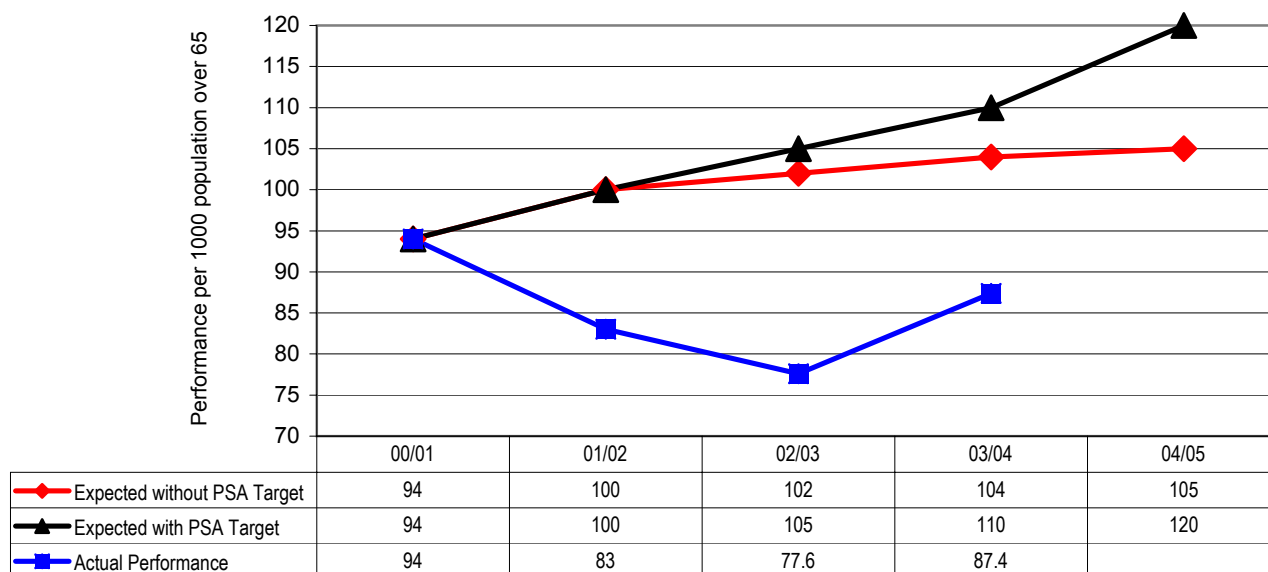
Report **Target 1.2** 😊

Feb-04 Progress is being made against this target by re-focusing in-house homecare to reablement and changes in contracting with the independent sector towards volume purchasing. This has diverted people from care homes and hospital to intensive home support.

Target 1

Enabling older people to live as independently as possible in the community - by providing community services.

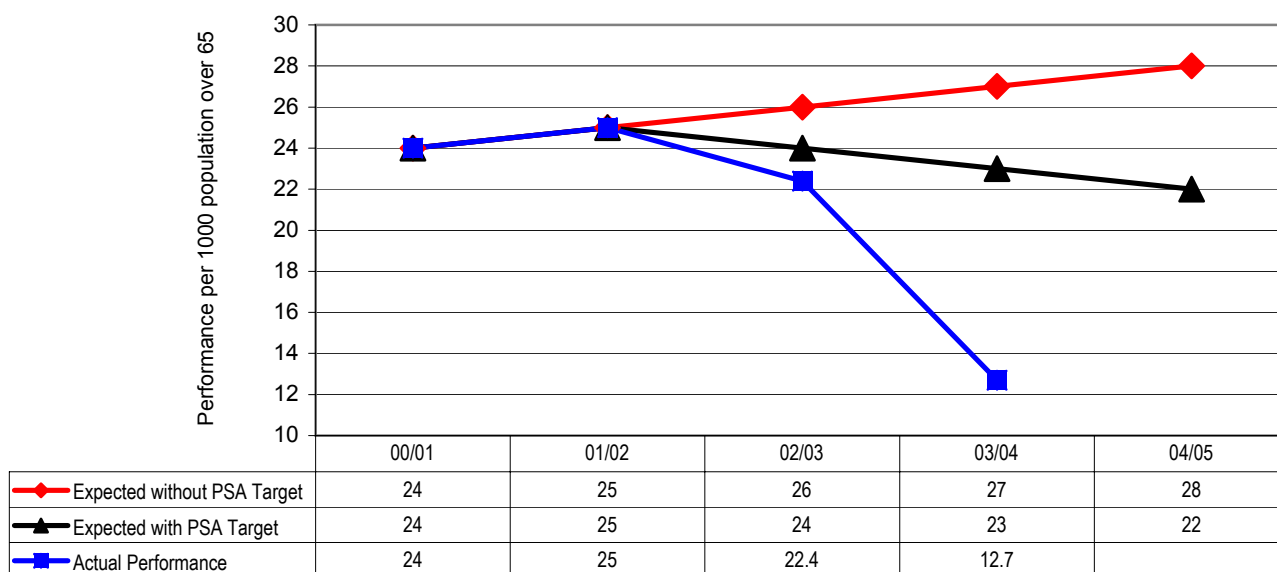
Target 1.3 - PSS PAF Indicator C32 Older People helped to live at home



Report **Target 1.3** ☹️

Feb-04 Actual performance is below target at this time although a number of actions are actively being pursued including the piloting of the latest signposting/contact assessment form. The target is based around a partnership between Health; Social Care; Fire Service; Herefordshire Home Check and the Council's Welfare Rights Team through developing and improving the first level single assessment and benefits advice take up.

Target 1.4 - PSS PAF Indicator C33 Avoidable harm for older people (falls and hypothermia)

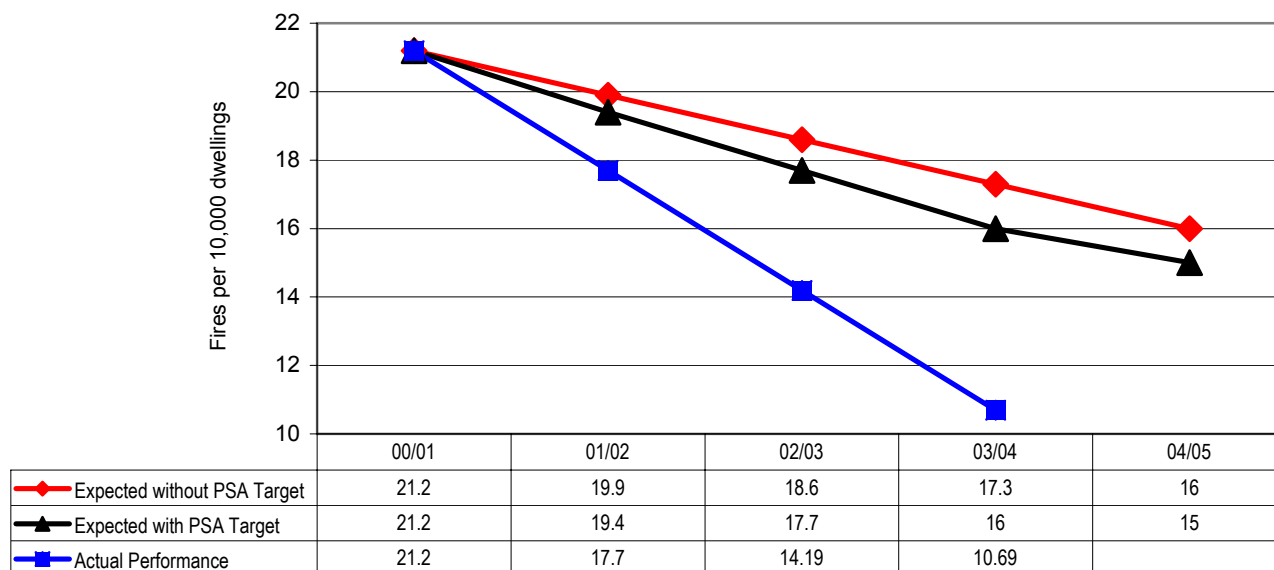


Report **Target 1.4** 😊😊

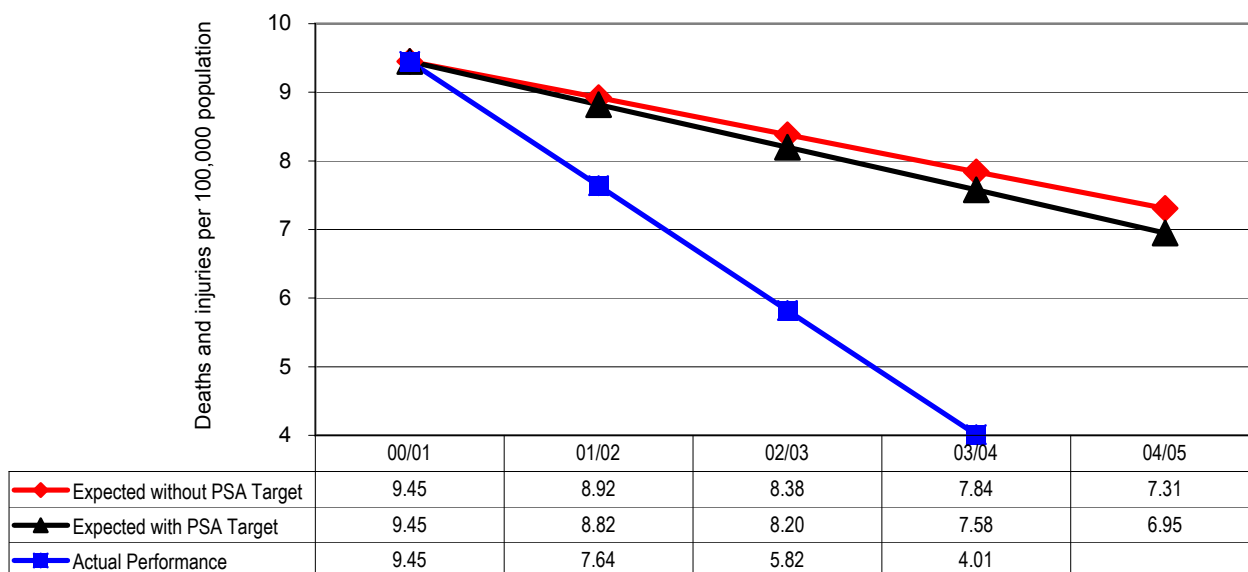
Feb-04 Performance on Track to meet targets

Target 2 Improving Fire Safety

Target 2.1 - BVPI 142iii Fires per 10,000 dwellings



Target 2.2 - BVPI 143i + 143ii Deaths and injuries per 100,000 population

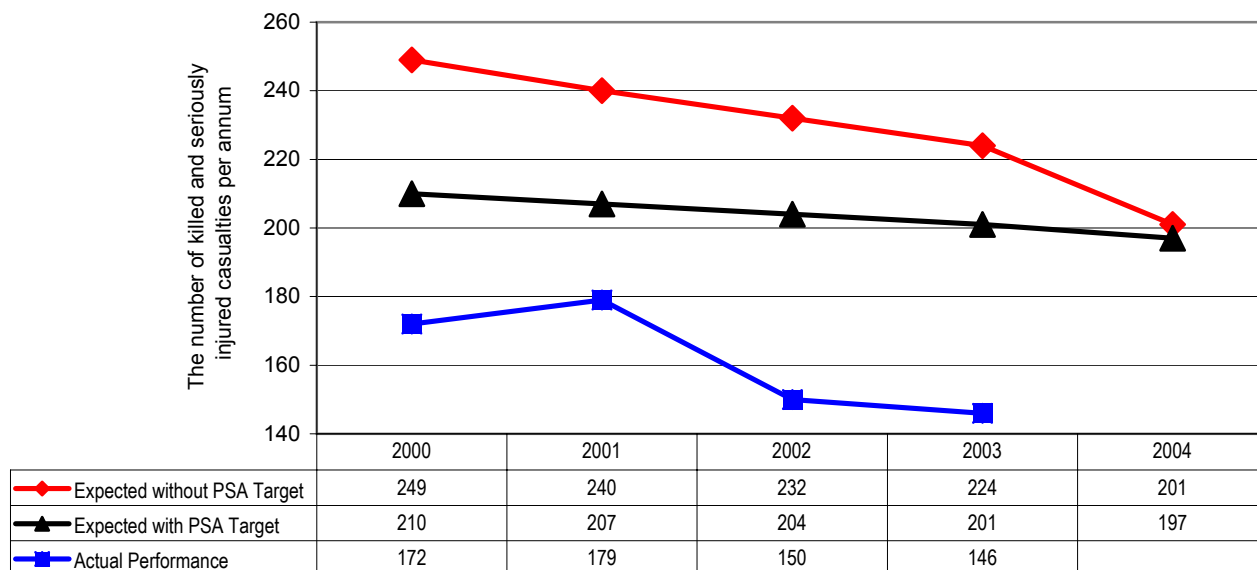


Report **Target 2.1 & 2.2** 😊😊

Feb-04 The Fire Authority continues to make excellent progress in reducing accidental dwelling fires and associated injuries through their frontline prevention initiatives such as Home Fire Safety Checks and the Schools Education Programme. It needs to be noted however that the LPSA performance is measured by performance in the final year solely and is therefore continues to be sensitive to major incidents.

Target 3 Improving Road Safety

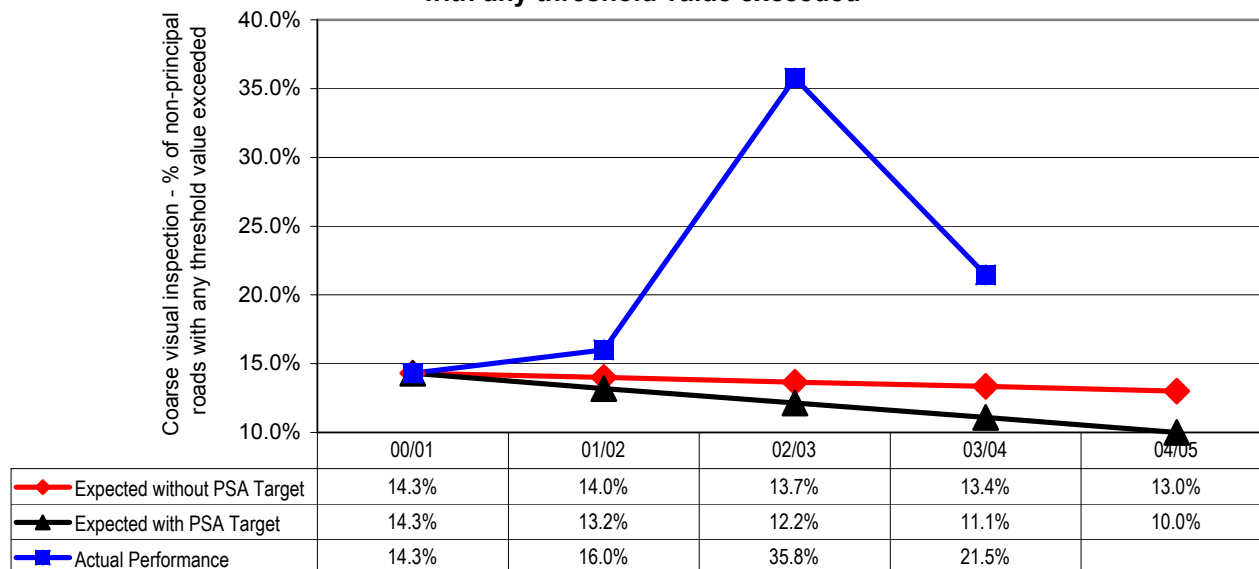
Target 3.1 - STATS 19
The number of killed and seriously injured casualties per annum



Report **Target 3.1** 😊😊

Feb-04 LPSA performance is measured in the last year so sensitivity to major accidents is still a factor despite a significant reduction in numbers of accidents. Figures for 2003 are now available and demonstrate yet further reductions.

Target 3.2 - BVPI 97 (a + b)
Coarse visual inspection (CVI) - % of non-principal roads with any threshold value exceeded

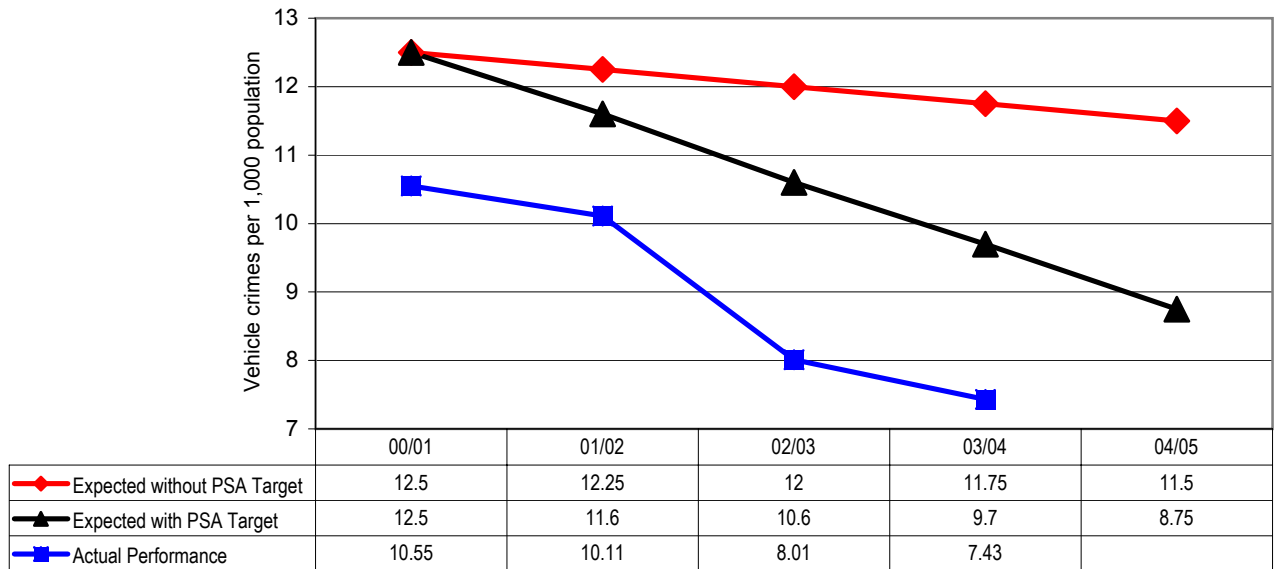


Report **Target 3.2** 😐

Feb-04 Previous years' figures do not provide a true comparison due to methodology changes. Recent data produced by CVI surveys demonstrate the importance of a targeted and successful maintenance programme this coming year in order to meet the LPSA target. The last CVI survey produced figures which we were surprised about and we have called in a second opinion for verification.

Target 4
Reducing crime

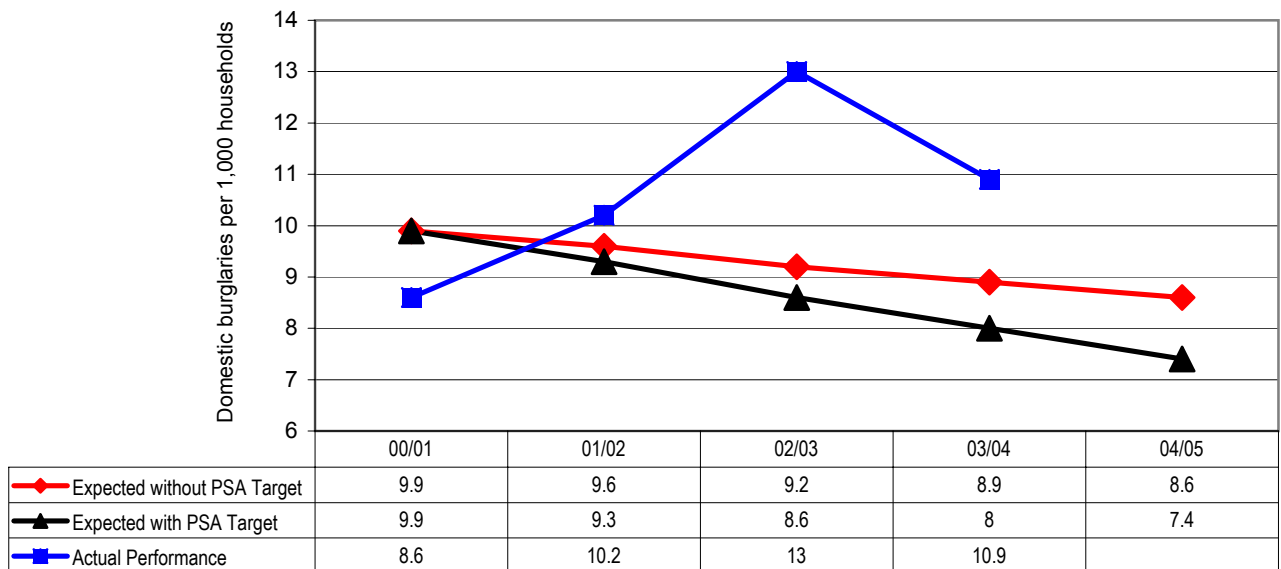
Target 4.1
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population



Report **Target 4.1** 😊😊

Feb-04 There continues to be a downward trend in vehicle crime as it is very difficult to break into modern cars and the LPSA target is very likely to be met.

Target 4.2
Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households

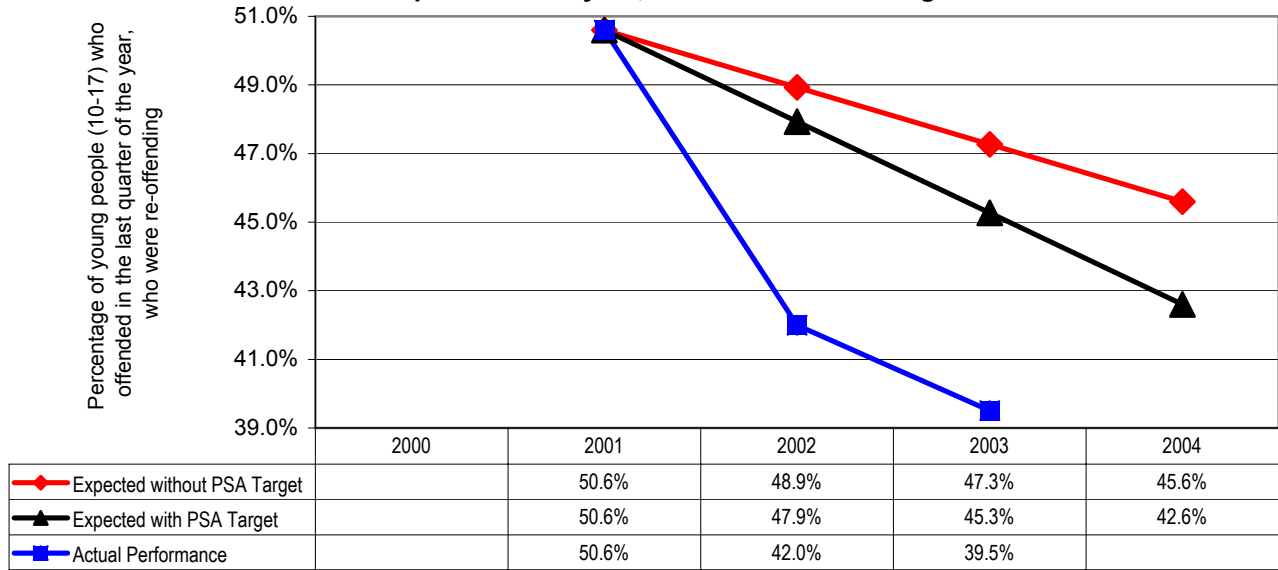


Report **Target 4.2** 😞😞

Feb-04 It is highly unlikely the burglary target will be met as thieves turn their attentions away from vehicles to dwellings despite recent performance improvements. The introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards in 2001 has not helped the target with the inclusion of attempted burglaries within incident recording.

Target 4
Reducing crime

Target 4.3 - Youth Justice Board indicator
Percentage of young people (10-17) who offended in the last quarter of the year, who were re-offending



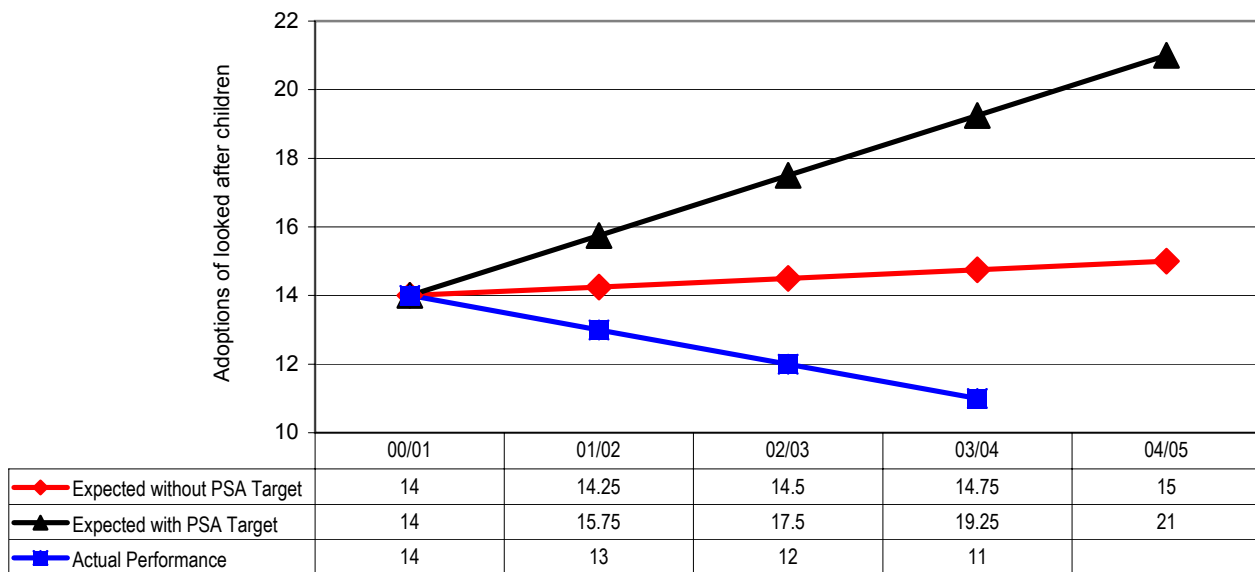
Report **Target 4.3** 😊

Feb-04 Performance continues to improve on reducing the rate of youth re-offending although the target is still sensitive to minor changes in trends. The 2003 figures are still provisional as final checks on Police National Computer records, for example, need to be carried out.

Target 5

Improving the life chances for children in care by increasing the adoption rate

Target 5.1 - PSS PAF Indicator C23 Adoptions of looked after children



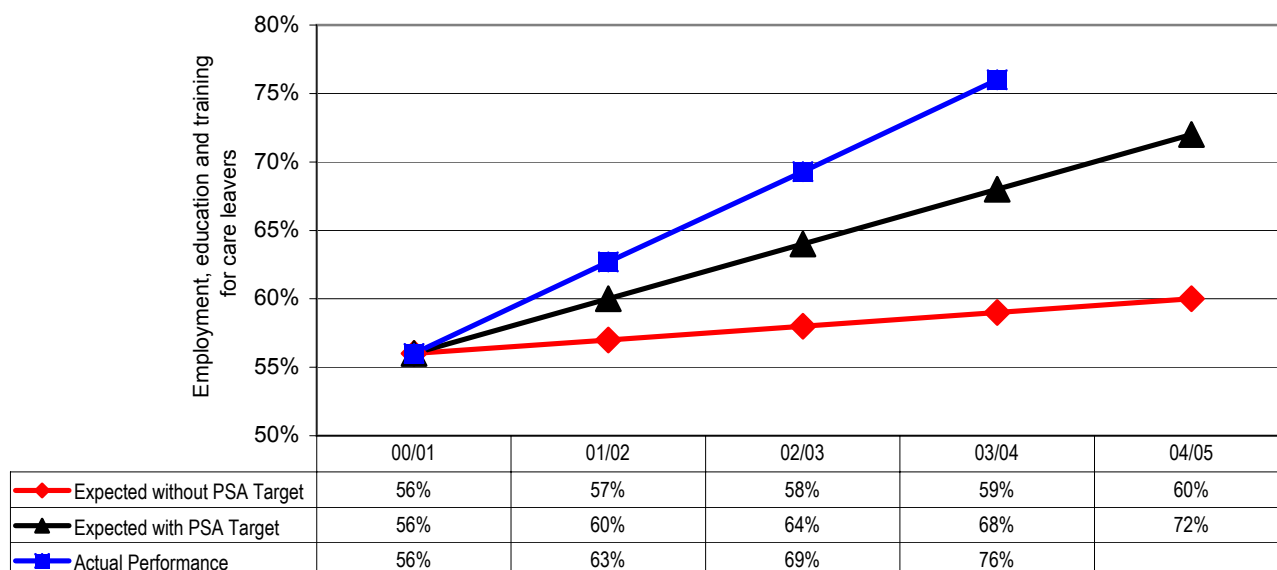
Report **Target 5.1** ☹️

Feb-04 The last update highlighted the potential problem of the fixed numbers used in the LPSA target when those available for adoption have gone down. The pump priming grant is being used for pre and post adoptive support for potential adoptive parents.

Target 6

Improving the life chances for children in care by improving their educational attainment

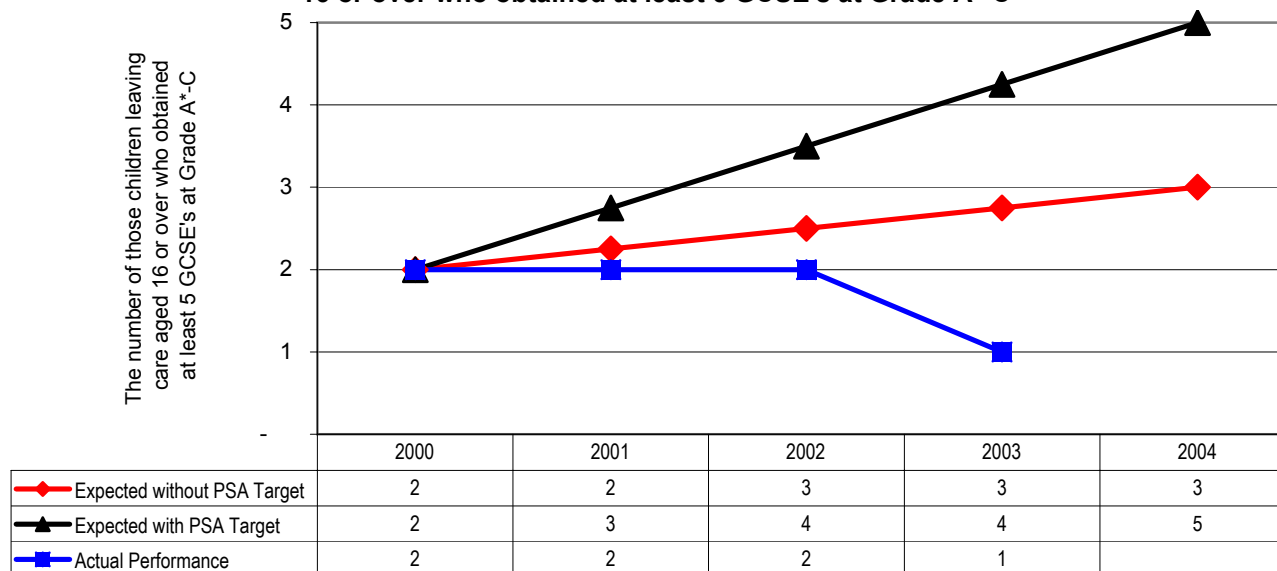
Target 6.1 - PSS PAF Indicator A4 Employment, education and training for care leavers



Report **Target 6.1** 😊

Feb-04 Performance for 2003 is already above the final LPSA Target for 2004/05, however with a different cohort next year indications are at present that there is no guarantee that current performance can be maintained.

Target 6.2 - Form OC1 The number of those children leaving care aged 16 or over who obtained at least 5 GCSE's at Grade A*-C



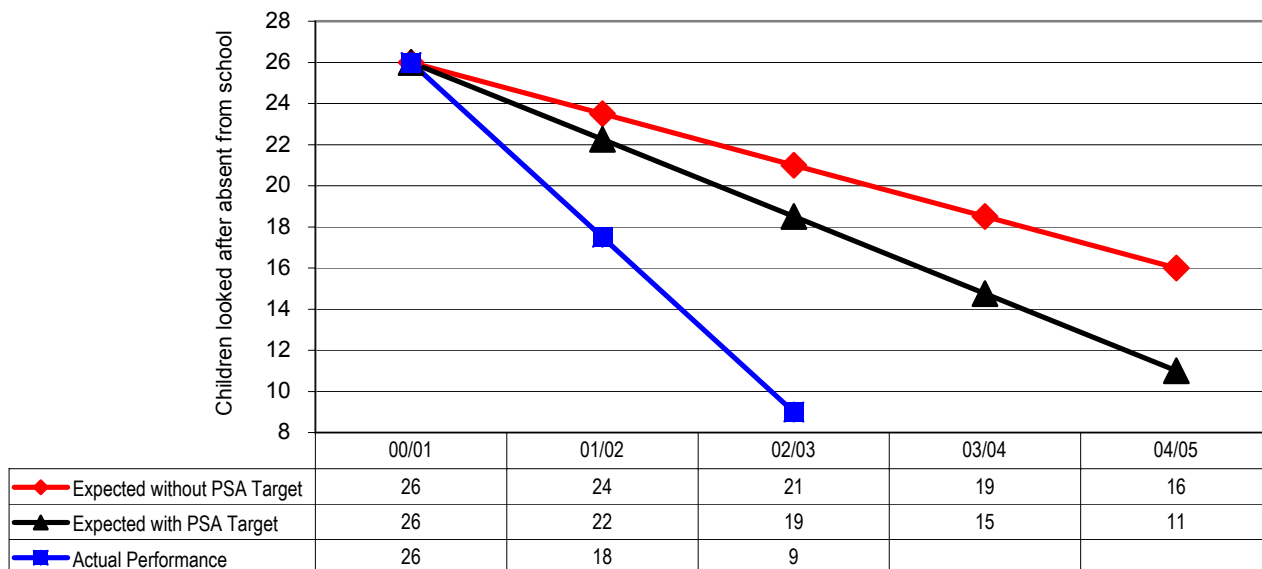
Report **Target 6.2** 😞😞

Feb-04 The target for March 2005 is 5 children leaving care to achieve 5 grades A-C at GCSE. This will be difficult to achieve in view of the uncertainty regarding this cohort. The methodology used in identifying the cohort has been challenged at the National Children's PAF indicator group to which we contribute. Only one student is expected to achieve the target (4%) as at March 2004 The Education Liaison team, partly responsible for this target, do not have influence over all the students as there is considerable movement in and out of the cohort. In 2003 a majority of the students had left school before the LPSA project work commenced.

Target 6

Improving the life chances for children in care by improving their educational attainment

Target 6.3 - PSS PAF Indicator C24
Children looked after absent from school



Report **Target 6.3**



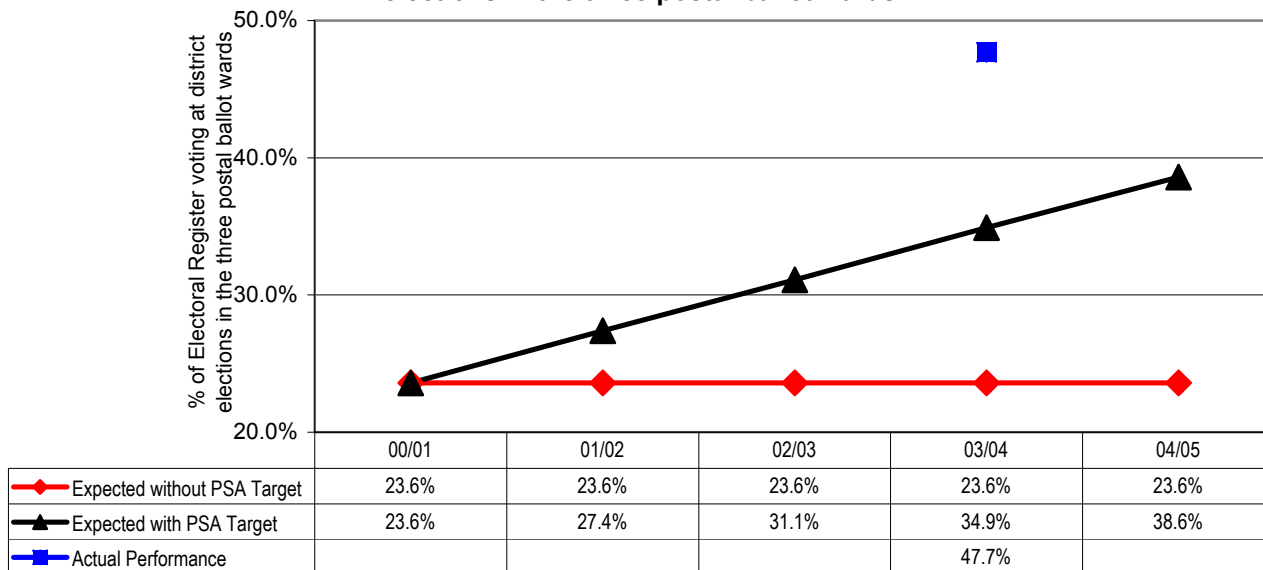
Feb-04

Performance for 2003 is already above the final LPSA Target for 2004 and measures are in place to manage and improve that performance.

Target 7

Increasing participation in democracy & local decision making

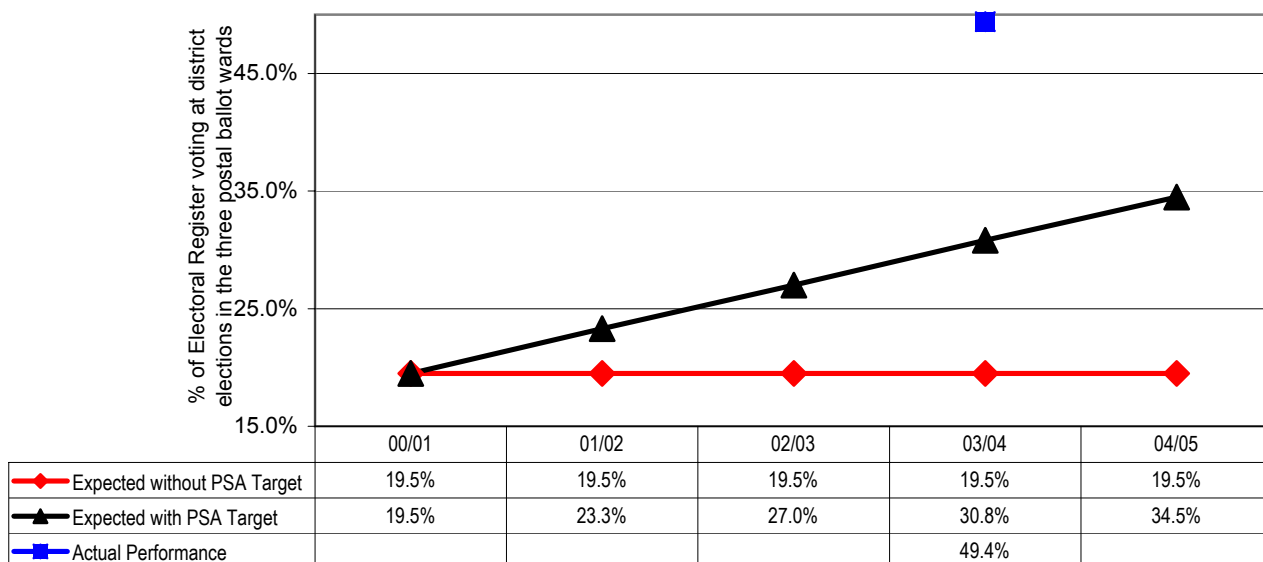
Target 7.1 Belmont
% of Electoral Register voting at district elections in the three postal ballot wards



Report **Target 7.1 Belmont** 😊😊

Feb-04 The electoral turnout targets have been achieved.

Target 7.1 Holmer
% of Electoral Register voting at district elections in the three postal ballot wards



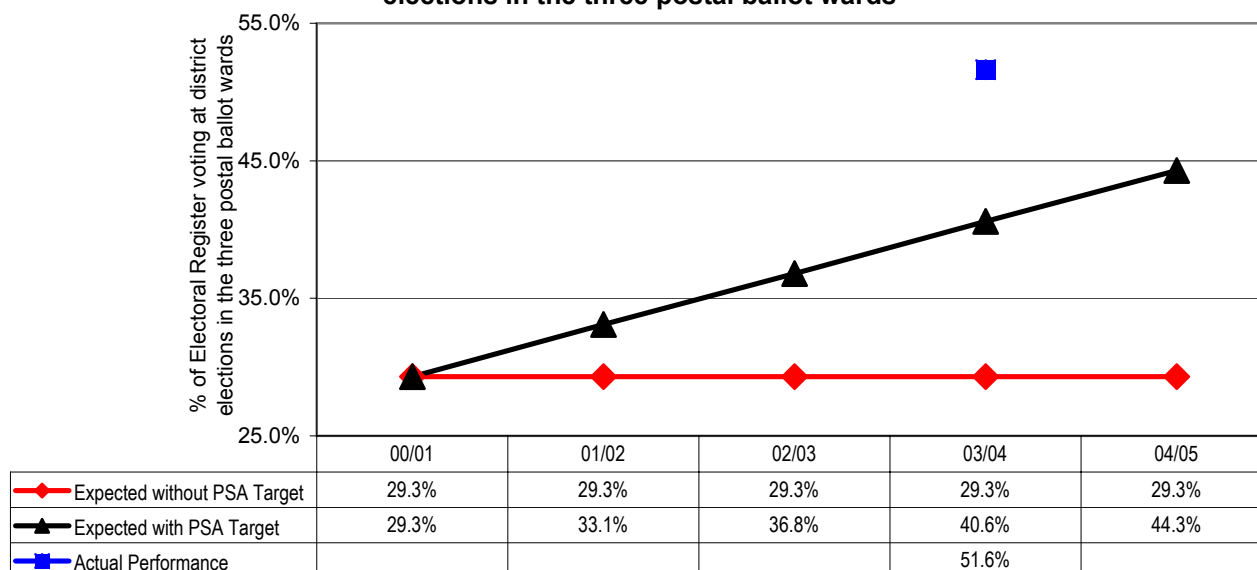
Report **Target 7.1 Holmer** 😊😊


Feb-04 The electoral turnout targets have been achieved.

Target 7

Increasing participation in democracy & local decision making

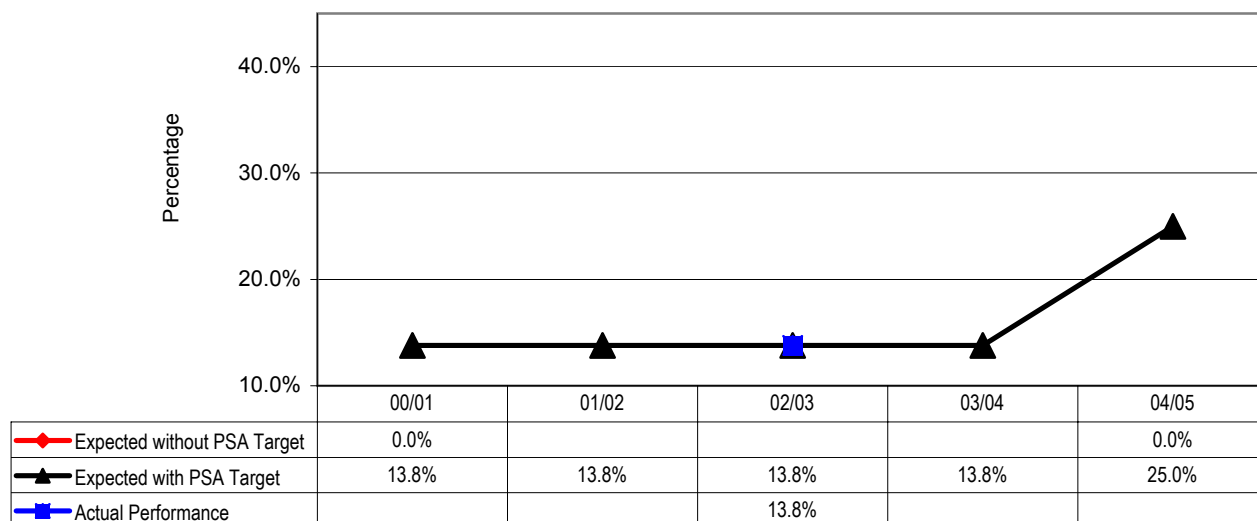
Target 7.1 Ross
% of Electoral Register voting at district elections in the three postal ballot wards



Report **Target 7.1** 
Ross

Feb-04 The electoral turnout targets have been achieved.

Target 7.2
% of young people (13-19) surveyed answering positively "Do you feel the Council does enough to give young people the opportunity to influence important decisions?"



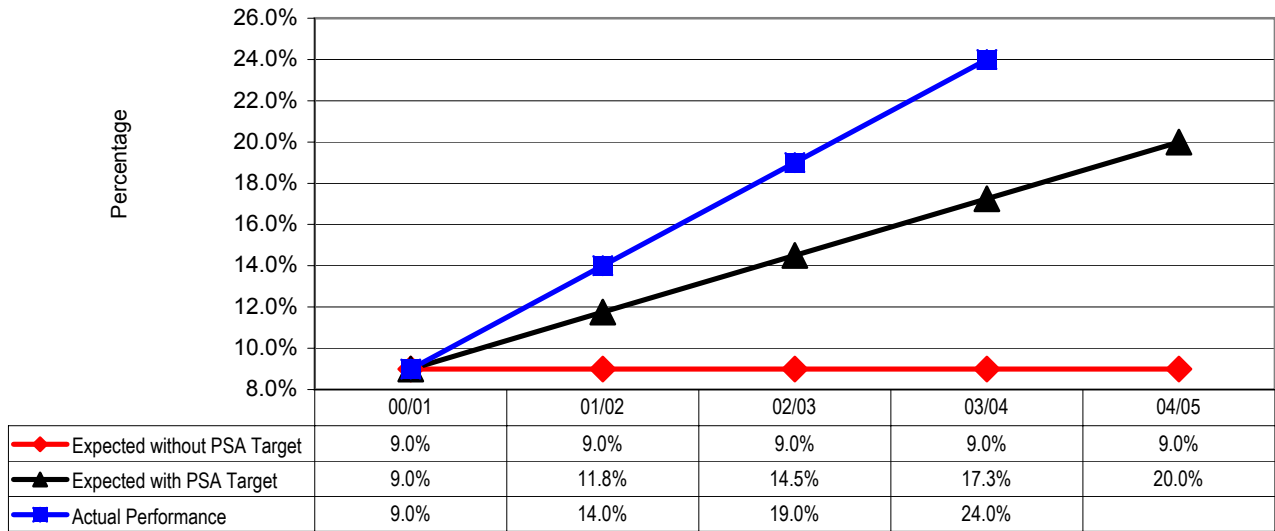
Report **Target 7.2** 

Feb-04 Historical information is not available to show a trend here with only the target for 2004/05 being set. The LPSA stretch need to be at least 11 percentage points on the baseline survey which was carried out in 2002.

Target 7

Increasing participation in democracy & local decision making

Target 7.3
% of Citizens Panel respondents answering positively to "Do you feel the Council does enough to give local people the opportunity to influence important decisions?"



Report **Target 7.3**



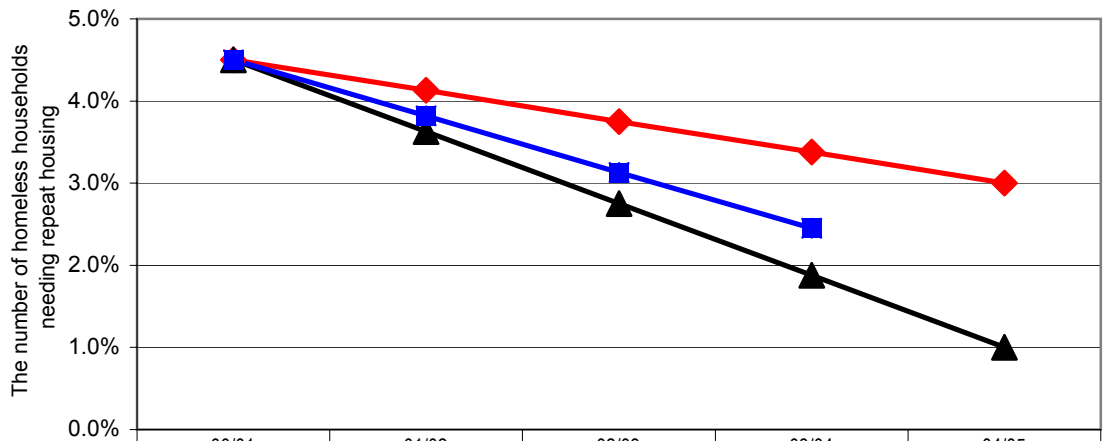
Feb-04

Performance trends for this consultation indicator suggest that we will comfortably achieve the target. Herefordshire Voice surveys are used for measuring performance.

Target 8

Improving resettlement support to homeless households

Target 8
The number of homeless households needing repeat housing



	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05
Expected without PSA Target	4.5%	4.1%	3.8%	3.4%	3.0%
Expected with PSA Target	4.5%	3.6%	2.8%	1.9%	1.0%
Actual Performance	4.5%	3.8%	3.1%	2.5%	

Report **Target 8.1**



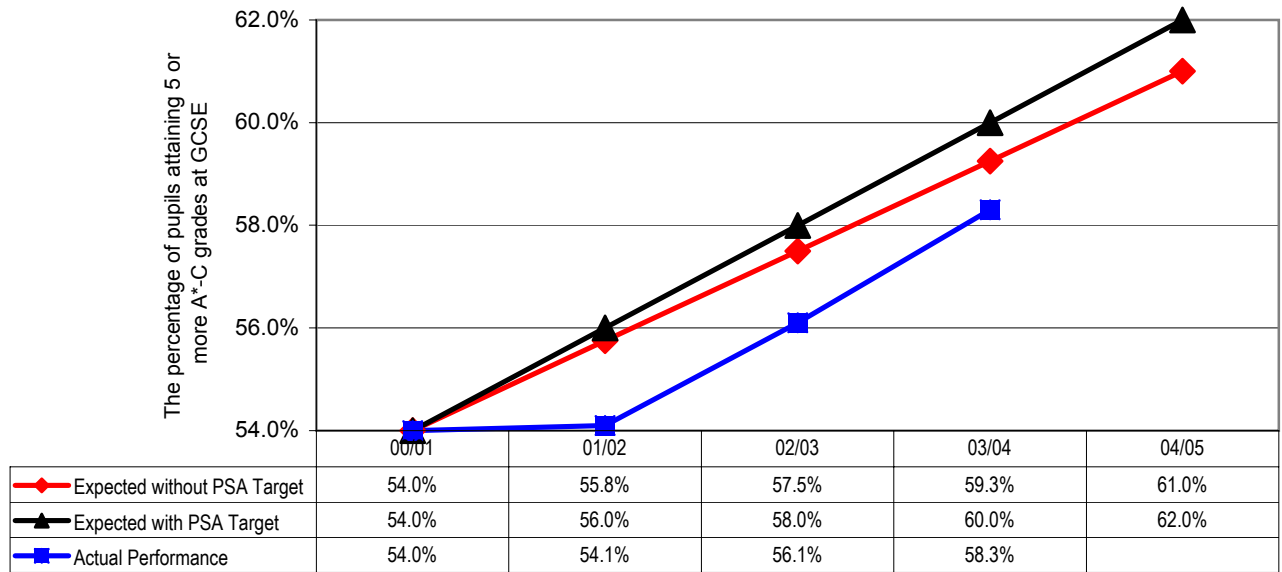
Feb-04

This target is unusual by the fact that it has a measurable output identified in the graph above which also has four conditions attached to it. There is a rigorous improvement plan in place to reach the resettlement target, however not only will this be difficult but also at least one of the conditions relating to satisfaction of service provided cannot in all reasonableness be achieved. There is also concern that the condition relating to non-use of B&B accommodation is unenforceable under the 2002 Homelessness Act.

Target 9

Improving the attainment level of pupils in Hereford

Target 9.1
The percentage of pupils attaining 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE



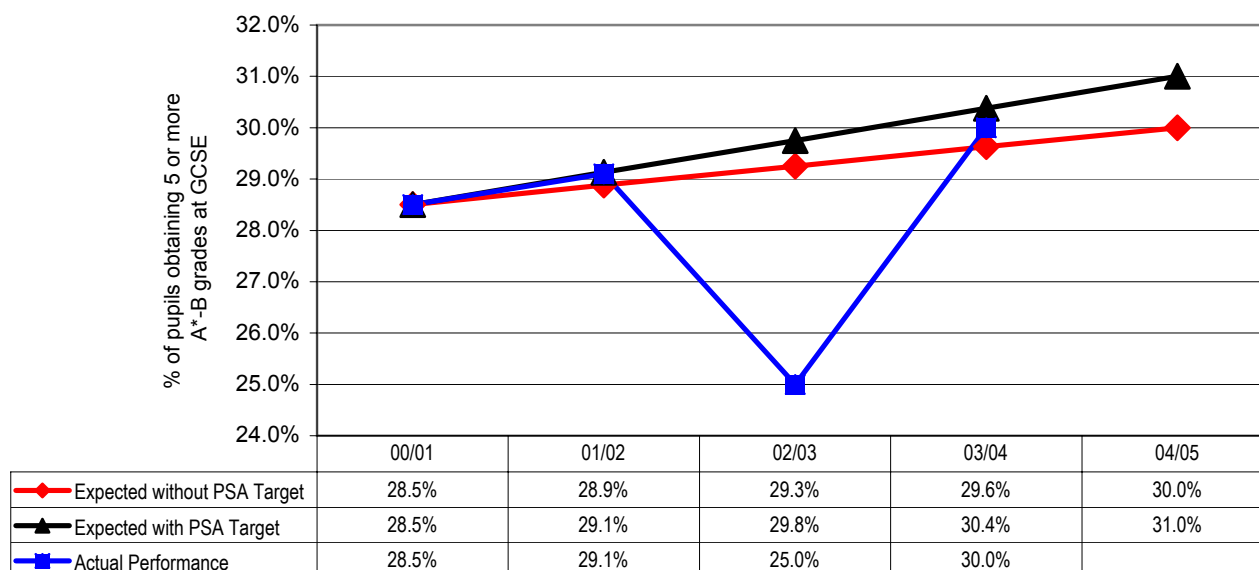
Report **Target 9.1** ☹️

Feb-04 This target continues to be very challenging although performance continues to improve by around 2 percentage points each year.

Target 10

Increasing the proportion of higher ability pupils obtaining 5 or more A*-B grades at GCSE

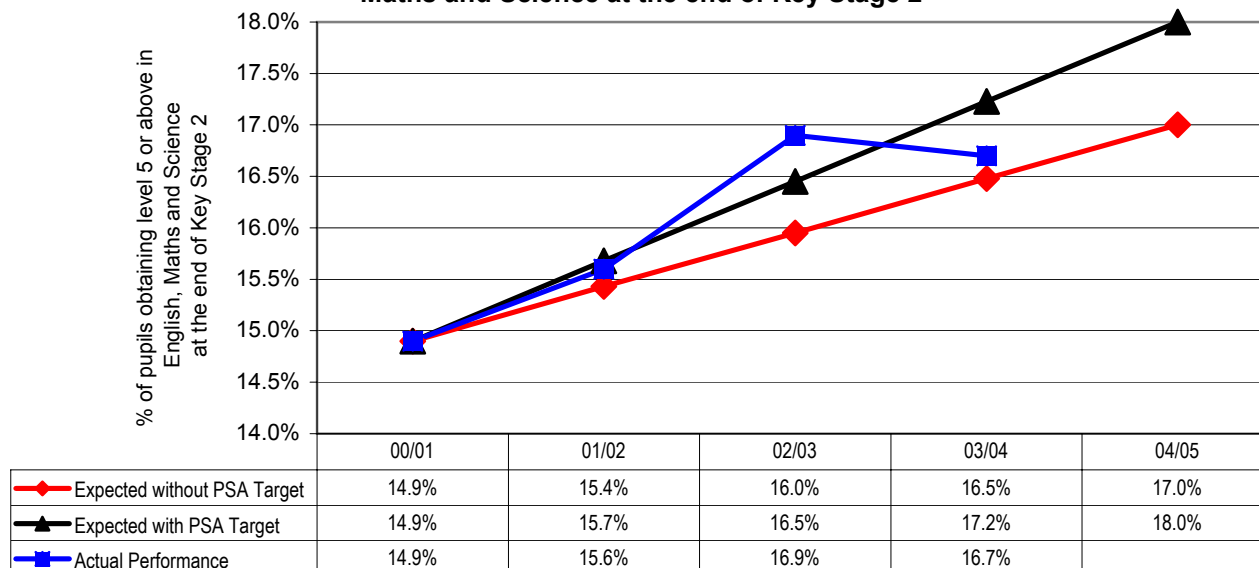
Target 10.1
% of pupils obtaining 5 or more A*-B grades at GCSE



Report **Target 10.1** 😊

Feb-04 The cohort of students taking GCSE exams next year performed particularly well in KS2 and KS3 exams and expectations are that the PSA target will be met.

Target 10.2
% of pupils obtaining level 5 or above in English, Maths and Science at the end of Key Stage 2



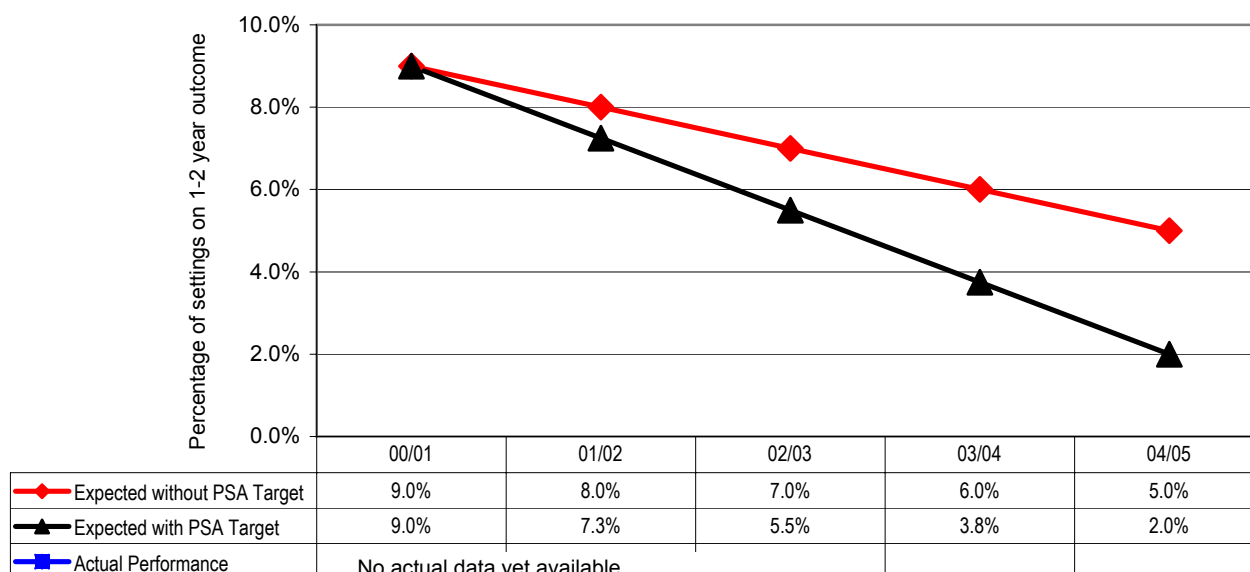
Report **Target 10.2** 😊

Feb-04 Expectations are improved by the cohort undertaking KS2 exams this year having performed well at KS1.

Target 11

Improving the care and development of young children by enhancing the quality of education and care provision in all childcare and early years settings in the County

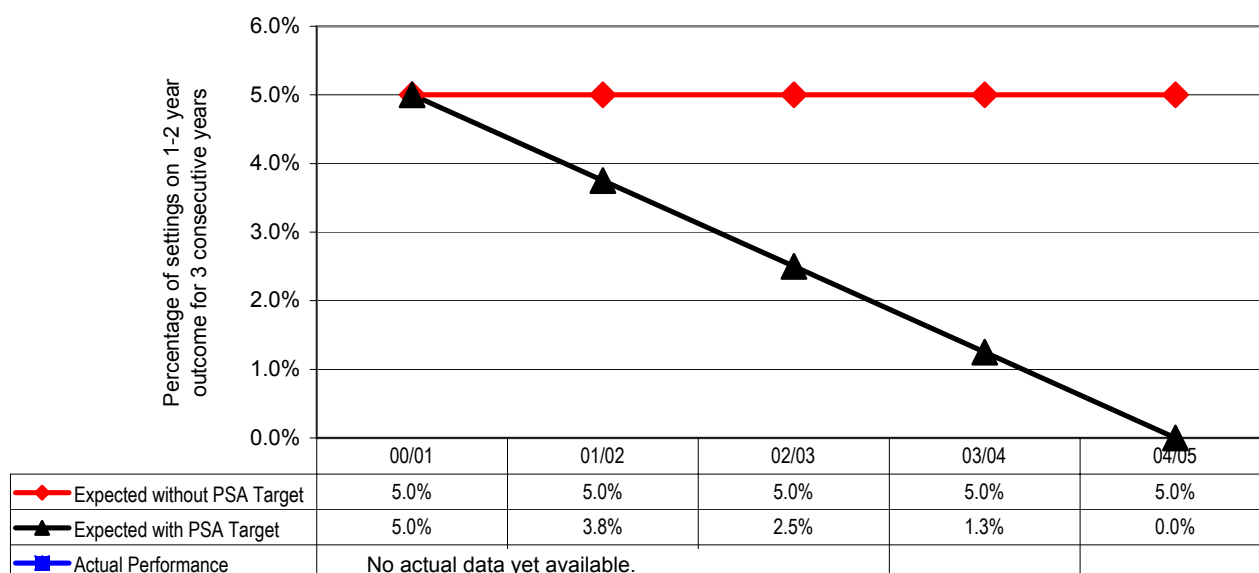
Target 11.1
Percentage of settings on 1-2 year outcome



Report **Target 11.1** ☹️

Feb-04 The current indications are that the first two sub-targets will be met, provided OFSTED carry out inspections of the groups in question in 2003/04, and no unexpected outcomes result.

Target 11.2
Percentage of settings on 1-2 year outcome for 3 consecutive years



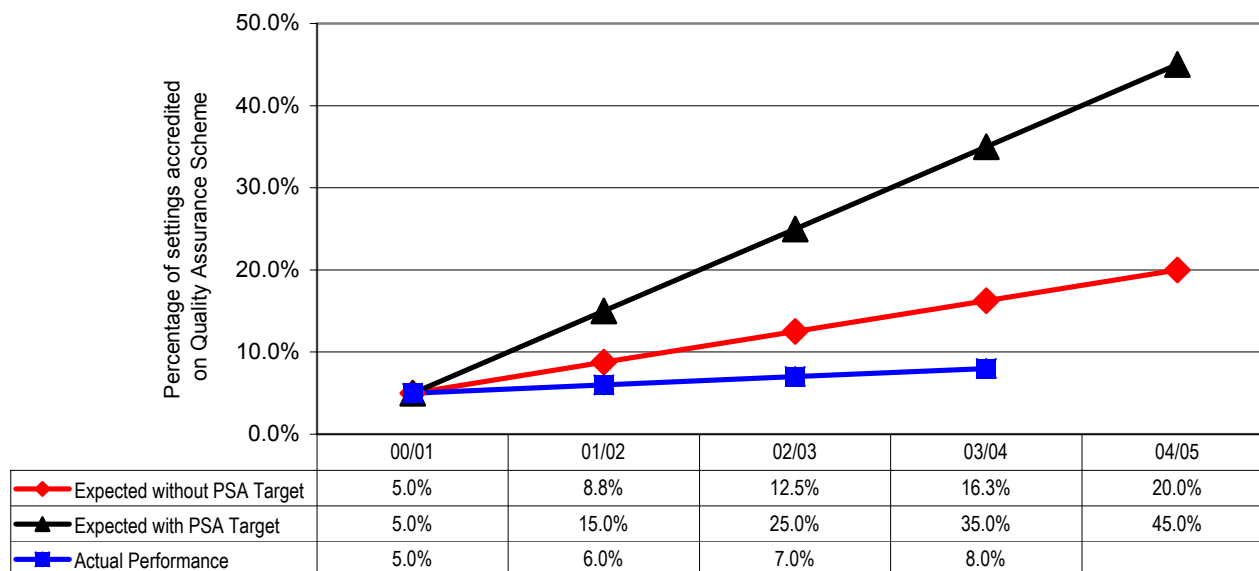
Report **Target 11.2** ☹️

Feb-04 This target is now more attainable as 3 of the relevant 8 settings have now closed.

Target 11

Improving the care and development of young children by enhancing the quality of education and care provision in all childcare and early years settings in the County

Target 11.3
Percentage of settings accredited on Quality Assurance Scheme

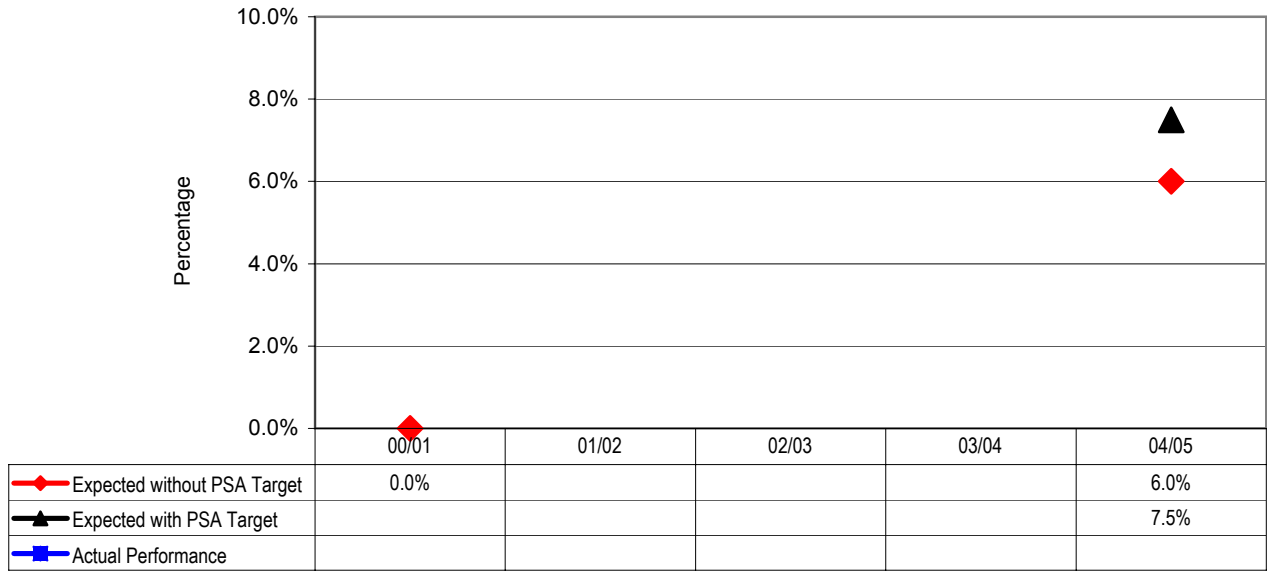


Report **Target 11.3** 😊

Feb-04 This target is much more challenging as Herefordshire started from a very low base. Although good progress has been made in generating interest in an accreditation scheme, achieving the target will depend on other settings expressing interest in the scheme, and the majority of the 191 registered childminders in the County being persuaded to join a childminders network or join the accreditation scheme. A further 12 settings have asked for information.

Target 12
Improving cost effectiveness

Target 12.1
Increase in Council's Cost Effectiveness



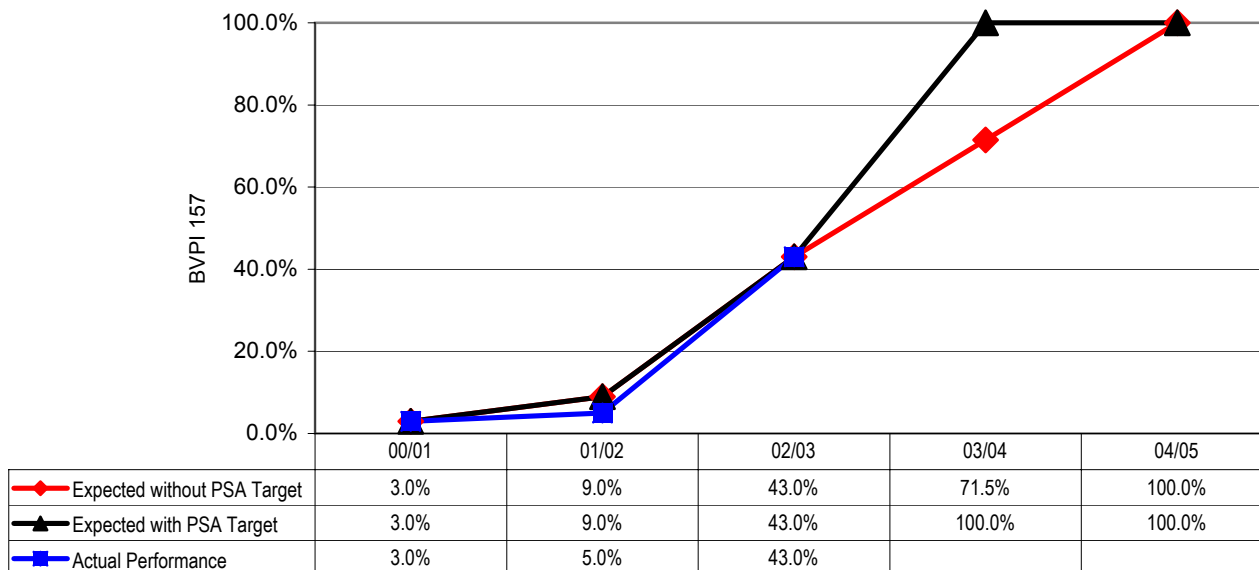
Report **Target 12.1** 😐

Feb-04 The cost effectiveness target is on track in terms of performance considerations but a true picture will not be possible until a revenue outturn position has been established for the current financial year. Performance gains for a set number of indicators are measured against the revenue expenditure of the Council which in turn is discounted by inflation factors to establish real term costs.

Target 13

Achieving 100% delivery of electronic government

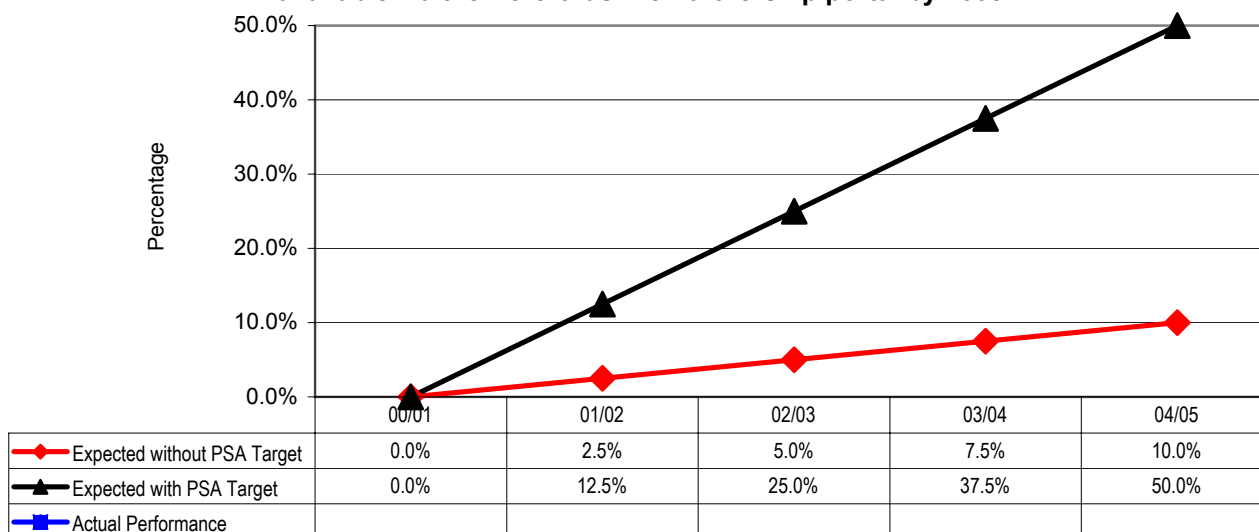
Target 13.1
BVPI 157 - Achieving 100% delivery of electronic government



Report **Target 13.1** 😊

Feb-04 The Council is still confident that the target can be met at the end of March although much depends on the strict definition of the original agreement. Final confirmation is still being sought from the ODPM in this regard and is centred on whether we are assessed by the number of services which are e enabled rather than by transactions.

Target 13.2
% of Council services relating to Single Assessment, Supporting People and community legal services, delivered in partnership with county agencies and available via the Herefordshire Partnership portal by 2005



Report **Target 13.2** 😊

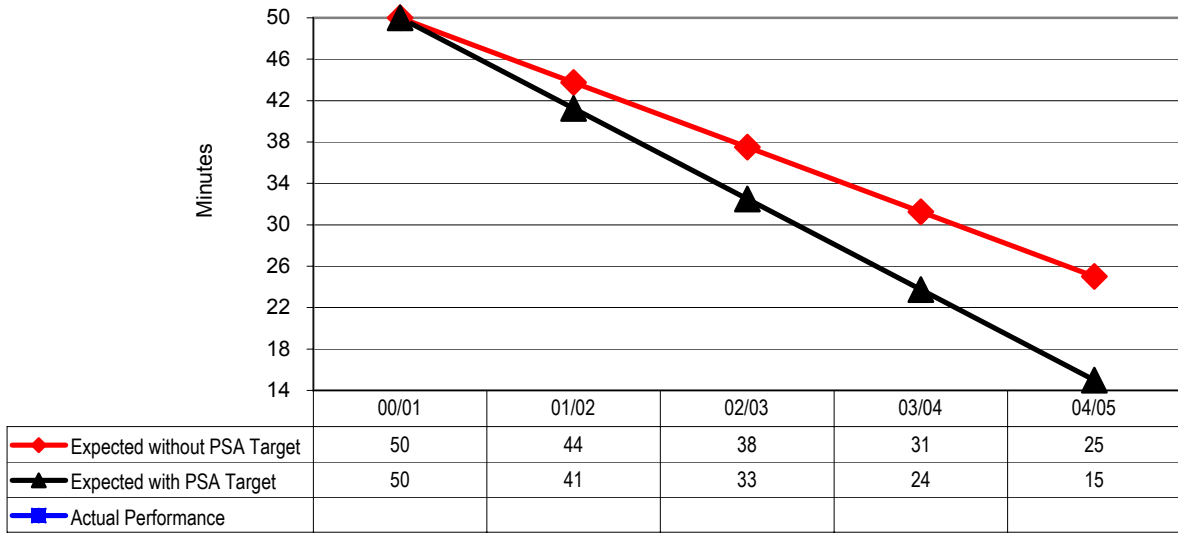
Feb-04 A benchmarking exercise has yet to be carried out for 13.2 but we will achieve the 50% target for the PLEA (Public Legal Electronic Access) component of this target by March 2004.

Target 13

Achieving 100% delivery of electronic government

Target 13.3

The maximum travelling time for any Herefordshire resident to their nearest community access point (a public web access point provided by the Herefordshire Partnership).



Report **Target 13.3** 😞

Feb-04 Figures for the community access points are not available at the time of reporting but will be formulated for the Cabinet meeting.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING - CORPORATE HEALTH

Report By: Policy Officer

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider a report to Cabinet on the Council's corporate performance in relation to our Best Value Performance Indicators from 1st April 2003 to 31st January 2004.

Financial Implications

2. None identified

Considerations

3. Attached at Appendix 1 is the corporate performance report, which was considered by Cabinet on 15th April 2004.
4. As part of the Council's performance management arrangements, a further report on corporate performance will also be prepared for the period 1st April 2003 to 31st March 2004, which will be linked to the publication of annual outturn information for the Best Value Performance Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Council's corporate performance from 1st April 2003 to 31st January 2004 be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

CORPORATE HEALTH PERFORMANCE

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

CABINET

15TH APRIL, 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive an update on the Council's corporate performance in relation to our National and Local Best Value Performance Indicators from 1st April 2003 to 31st January, 2004.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT performance in relation to the Council's National and Local Corporate Best Value Indicators, from 1st April 2003 to 31st January, 2004, be noted

Reasons

The Council has developed revised performance monitoring arrangements as outlined in the Comprehensive Performance Self-assessment document submitted to the Audit Commission. The revised arrangements ensure that the Chief Executive's Management Team, the Strategic Monitoring Committee, Scrutiny Committees, and Cabinet are all involved in the performance monitoring process.

Considerations

1. During 2003/2004 corporate performance is being reported to Cabinet at 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 monthly intervals, in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework.
2. Corporate performance for the 10 month period 1st April 2003 – 31st January 2004 has been reported on an exception basis and only those indicators where there is a variation on the target of at least + or – 10% are highlighted.

Above target performance

3. **The percentage of top 5% of earners that are from black and minority ethnic communities (National Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 2%, whereas the actual level from 1st April 2003 to 31st January 2004 was 2.3%.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tony Michael, Policy Officer, on (01432) 261823

4. **Number of recorded complaints, both formal and informal (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 285, whilst the number of complaints recorded for the first 10 months of this year is already up to 328. The high level of recorded complaints reflects improved collection arrangements and a greater focus on customer service issues across the authority.
5. **Staff mileage (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is to reduce mileage by 1% in comparison to 2002/2003. Performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004, compared to the 10 months up to 31st January 2003, showed a 20% reduction.
6. **Use of public transport by staff (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is to increase expenditure on the use of public transport by 5%. Performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004, compared to the 10 months up to 31st January 2003, showed a 40% increase.

Areas for Improvement

7. **Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (National Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 33 days, whilst performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004 was 54 days. This shows an improvement over the performance for the first six months of the year when the average processing time was 56 days. A significant amount of downtime in systems, the implementation of tax credits and shortages in staffing resources, have all affected performance in this area. During January 2004 a pilot scheme was introduced to improve performance, by arranging special interviews with applicants to obtain all the information required at the outset of an application. If the pilot is successful it will be introduced on a countywide basis.
8. **Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstance for housing benefit claims (National Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 9 days, whilst performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004 was 11 days. This shows an improvement over the 8 month period up to 30th November 2003, when performance was 12 days. The late notification by the Inland Revenue of working tax and child tax credits entitlements during the early part of the year resulted in a significant amount of additional changes in circumstances to be dealt with by the Benefits Team, compared with the same period last year. The additional changes in circumstances have now been cleared and current performance is now meeting the 9 day target.
9. **Percentage of housing benefit renewal claims processed on time (National Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 83%, whilst performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004 was 25%. During 2003/2004 staffing resources have been put into dealing with new claims and changes in circumstances at the expense of renewal applications to give priority to those people waiting for benefit. From October 2003, there was no longer a requirement to issue renewal claims to pensioners and performance for the month of February has now improved to 40%. The requirement to submit renewal claims will be abolished for all claims from April 2004 and this indicator will no longer be used.
10. **Domestic burglaries per 1000 population (National Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 8 per 1000 population, whilst performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004, suggests that the annual figure will be approximately 10 per 1000. The West Mercia Police Force has established a burglary action plan in order to reduce the number of burglaries. A team of officers has been

created that are dedicated to burglary and vehicle crime in support of this strategy. The Division is also working with neighbouring Forces in order to reduce the number of cross-border offenders.

11. **The number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as a percentage of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery (National Indicator):** The target for this indicator is 100% by 31st March 2004, whilst performance up to 31st January 2004 was only 42%. However, we are still aiming for 60% by that date. During 2003/04, there has been limited development of the current web site, with the focus of effort being concentrated on the development of the e-Gateway infrastructure, which will be the main platform for the delivery of electronic services in the future.
12. **The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days (National Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 100%, whilst performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004 was 87%. However, this compares with an outturn performance of 58% for 2002/2003, demonstrating a significant improvement in performance for the current year.
13. **The percentage of Staff Review and Development interviews completed in the previous 12 months (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator is 100%, whilst performance for the 12 months period up to 31st January 2004 was 57%. As part of the Council's new Performance Management Framework, it is planned to undertake the majority of Staff Review and Development interviews during March, April and May of each year as part of the annual service planning cycle. It is anticipated that these new arrangements will result in improved performance in relation to this indicator.
14. **The percentage of agreed training plans arising from Staff Review and Development interviews (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 90%, whilst performance for the 12 months period up to 31st January 2004 was 57%. It is anticipated that the increased emphasis on the Staff Review and Development process, resulting from the implementation of the Council's revised Performance Management Framework, will result in improved performance in relation to this indicator.
15. **Percentage of employees receiving a corporate induction within 3 months of commencing employment (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 100%. Performance for 10 months up to 31st January 2004 was 71%. This compares with an outturn performance for the 12 month period 1st April 2002 to 31st March 2003 of 45%, which demonstrates significant improvement in relation to this indicator.
16. **First Stop INFO customer enquiries resolved within agreed timescales (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 80%, however performance for the 10 months up to 31st January 2004 was 65%. Service level agreements and the procedures for dealing with first stop customer enquiries are currently being reviewed in order to improve response rates.

Risk Management

Failure to review performance and improvement activity would undermine the implementation of the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Background Papers

- Herefordshire Council's Performance Management Framework
- Best Value Performance Plan 2003/2004

HOUSING BENEFITS UPDATE AND PROGRESS REPORT ON REVENUES AND BENEFITS BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Report By: County Treasurer

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

- To update members on current performance and activity in the Benefits Section and report on progress to date with the Revenues and Benefits Improvement Plan.

Financial Implications

None.

Background

- Since the last report to this Committee in December 2003, Benefits Services has been concentrating efforts on clearing outstanding renewal applications and preparing for the new intervention regime which replaces the need to annually review of benefit claims. The annual recalculation of benefits has also taken place, along with implementing some changes to legislation and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) reporting requirements that come into effect from April 2004.

Current Performance

	Performance For 2003/04	Target 2003/04	Actual 2002/03
Speed of processing – average time for processing new claims	52 days	35 days	41 days
Speed of processing – average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstance	11 days	9 days	14 days
Speed of processing – percentage of renewal claims processed on time	27%	83%	25%
% cases processed accurately	97.8%	98%	98%

* Year to date figures may vary from final outturn provided for Performance Plan due to final management checks

3. The above chart shows our performance for the year that is well below target for new and renewal claim processing and the reasons for this have been provided in previous reports to this Committee during the year. However, improvements have been made in the past few months but these have not been significant enough to show an overall improvement for the year. In March, the average processing time for new claims was down to 41 days, changes in circumstances were at target and all outstanding review claims that were ready to process had been cleared. The latest information provided by the Department of Work and Pensions shows that compared with performance nationally we are within the median range for new claims and changes in circumstances, but in the bottom quartile for renewals.

Year to Date Quarter 3	New Claims No of days	Changes No of days	Renewals % on time
Best Performance	11	3	100
Top quartile	34	8	80
Median	43	11	69
Bottom quartile	55	17	54
Worst performance	144	107	0

4. As mentioned in the December report to this Committee, renewal claims are being replaced by intervention activity from April 2004. To ensure that the new regime is dealt with effectively a pilot has been established to allocate this new workload within the benefits section by creating a new team that is dedicated to intervention activity. This also includes a secondment of two assessors to work closely with the Benefits Investigation Unit. All existing benefit assessment staff were asked to show expressions of interest for the posts with the result that they have been successfully filled on a volunteer basis. The pilot is expected to run for a minimum of 6 months. The outcome of the intervention activity will be reflected in future reports.
5. Members have previously been informed about the Service Improvement Project (SIP) Team recommendations to improve our new claim processing times. The project is continuing to move forward and the plan is to deliver the new service (as recommended by the SIP Team) for claimants within Hereford City from offices located at Garrick House by the end of June 2004. In the meantime a SIP Pilot scheme was introduced at the Town Hall in Feb. 04. The Customer Service Team, assisted by 2 Benefits Assessors have implemented a number of new procedures aimed at meeting the expectations of the SIP project. The early indications show an impressive improvement in performance as shown below, however this is on a limited sample and has been resource intensive. Once all new claims are being dealt with in this way this level of performance is unlikely to be sustained.

New Claims Performance (SIP Project) – 1st February to 31st March 2004**No. of interviews conducted: 94**

	Days
Average processing time for Council Tax Benefit New Claims via SIP	2.8
Average processing time for other Council Tax Benefit New Claims	45.3
Average processing time for Housing Benefit New Claims via SIP:	3.8
Average processing time for other Housing Benefit New Claims:	47.4

6. Although our performance for changes in circumstances is currently at target, we are aware that this level of performance may not be sustained in the short term owing to a number of known issues that will impact on service delivery in the coming weeks and months. Firstly, we have recently experienced another period of significant system down time. At the end of March over a weeks worth of processing time was lost, this was partly due to the normal planned closure for annual council tax billing, but mainly due to system errors following development in the software required by changes to benefit processing. The result is that the outstanding workload has increased by over 600 claims during the period of down time.
7. For the first time this year certain claims have had to be dealt with differently during the annual uprating of benefits ready for council tax billing. In previous years state retirement pensions have been uprated by the Retail Price Index and entitlements recalculated automatically before the annual council tax bills are produced. However, the new benefit rules now in place for pension credit mean that entitlement for pensioners getting pension credit can only be recalculated when an Assessed Income Figure (AIF) has been provided for the new financial year by the DWP. The scan of Pension Credit cases was received from the DWP on the 28th February 2004 but this list did not contain information of all our current pension credit caseload so it has not been possible to recalculate every pensioners benefit entitlement on time. A further scan is due to be provided by the DWP week commencing 12th April 2004, but at the time of writing this report it has not been received. To avoid confusion sending out benefit letters to those pensioners affected by these delays have been suspended, but once the information is provided these claims will need to be re-assessed as a matter of urgency. The Inland Revenue has also informed us that they have started their annual review of tax credit awards which should be completed by September 2004. Once new entitlements to the tax credits have been received housing and council tax benefit entitlements will be re-calculated to take account of these payments. Due to the volumes of cases involved in both tax and pension credits there will be an increase in workload during the next few months.

8. Finally, members will be aware that extra steps have been taken this year to promote the availability of council tax benefits. Take-up activity will continue over the coming months to try to make sure that all those that are entitled to these benefits make a claim. The knock on effect of this will be an increase in the number of new claims being received, therefore the average processing time for these claims may be longer during these peak periods.

Best Value Improvement Plan

9. The Improvement Plan that resulted from the Best Value Review of Revenues and Benefits Services (RBS) has been subject to regular review, with variations reported to the Leader of the Council accordingly. Owing to factors outside the control of Revenues and Benefits Services e.g. the acquisition of the required technology to enable home-working, and the fact that actions originally contained within the plan were linked to corporate initiatives such as the possible procurement of a corporate Electronic Document Management System, a number of actions had been put on hold. It was for this reason that the plan was reviewed at the end of October 2003.
10. At the end of the second year of the Plan, of the 54 actions in the Improvement Plan that were originally scheduled for 2003/2004, 18 have been completed, 32 actions have been taken out of the plan as a result of the review, and 4 have been moved to 2004/2005, as set out in Appendix A. 8 improvements, of the 12 planned, for 2004/2005 were also removed.

Conclusion

11. As predicted in the report last December, the ongoing changes at a national level to the way benefits must be administered are having an impact on our performance in the short term. However, steps have been taken to address these issues at an early stage to minimise this. These include:
 - Maintaining existing staffing levels even though the workload is anticipated to reduce following the abolition of renewal work.
 - Recruitment of additional specialist customer service staff to deal with telephone enquiries.
 - Assessment staff being taken off telephone rotas so that they can concentrate on claim processing activity and bring average processing times down.
 - Training being given to Herefordshire Housing and Elgar Housing staff so that they can verify claims on behalf of their tenants.
 - Investment in further resources into staff training during this period.

12. To improve performance in the long-term, it is the intention to purchase a new computer system to process benefit claims and negotiations are currently ongoing with the preferred supplier. The implementation of a replacement system, together with the findings from the pilot schemes of the SIP recommendations and the interventions team, will create an environment where a review of the structure will be required. It should also provide the framework for continuous improved service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the content of the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICES - BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2003-2004
(AS REVIEWED ON 31 OCTOBER 2003)
AS AT 31 MARCH 2004

Action	Officer responsible	Target Date	Result of Review
1. Performance Management			
Implement the Corporate Performance Management Framework	Jane Salt	Complete	
2. Communication & Consultation			
Carry out analysis to find out whether our claim forms are collecting accurate information at first point of completion	Alison Bowen	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new benefits processes (SIP recommendations) and restructure
Apply for Plain English Crystal Award for our benefit form and leaflets	Alison Bowen	Complete	
Ensure our decision letters provide fixed text options and comply with regulations whilst being written in plain English	Susie Binns	Complete	
Display Customer Service Standards. Posters to include performance against standards, monitored monthly.	Simon Griffith	Complete	
Investigate the possibility of a Crystal Mark for Council Tax & Rating forms.	Rob Morgan	31 Mar 05	Moved to 2004/05 plan Forms will need to be redesigned as a new Council Tax and NDR system is being acquired.
3. Customer Access			
Introduce payment via the Internet for payments other than Council Tax.	Alison Cook	ON HOLD	Removed – awaiting delivery of the Corporate Portal

Appendix A

Commence further training programs for Info staff	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – the CRM system will provide mapped processes
Conduct RBS “clinics” and appointments at Info Shops.	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new benefits processes (SIP recommendations) and restructure
Review of current RBS structure, taking into account: Loss of housing, Back-office/front-office split, Joined up recovery team, Centralised systems administration, Develop standard approach to the use and development of Electronic Document Management System and core systems Possible integration of the cashiering function onto a generic Customer Services Unit	Jane Salt	31 Dec 04	Moved to 2004/05 plan Review underway
Consider the integration of the cashiering function into Customer Services	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – included in the restructure (see above)
Provision of 24-hour answer service.	Rob Morgan	ON HOLD	Removed – awaiting corporate INFO Service Centre
Pilot the use of a call centre for council tax and benefits enquiries.	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new benefits processes (SIP recommendations) and restructure
Introduce a contact centre for RBS customers.	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new benefits processes (SIP recommendations) and restructure
Inclusion of RBS into Corporate Call Centre.	Kath Davies	ON HOLD	Removed – awaiting corporate INFO Service Centre
Look at the feasibility of offering more payment dates.	Clive James	Complete	
The functionality of the existing cash receipting system is to be compared with other available systems due to contract expiry.	Alison Cook	Complete	
Hold Benefit surgeries in area offices on specific days each week after consulting with customers over dates and times that would be most useful to them.	Susie Binns	31 Jan 04	Removed – in discussion with the Pension Service re the use of their bus
Analysis of feasibility of introducing prompt payment discounts.	Rob Morgan	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan

Identify any hard to reach groups and how we can improve access and information.	Simon Griffith	Complete	
Explore the merits of Video Conferencing.	Simon Griffith	Complete	
4. Quality Assurance			
Extend quality checking to sections other than Benefits.	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in restructure
Implement quality checks to ensure that all invoiced income is correctly charged and recovery processes appropriate.	Richard Shaw	Complete	
5. Our Staff			
Ensure staff at local offices receive appropriate training on use of our systems as identified in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Info.	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – the CRM system will provide mapped processes
Survey individuals' communication requirements.	Simon Griffith	Complete	
Develop a framework to ensure that staff have access to regular feedback on performance and consultation.	Simon Griffith	Complete	
Preparation of competence based job descriptions	Rob Morgan	ON HOLD	Removed – new corporate JD format has been adopted
Customer service staff to start to attain a recognised qualification	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – new corporate qualification scheme to be introduced
Update and re-launch Benefits Procedure Manual	Susie Binns	Complete	
6. Working Relationships			
Benefits staff to process straightforward vacations and discounts where benefit is involved.	Rob Morgan	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
Provide documentation (benefit entitlement letter, Council Tax bill) when processing claims and amendments at counter	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan

bill) when processing claims and amendments at counter.					
Arrange for exchange visits, job shadowing with other departments such as Newton Farm Advice Centre, Info Offices.	Alison Bowen	31 Aug 04			Moved to 2004/05 plan
Consult with other sections regarding quality of service provision of the Corporate Admin Team.	Simon Griffith	Complete			
7. I.T. Systems & Electronic Government					
Investigate whether the Universal Revenues Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) product will meet our e-government objectives at reasonable cost	Jane Salt	ON HOLD			Removed – awaiting corporate EDMS
Send benefit notification and payment information to RSLs electronically.	Susie Binns	ON HOLD			Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
Purchase equipment to enable the downloading and scanning of documents remotely including hand held devices for visiting staff.	Alison Bowen	ON HOLD			Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
Provide facility to report changes in circumstances on our website (including electronic signatures).	Susie Binns	ON HOLD			Removed – relies on delivery of the Corporate Portal
Automatic integration of e-mails to Electronic Document Management System (EDMS).	Rob Morgan	ON HOLD			Removed – awaiting corporate EDMS
Hand held devices for visiting officers, including interfaces to be written.	Clive James	ON HOLD			Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
Improve integration between the Electronic Document Management System and mainframe Benefits system.	Susie Binns	ON HOLD			Removed – awaiting corporate EDMS & new Benefits system
Cost benefit analysis of continued use of in-house programs or external package	Jane Salt	Complete			

Commence a pilot of the assessment of benefit claims by remote working.	Susie Binns	ON HOLD	Removed – pilot ready, awaiting delivery of required technology
Download information on liability orders to bailiffs database.	Alison Powell	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
Investigate feasibility of link to land registry.	Rob Morgan	31 May 04	Moved to 2004/05 plan Still awaiting feedback from land registry
Cost benefit analysis of the provision of laptops at court.	Alison Powell	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
Investigate more options for using Formscan software.	Rob Morgan	Complete	
Document all Customer Services procedures	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – the CRM system will provide mapped processes
8. Efficiency & Process Reviews			
Re-assess front-line resource requirements	Dave Pryce	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in restructure
Deal with queries at point of receipt (both at counter and by post) including full verification of documents, authentication & indexing of all documents (including Council Tax)	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new benefits processes (SIP recommendations) and restructure
Facility to laser print all documents to be in place	Rob Morgan	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
Check claims for completeness and advise claimant of missing information on receipt of post (Admin Team).	Simon Griffith	ON HOLD	Removed – to be included in new benefits processes (SIP recommendations) and restructure
Completion of process reviews as per timetable	Rob Morgan	Complete	
Detailed analysis of the success rates of the different types of recovery.	Alison Powell	Complete	
Carry out more detailed process review of benefits procedures to enable further improvements to be made.	Susie Binns	Complete	

**REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICES - BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2004-2005
REVIEWED AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2003**

Action	Officer responsible	Target Date	Result of Review
1. Performance Management			
Investigation of reporting tools	Rob Morgan	31 Aug 04	Removed - to be included in new system implementation plan
Investigate joint commissioning e.g. for business rates	Rob Morgan	31 Oct 04	Removed - to be included in new system implementation plan
3. Customer Access			
Inclusion of RBS Customer Services into Info	Kath Davies	31 Mar 05	No change
4. Quality Assurance			
Submit application for Service First accreditation.	Simon Griffith	Summer 04	No change
7. I.T. Systems & Electronic Government			
Replace existing in-house systems with fully integrated web-enabled systems	Jane Salt	01 Apr 04	Removed - to be included in new system implementation plan
Possible homeworking (corporate policy will dictate)	Jane Salt	31 Oct 04	Removed - pilot ready, awaiting delivery of required technology
Investigate the selling of space on RBS web page	Simon Griffith	31 Oct 04	Removed - relies on delivery of the Corporate Portal
Preparation for electronic billing	Rob Morgan	31 Dec 04	No change
Look at extending the Comino EDMS into the Revenues section once agreement is in place to roll it out corporately.	Alison Cook	31 Dec 04	Removed - awaiting corporate EDMS

Automatic transfer of new business rates rateable values	Alison Powell	31 Jan 05	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan
8. Efficiency & Process Reviews			
Investigate ways to reduce bailiff and committal action	Alison Powell	31 Oct 04	No change
Improve interfaces between the Benefits and Debtors systems	Alison Cook	31 Mar 05	Removed – to be included in new system implementation plan

LAND CHARGES

Report By: County Secretary and Solicitor

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To review progress in improving Land Charge response times.

Introduction

2. The Committee, at its meeting on 13 October 2003, reviewed land charge response times and noted that they had continued to improve but requested a further report in six months.
3. The Council has a statutory obligation to provide information required by land charge search requests received on the statutory LLC1 and CON 29 Forms as required by the Land Charges Act of 1975 and the Local Land Charges Rules of 1977 as amended in 1995.
4. There is also an Audit Commission national Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) target to reply to 100% of search requests within 10 working days.
5. The Land Charges Section maintains the statutory land charge register and collates search information supplied by the other Directorates of the Council. Until 2001/2002 the Council was meeting its BVPI target. The BVPI information is as follows:

BVPI No	Detail	Target	1998/ 1999	1999/ 2000	2000/ 2001	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004
BVPI 113	The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%	96 %	53%	89%

6. The current turnaround time for land charge searches is 6 days and from 1 April 2003 to end of March 2004, some 89% of searches had been completed within 10 working days. It will not be possible to achieve the 100% target in the financial year 2003/2004 but this target should be achieved in the next financial year.

Progress to Date

7. Productivity within the Land Charges Section has improved greatly over the last 12 months with the establishment of a permanent, well trained team. However, the process is still reliant on timely information being supplied from the Environment and Social Care and Housing Directorates.
8. Progress on searches within the Directorates is now monitored on a weekly basis to ensure that any delays are kept to a minimum and to give advance warning of future problems arising.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Steve Oram, Public Services Manager on (01432) 260110

Personal Searches

9. Personal search companies exploit the right intended to safeguard the citizen's access to information held by local government to operate businesses in which they act as agents for solicitors in conducting Local Authority enquiries. In many areas the proportion of personal searches is greater than 30% resulting in a significant loss of revenue to Local Authorities and an inferior service for the citizen. Personal search appointments consume significant Local Authority staff resources and divert efforts from maintaining high service levels for official searches carried out by the Council.
10. The Cabinet Member (Human Resources and Corporate Support Services) approved, as is the practice elsewhere, that personal searchers should be sent to the appropriate locations within the Council to view the statutory registers, rather than being supplied with full information they have not paid for. Accordingly, with effect from 1 December 2003, personal searchers were referred to the statutory public registers held by the various departments of the Council for this information. This appears to be working and has allowed the Land ChargeS Section more time to deal with its paying customers but the situation needs to be closely monitored.

National Land and Information Service

11. Furthermore, in order to combat these personal search trends it is intended to use the services of the National Land and Information Service (NLIS). NLIS is one of the government's first electronic service delivery initiatives announced as part of the Information Age Concordat to provide an on-line, one-stop-shop for land and property information held by Local Authorities, the Land Registry and many other organisations. NLIS has been designed to enable Local Authorities to conveniently provide improved services to the conveyancing community and to make rapid progress towards meeting government e-delivery targets without incurring the cost of developing the necessary infrastructure. Local Authorities do not have the remit or resources to undertake sales and advertising activities to compete with personal search companies. NLIS will help redress the balance by providing the means to compete effectively with personal search companies and regain the lost ground by giving a discounted fee service to those Solicitors using this service.

Future Investment

12. The Land Charges Service relies heavily upon the timely supply of information from various sections within the Council. Management arrangements are in place and being monitored to ensure a consistent response.
13. Separately, because much of the data held within the Council is still in a paper format or on personal spreadsheets or databases, there is a very large data capture process requirement of relevant information. If this data was captured and shared, search requests could be instantaneous and search times would be reduced quite considerably. Priority does need to be given to data capturing relevant information within the Directorates, especially to meet e-government targets but cost is a serious limiting factor. This is being pursued through the Council's IT Strategy.

Financial Implications

14. The need to capture data from Planning and Enforcement, Highways Environmental Health and Housing Information is paramount. Unfortunately, the estimated cost of

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Steve Oram, Public Services Manager on (01432) 260110

the data collection exercise alone would be in the region of £300,000+ for which there is no budget provision, nor a valid business case, as long as the information requested is supplied on a timely basis. If further time delays are experienced it will be necessary to revisit the business case.

15. The growing use by Solicitors, against the Law Society's advice, to use local firms to carry out personal searches at the current statutory fee of only £11 instead of the current full search fee of £131, means that there is a risk of a shortfall in the expected search income in future years. Consequently Land Charge Search fees have been increased with effect from 1 April 2004.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the position be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Report By: County Treasurer

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the position with regard to the Risk Management Strategy.

Financial Implications

2. As detailed in the attached Cabinet report dated 15th April 2004.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT (a) the contents of the attached Cabinet report dated 15th April 2004 be noted;

and

(b) the Committee considers whether there are any issues it wishes to be brought to Cabinet's attention.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report to Cabinet dated 15th April 2004.

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

CABINET

15TH APRIL, 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To approve the revised Risk Management Strategy for Herefordshire Council and the arrangements for the development, promotion and monitoring of Risk Management within the Council.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT the implementation of the Risk Management Strategy be approved.

Reasons

The revised Risk Management Strategy further develops the Council's approach to this important issue.

Considerations

1. There is a need to refocus the Council's attention and thinking on Risk Management due to the greater emphasis now being placed on Corporate Governance nationally. What has gone before has been robust and has laid a solid foundation for the future but now needs to be formalised.
2. Risk Management needs to be a key consideration when undertaking Service Planning, Project Management (Prince 2), Best Value reviews, Budget Planning, Performance Management, Annual Insurance report, Internal Audit reports, Cabinet Reports, External Inspections and Improvement Planning.
3. The comments and recommendations made by the Audit Commission, organisations such as ALARM (The Association of Local Authority Risk Managers) & CIPFA and the results of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment have been taken on board in order to ensure that the Council's strategy complies with all of their requirements. However considerable attention has also be paid to making the document as "user friendly" as possible.

Further information on the subject of this report is available
Mr I Hyson, County Treasurer on (01432) 260235

4. The Head of Performance Management and the Performance Leads have been fully engaged in developing this strategy as it links intrinsically with performance management and project management. They will take the lead on monitoring it acting as the Council's corporate risk management group.
5. The necessary training and resources must be secured in order that this strategy is incorporated across the whole authority. Performance Leads have undergone a one-day training session and sessions to include all managers are scheduled for March/April 2004. The introduction of Risk Management within induction training will also be pursued.
6. The need to ensure that elected members are kept informed will be addressed in the near future by way of a seminar.
7. Each Directorate/Department should in time review its training needs in relation to Risk Management and should make this known via their member on the Performance Leads Group.
8. The attached appendices set out in full the revised Risk Management Strategy along with guidance to aid officers in its implementation
9. The Risk Management & Insurance Officer will collate the strategic risks identified to produce a corporate risk register. (However, it must be stressed that the risk management & insurance officer is not the owner of the risk. The ownership and therefore the responsibility to regularly monitor and review the risk stays with the individual manager). The corporate risk register will form the basis of a quarterly review by the Head of Performance Management and Performance Leads and an annual review of strategic risks and the Strategy itself, to be reported to Cabinet and the Strategic Monitoring Committee.
10. It is proposed that the initial tasks of identifying the strategic risks is undertaken by 31st March with a report to Chief Executive Management Team during April and Cabinet and Strategic Monitoring Committee thereafter.

Risk Management

The development of a Risk Management Strategy is critical to the effective management of all risks.

Consultees

Chief Executive's Management Team.

Background Papers

None identified.

Risk Management Strategy –

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Appendix E – Strategic Risk Control	

Introduction

Risk Management is assuming a much higher profile in Local Government. Not only do Councils touch the life of all their residents but also have resources to match many large businesses. This requires a sound approach to managing the risks that are significant to the achievement of the Council's objectives. The Council, through its Corporate Plan, is committed to ensuring that it has "**the energy, ability and ambition to seek improvement, whilst retaining the ability to innovate**". The adoption of a strong Risk Management Strategy is key to achieving this and meets the requirements of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan, "Committed to Excellence".

The exposure to risks is often measured in financial terms only, for example, repairs to property, motor vehicles, additional staff costs and increase in insurance policy premiums. However, it also includes inconvenience, lowering of morale, adverse publicity, disruption of service etc. As such risks can be either operational, strategic or a mixture of both.

Managers are used to managing risk in their day-to-day operations: from decisions about whether to take a child into care to the safety implications of trailing leads in an office. Managing strategic risks however, though drawing on this good and often instinctive practice, requires us, as a Council, to take a more formalised approach.

It is a requirement that Councils have an agreed approach to strategic risk management as part of its wider corporate governance regime. The Audit Commission and other Inspection bodies are increasingly focusing on this as an indicator of a well-run authority, via Comprehensive Performance Assessments and other Inspections.

This document sets out Herefordshire Council's approach to risk management focusing on those strategic risks which will emerge in developing service plans, projects, making funding bids and managing change (e.g. financial changes). It provides a framework that is simple to use while sufficiently structured to ensure that consistent judgements are made on risk.

The approach will ensure that all areas of risk are identified, evaluated, controlled and reviewed. This process **must** be applied in the above strategic contexts but can also support operational risk management.

The cycle of Risk Management involves four processes:

- A systematic and regular **Identification** of risk
- Evaluation** of each risk
- Control** of each risk
- Monitoring** of risks with further corrective action as necessary

Herefordshire Council's Risk Management Strategy, outlined here, addresses each of these aspects to ensure that it meets the overall objectives of good corporate governance. This document has been produced to set out the framework and support needed to meet your obligations in this respect.

Neil Pringle, Chief Executive

Roger Philips, Leader

Definition of Risk Management

“ Risk management is a business discipline that public and private sector organisations use to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation achieving its objectives. It is a key part of the strategic management and performance management processes.”

(Association of Local Authority Risk Managers)

In addition, in assessing Councils under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime, the Audit Commission is checking that **“ the Council is risk aware particularly when entering new arenas and always assesses risks inherent in the things it does”**

(Audit Commission – Key lines of enquiry)

Risk management is not about avoiding risks altogether, but managing them prudently. Nothing is achieved without some element of risk and good opportunities can be lost if organisations are over cautious. Risk management can help us to evaluate and balance hazards and opportunities to make well-informed decisions and provide sustainable improvements in service delivery.

In this sense it has always been a key aspect of a manager’s role and has been undertaken very effectively in many instances. What this Strategy will do is to provide a consistent framework and audit trail evidence to support those judgements.

The strategy has been designed to support the management of the strategic risks the Council faces. (see **Appendix A** for a guide to strategic risk categories). Operational risks will continue to be assessed in the normal way. However managers should be alert to any operational risks that may become strategic and hence require consideration within this framework.

Statement of Policy on Risk Management

The Council recognises its business has an impact on the people who live, work and play in Herefordshire.

The Council undertakes to take all reasonably practicable measures to ensure that the impact of its decisions does not have an adverse effect on the resources of the Council, the people working for the Council or those receiving the services of the Council by ensuring that:

- A strategic overview of the management of risks facing the Council is undertaken
- Risk assessments are undertaken on any projects, service plans, and changes to procedures or processes
- The 4 stage cycle of risk management is adhered to
- Employees at all levels understand their role in managing risk

Responsibilities for Risk Management

All employees have a responsibility to identify and manage the risks that they face on a day-to-day basis (operational risks).

However, certain roles carry specific responsibilities in respect of managing risk, particularly strategic risks, as follows:

Elected members have overall responsibility for managing the strategic risks of the Council.

The **Chief Executive** is accountable on a day-to-day basis for managing the Council's risks and for providing advice to Elected Members to enable them to undertake their role.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for managing risks effectively within their Directorate/Department/Service.

The **County Treasurer** is the Council's nominated Risk Manager and manages the Council's insurance arrangements.

The **Head of Performance Management** is responsible for monitoring the overall policy/strategy, assisted by the **Performance Leads Group**. (see below)

The **Risk Management and Insurance Officer** maintains the Council's corporate risk register, providing monitoring reports as required to the County Treasurer and Head of Performance Management. This Officer also liaises with external insurers to ensure that future premiums reflect all Risk Management activities being undertaken and that advice and resources available from insurers/brokers are made available to the Council.

Performance Leads Group

Senior management commitment and involvement of employees at all levels is the key to good risk management, and unless the principles are fully embraced, they are unlikely to be successfully imposed.

The Performance Leads Group, chaired by the Head of Performance Management, is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Performance Management framework. It consists of representatives, at Head of Service level from across the Council. The Risk Management and Insurance Officer is also a full member of the Group. It meets the need for a forum in which issues can be freely debated, providing an opportunity to learn from others, share good practice and areas of difficulty.

The relevant terms of reference of the Group, in respect of risk management, are as follows:

- Ensure the Council's performance and risk management frameworks are integrated into the day-to-day activities of the Directorate/Department
- Ensure that projects within their Directorate/Department are managed within the agreed project management framework
- Contribute to raising the awareness of, and developing skills in performance, project and risk management within the Council

As important as the specific terms of reference is the responsibility, which members have, in providing leadership to their Directorates/Departments in risk management.

The Risk Management Cycle

As described earlier the risk management cycle consists of four stages (**Appendix B**).

Identification

This process is achieved by:

- Specifying the risks to which the Council is exposed both strategic and operational.
- Analysing past claims, incidents and other losses.
- Creation and maintenance of a corporate risk register.

Evaluation

Having identified areas of potential risk they need to be analysed by:

- An assessment of impact.
- An assessment of likelihood.

Risk Control

Following evaluation there are four main control options:

- Tolerate – monitor and re-evaluate in the future
- Terminate –do not undertake the activity
- Treatment (pre and/or post loss) – manage it, put in place effective controls
- Transfer – pass the risk on (e.g. to contractor/insurer)

To assist in the above process a simple guide along with the necessary documentation have been drawn up and are attached to this strategy as **Appendices A – E**. It is important that a coordinated approach to the management of risk is established throughout the authority and that managers adhere to this process.

Monitoring

The Risk Management cycle requires a suitable reporting and monitoring system, which will report effectively on the Council's current risk profile. Monitoring needs to be a pro-active approach that triggers further evaluation and control of risks as necessary. Reporting of Risk Management will be as follows:

- The Performance Leads Group will, on a quarterly basis, consider and review those risks reported and submit their findings to the Chief Executives Management team via the County Treasurer and Head of Performance Management.
- A formal review and report will be generated annually. This will form the basis of an annual review of strategic risks to be reported to the Strategic Monitoring Committee and Cabinet.

Our Approach

The Council is committed to ensuring best practice in the management of its strategic risks and has taken up corporate membership of ALARM to keep abreast of developments in this field. This learning will be shared with managers. As a minimum there needs to be a shared awareness and understanding within the authority of:

- the nature and extent of the risks it faces
- the extent/type of risks regarded as acceptable
- the likelihood and potential impact of the risks happening
- its ability to reduce the incidence and impact of risks through effective controls.

The risk management process should be ongoing, embedded in the culture of the authority and assist the organisation in further developing performance management and good governance generally. There will be key points, however, when managers are required to undertake a formal risk assessment within this framework as follows:

- As part of the service planning process
- As part of a project scoping
- When managing change
- When making funding bids
- When presenting reports to Elected Members

In addition managers need to be alert to what operational risks they are managing and at what point these might become strategic. An example might be when the ongoing operational risks associated with child protection become exacerbated by a high number of vacancies or when the Council's reputation is at risk because of a high profile complaint.

The tools to identify and manage operational risks are not always labeled as 'risk management' but can help to identify potential strategic risks. They include:

- Health & Safety audits
- Induction training
- Staff Review and Development
- Operational Risk Assessments
- Customer Surveys
- Benchmarking
- Insurance arrangements

Strategic risk management related activity within the Council is already quite wide ranging. It is generally, if not formally, undertaken as part of

Service Planning, PRINCE2 Project Management, Best Value Reviews, Budget Panel reports, Performance Management, Annual Insurance Report, Internal Audit reports, Cabinet Reports, External Inspections, Improvement Planning, Funding Bids, Reviews

In adopting the Risk Management Strategy the Council is ensuring that there is a consistent and rigorous approach adopted right across the Council setting out when, how and by whom risks are to be assessed and managed. The implementation of the strategy is set out later in the report. However it is worth noting here that rather than attempting to undertake a retrospective risk assessment in every case, the approach will be to start with a clean sheet and evaluate and manage those risks which emerge throughout the year. All 2004/5 Service Plans **should be** risk assessed together with any ongoing significant projects.

Implementation Plan

Approval

The production of the Risk Management Strategy was overseen by the Performance Leads Group and approved by Chief Executive's Management Team on 17th February 2004 and Cabinet on 25th March 2004.

Monitoring

The Performance Leads reporting to Chief Executives Management Team will undertake the monitoring of the operation of the Strategy on a quarterly basis. An Annual Report will be presented to Cabinet and the Strategic Monitoring Committee. The overall Strategy will also be reviewed on an annual basis and any required revisions will be put forward for re-approval. The success criteria will be based on the number of plans, change proposals and Cabinet/Committee reports, risk assessed to the required standard. There is also a planned Internal Audit of the Strategy and its implementation, the date of which is currently being determined.

Training and Development

The Performance Leads Group received a day's risk management training in November 2003 delivered by Gallagher Bassett, the Council's risk consultants. In addition the Council has purchased the ALARM "Risk Management Training Toolkit" and the Risk Management and Insurance Officer and Head of Performance Management have attended a "training the trainers" course on its use. Risk management is also covered in the Management Development Programme delivered by Aston Business School as part of the Certificate in Management (Project and Performance Management Module).

The Risk Management Strategy will be rolled out through workshops run for Directorate and Departmental Management Teams. These workshops will be used to identify further training needs in this area. It will also be necessary to ensure that any new managers receive appropriate training and that risk management is covered as part of new employee induction.

The corporate membership of ALARM not only provides us with leading edge thinking but access to workshops, conferences and accredited training at a reduced rate. This can be made available to managers other than the named corporate members. Anyone interested should contact the Risk Management and Insurance Officer.

Communication

Proper management of risk is the responsibility of everyone, albeit at different levels. The Risk Management Strategy will be posted on the Intranet and will be one of the documents in the Managers Guide to Rocket Science toolkit being produced for key Managers. (Also available in CD ROM format) Managers should ensure that their Teams understand the broad approach to risk management via Team Briefings and other appropriate mechanisms.

A newsletter Risk Matters, edited by the Risk Management and Insurance Officer is produced three times a year for interested managers. In future this will be circulated to the Key Managers Group. Further advice/support on undertaking risk assessments will be available from the Head of Performance Management, the Risk Management and Insurance Officer and Performance Leads,

Timetable

What	Who	When
Approval Performance Leads	Head of PM	January 2004
Approval CXMT	County Treasurer	February 2004
Approval Cabinet	County Treasurer	March 2004
Initial Training Workshops	Head of PM	March/April 2004
Further training/support to risk assessments	Head of PM/Performance Leads	April-September 2004
Ongoing Monitoring	Head of PM/Performance Leads	Ongoing
Review of Strategy	Head of PM/Performance Leads	March 2005

The Audit Commission has given the following definition of strategic risks:

‘Risks that need to be taken into account in judgments about the medium to long term goals and objectives.’

And CIPFA has given guidance on when strategic risks should be assessed, in this way:

‘Strategic Risk assessments should be undertaken as part of the community, corporate and service planning process and as a key element of service reviews’.

The following categories of strategic risks, these should be used as **a guide only** in the Risk Management process and is not an exhaustive list.

Competitive: those affecting the competitiveness of the service (in terms of cost or quality) and/or its ability to deliver best value.

Customer/Citizen: those associated with the failure to meet the current and changing needs and expectations of customers and citizens.

Environmental: those relating to the environmental consequences of progressing the council’s strategic objectives (e.g. energy efficiency, pollution, waste recycling, etc.).

Financial: those affecting the ability of the council to meet its financial commitments. These include internal budgetary pressures, the failure to purchase adequate insurance, the consequences of proposed investment decisions, interest rate instability and inflation.

Information & knowledge: *those associated with the Council’s ability to identify, understand and manage new or key information which may impact on its ability to deliver business objectives or forecast changing circumstances.*

Legislative: those associated with current or potential changes in national or European law

Partners/ Contractors: Over reliance on key contractors, failure of outsource providers to deliver. This could be in terms of quality, quantity, timescales or their own exposure to risk. Collapse of contractors, insolvency.

Personnel: Recruitment/retention of qualified staff, over reliance on key officers, inability to implement change. Lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities.

Political: those affecting the standing of Elected Members in the community or with National organizations, including Government Departments or their representatives

Property (including IT): Loss of or loss of use of assets. This could include loss caused by natural disasters, pollution incidents, aircraft/vehicle collision

Reputation – i.e. bad publicity in local press over an extended period, items in the national press, matters raised in parliament or the EU.

Social: those relating to the effects of changes in demographic, residential or socio-economic trends on the council’s ability to deliver its objectives. For example the changes in population ratios, more older people, more ethnic groups

Technological: those associated with the capacity of the council to deal with the pace/scale of technological change, or its ability to use technology to address changing demands or the consequences of internal technological failures on the council’s ability to deliver its objectives.

Well being and safety: those which impact on the Council’s ability to ensure the well-being and safety of its employees, customers or others involved in the Council’s activities, over and above operational health and safety concerns.

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Managing Risk – Strategic Risk Identification & Assessment</h2>	 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL
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Process Summary

STAGE ONE

A – Identify a Responsible Officer
 Identify a responsible officer (service manager, project officer) who will be responsible for carrying out the process on form **RIA2**.

B – Risk Identification
 Identify the risks to the business process/project using the strategic risk categories list as a guide, enter these on form **RIA2**.

C – Risk Assessment & Prioritisation
 Assess the *impact* of the identified risk and the *likelihood* of the risk occurring (assuming no control measures are in place). Prioritise the risks using the scoring system below and enter the results on form **RIA2**. Apply the 4T test to identify how risks should be managed. (see below)

		Impact			
		1	2	3	4
Likelihood		<i>Minor</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Serious</i>	<i>Major</i>
Very Likely	4	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
Likely	3	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
Unlikely	2	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Very Unlikely	1	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW

STAGE TWO

A – Risk Management
 Identify the control measures needed to manage the high priority risks. Summarise these on form RIA2 but use form RIA3 to expand.

B – Action Planning
 Produce action plan for implementing risk control measures.

C – Re-Assessment of Risk
 Re-assess the *impact* of the identified risk and the *likelihood* of it occurring this time with the control measures in place, enter the new scores and overall rating on form RIA2.

D – Action Planning
 Undertake regular monitoring of risk control measures.

The 4 Test (Terminate (Don't do), Transfer (Pass risk on), Treat (Manage and Control), Tolerate (Go ahead but monitor))

RED (Score 11-16) TERMINATE, TRANSFER OR TREAT

YELLOW (Score 5-10) TRANSFER OR TREAT

GREEN (Score 1-4) TOLERATE

**DEFINITIONS
ASSESSING IMPACT**

Impact Rating	Score	Description	Possible Indicators
Major	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major loss of service facilities. Major financial loss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service disruption >5 days. One or more fatalities. Financial loss up to 75% of budget.
Serious	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of major service. Major injuries. Serious financial loss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service disruption 3-5 days. Major injury to individual/several people. Financial loss up to 50% of the budget.
Significant	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major impact on aspect of service. Severe injuries. Significant financial loss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service disruption 2-3 days. Severe injury to individual/several people. Financial loss up to 25% of the budget
Minor	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief disruption to service. Minor injuries. Minor financial loss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service disruption <1 day. Minor injury to individual/several people. Financial loss up to 10% of budget.

ASSESSING LIKELIHOOD

Likelihood Rating	Score	Description	Possible Indicators
Very Likely	4	More than 75% chance of occurrence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular occurrence. Circumstances frequently encountered-daily/weekly/monthly.
Likely	3	40 – 75% chance of occurrence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely to happen at some point within the next 1-3 years. Circumstances occasionally encountered (few times a year).
Unlikely	2	10 – 40% chance of occurrence.	Only likely to happen once every 3 or more years.
Very Unlikely	1	Less than 10% chance of occurrence.	Has happened rarely or never before.

Overall Risk Score	Risk Rating
11-16	High
5-10	Medium
1-4	Low

BUDGET MONITORING 2003/04 TO 31 JANUARY 2004**Report By: County Treasurer****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the position with regard to revenue budget monitoring for Programme Areas in 2003/04.

Financial Implications

2. As detailed in the attached Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004.

Background

3. The report on Budget Monitoring 2003/04 considered by Cabinet on 18th March 2004 is appended.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT (a) the contents of the attached Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004 be noted;

and

(b) the Committee considers whether there are any issues it wishes to be brought to Cabinet's attention.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2003/04

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

18TH MARCH 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note the position with regard to revenue budget monitoring for Programme Areas in 2003/04.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

THAT the report be noted.

Reasons

Reports are regularly presented to Cabinet as part of the Council's Performance Management arrangements. Cabinet Members will discuss the individual Programme Area figures with their Directors and Departmental Managers as appropriate.

Considerations

1. Appendix 1 shows the details of the spending as at 31st January 2004 for each Programme Area, together with the projected outturn for 2003/04.
2. The budgets shown for 2003/04 include the final carry forwards from 2002/03.

Education

3. A very large proportion of the Education budget is delegated to schools. Any underspendings, or indeed overspendings should they occur, in the schools budgets will automatically be carried forward into next year under the statutory arrangements for delegation to schools.
4. It is expected that the net expenditure on the non-schools budgets will show a small underspending of approximately £200,000 during 2003/04.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from David Keetch, Assistant County Treasurer on (01432) 260227

5. The net underspending takes into account a number of variations including increased spending on fees for S.E.N placements in independent schools reflecting both more placements and increased fee levels, and a projected underspending of £200,000 on home to school transport. A great deal of work has been undertaken to reduce costs in this area by making routing more efficient and making other changes where appropriate.

Policy and Finance General

6. The shortfall of income from Land Charges is now estimated at £70,000 for 2003/04. The recovery plan to deal with the increase in the use of personal searches has been successful in reducing the loss of income. The fees will be increased for 2004/05 to meet the cost of additional staff in the Environment Directorate (£40,000). The overall deficit for 2003/04 will be met from the Council's general reserves in line with current policy which treats Land Charges as a corporate item.
7. Spending on e-Modernisation continues to be low compared to the budget. An underspending of £544,000 is predicted although spending is accelerating. As sufficient external funding can be carried forward into 2004/05, the underspending is not a major concern in financial terms.
8. Some of the Treasurer's Department underspending brought forward from 2002/03 (£160,000) is expected to be carried forward in 2004/05 to help meet the cost of the new Revenues and Benefits systems etc.
9. Members' expenses will be overspent by approximately £37,000 primarily because of the need to fund the cost of the IT support costs for members' pc links and laptops. There has been a small saving in members' travelling and subsistence costs and training during 2003/04 which will meet some of this. A new Service Level Agreement for 2004/05 is being set up with ICT to contain these IT costs for the future.
10. Final figures for the cost of the 2003 Election indicate an overspending of £43,000 which will have to be met from reserves.
11. The additional costs of job evaluation, estimated to be at least £110,000 for the year, will also be met from reserves. In the case of the externalisation of Commercial Services (£115,000), these costs will be met from mobilisation payments received as a result of the transfer.
12. The latest report to the Combined Fire Authority indicated that a supplementary levy for constituent authorities would be necessary for 2003/04. The estimated share for Herefordshire Council would be approximately £150,000. A final decision will be taken at the Fire Authorities' February meeting. Any additional costs would be met from reserves.

Policy and Finance Property

13. The projected overspend on Property has reduced by £56,000 to £701,000, including £524,000 brought forward from 2002/03. £379,000 of this overspend is the deficit on the Markets and Fairs budget. The capital investment in creating new car parking provision should increase income in total to reduce this deficit by between £80,000 and £100,000 per annum in future years. However, the income being received each month is only just beginning to build up.
14. In addition, the projected deficit on income from the Industrial Estate has fallen to £440,000. Income from shops transferred from Housing following the stock transfer will, however, produce a surplus of £100,000 in 2003/04.

Environment General

15. Spending continues to be in line with the budget in overall terms. An overspending on the Waste Collection contract is expected because of the costs of indexing the contract but this is being largely offset by additional Trade Waste charges. The Travellers budget is likely to be overspent by around £20,000 although rental income is coming in more steadily this year. The income for Cemeteries and the Crematorium is expected to be approximately £70,000 above budget for the year.

Environment Regulatory

16. Spending on Environment Regulatory is very much in line with the budget at present, with most services showing modest underspendings. An underspending of approximately £30,000 is predicted in total. Budget pressures are increasing in respect of Landfill and Contaminated Land and Licensing but these are currently being contained.

Planning

17. The main variation is additional fee income received to date this year (£80,000). Difficulties in recruiting staff is producing staffing savings especially in building control (£50,000). In total, the estimated outturn suggests an underspending of around £130,000 during the year. The report anticipates that the Planning Development Grant of £320,000 will be fully committed although possibly not spent during 2003/04.

Social Care

18. The projected year end position for Social Care is an over commitment of £221,000 after incorporating the 2002/03 overspend brought forward of £582,000.
19. The objective remains to balance the budget overall (including the 2002/03 overspend). The current position continues to show good progress against this objective. However, in light of the continuing financial risks within the budget a cautious but proactive approach has been taken.
20. There are risks in the children's services area from lack of capacity in the foster parents resource and the need to find other placements. There is also the imperative to improve the performance on delays for older people and intensive home care, which will remain challenging in terms of budget management. Financial risks of Free Nursing Care income and potential loss of income from Fairer Charging remain.

Strategic Housing

21. The projected year-end position is an underspend of £90,000, after incorporating the 2002/03 underspend. It is not expected that there will be an underspend in future years. The reason for the expected underspend in this year is the time taken to review services and recruit to all posts within the new Strategic Housing function and also reflects the cautious approach taken to committing to expenditure in the first year following transfer. The risk area is spending on homelessness and although this is currently underspending, demand can increase on homelessness accommodation costs at short notice.

Social Development

22. The most significant budget issue remaining is the expected overspend in 2003/04 of Parks and Countryside which is now estimated at £130,000. This has been reduced by meeting the overspending brought forward from 2002/03 out of the sums held in respect of open spaces commuted sums. This overspending is expected to be largely offset by an underspending on Youth of £120,000 due to staff vacancies and increased income from lettings.

Leisure Contracts

23. The carried forward deficit position for Leisure contracts is being reduced through negotiations with Halo. It is anticipated the deficit will be cleared in full during 2004/05.

Economic Development

24. An underspending of £120,000 is projected at present. Some of the carry forward underspends from 2002/03 have now been committed, however there will be some employee savings during 2003/04 due to staff turnover.

Financial Transactions

25. Investment interest received and debit interest paid is currently expected to be £370,000 better than budgeted mainly owing to slippage of capital programme expenditure.

Conclusion

The projected outturn for the year now shows a net underspending of £143,000. The position reflects an across the board improvement for most Programme Areas together with increased income from interest earned.

Revenue Reserves position as at 19th February 2004

The estimated value of uncommitted reserves as at 31st March 2004 remains at £2,050,000. This takes account of a likely underspending on capital financing costs during the year and the final Herefordshire Commercial Services position, offset by potential call on reserves in relation to Land Charges etc. The figure also takes account of authorised approvals during the course of the financial year. The County Treasurer will advise further at the meeting.

Alternative Options

There are no alternative options.

Consultees

None identified.

Background Papers

None identified.

Summary Budget Monitoring Report 2003/04 - January 2004

Programme Area	Carry Forwards from 2002/03	Total 2003/04 Budget	Actuals to Period 10	Budgets to Period 10	Variance	Projected Out-turn	Projected Over/(Under-) Spending
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Education	-927	77,875	58,016	64,896	6,880	77,675	-200
Social Care	582	32,681	29,850	27,020	-2,830	32,902	221
Policy and Finance - General	-1,232	21,312	35,619	37,018	1,399	21,089	-223
Policy and Finance - Property	524	1,344	837	969	132	2,045	701
Environment - General	-210	16,674	12,005	13,860	1,855	16,674	0
Environment - Regulatory	-10	2,276	1,707	1,897	190	2,246	-30
Environment - Planning		2,151	1,677	1,792	115	2,021	-130
Social Development	53	7,531	6,472	6,194	-278	7,541	10
Leisure Contract	138	-138	9	-124		-50	88
Economic Development	-150	2,229	1,405	1,858	453	2,109	-120
Housing	-191	1,406	193	895	702	1,316	-90
	-1,423	165,341	147,790	156,275	8,618	165,568	227
Financing adjustments etc	1,423	2,203	707	1,216	509	1,833	-370
	0	167,544	148,497	157,491	9,127	167,401	-143

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2003/04 TO 31 JANUARY 2004

Report By: County Treasurer

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To report to the Committee on the Capital Programme forecast for 2003/04.

Financial Implications

2. As detailed in the attached Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004.

Background

3. The report on Capital Programme Monitoring 2003/04 considered by Cabinet on 18th March 2004 is appended.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT**
- (a) **the contents of the attached Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004 be noted;**
- and**
- (b) **the Committee considers whether there are any issues it wishes to be brought to Cabinet's attention.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet report dated 18th March 2004.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2003/04 TO 31ST JANUARY 2004

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

18TH MARCH 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To note the Capital Programme forecast for 2003/04.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT the position be noted.

Reasons

Report for noting only.

Considerations

1. This is the third round of the 2003/04 capital monitoring process. The purpose of this monitoring exercise is to update the original budget position as at 31st January to highlight and manage any slippages or overspends.

Overview

2. The revised forecast for 2003/04 as at 31st January totals £32,126,000 (excluding LSVT costs). This is a decrease of £2,606,000 from the previous round of capital monitoring on 31st October, mainly owing to forecast spend decreases on Social and Economic Development which are explained later. This programme is funded as detailed in Appendix 1.
3. Actual spend in the first ten months at £19,258,000 was 60% of the revised forecast. This excludes unposted commitments of £4,268,000, which would increase committed spend to 73% of the revised forecast. A summary of the programme expenditure for each area is set out on Appendix 2.
4. Set out in Appendix 3 is a list of all capital schemes with a budget in excess of £500,000.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Josie Smith, Accountant – Capital and VAT Services, on (01432) 261867

Capital Programme Areas

Education

5. Forecast spend has not changed in this round of capital monitoring. Actual spend to date represents 55% of the forecast spend. This increases to 64% including commitments. There is potential to purchase the site for the Whitecross School before the financial year-end to help ensure no conditional funding is lost.

Social Care

6. There have been no changes to the forecast capital expenditure on Social Care. Actual spend represents 70% of the budget; committed spend reflects 72% of the total budget.

Property

7. The forecast spend has increased by £159,000. £120,000 of this relates to the Leominster Bus Station Toilet Refurbishment, funded by Basic Credit Approval (BCA) which was previously reported under Environment General.

Policy and Finance

8. The forecast spend has decreased by £29,000 owing to decreased commitments on the CCTV capital scheme and Info in Bromyard actual spend slipping into 2004/05. The Reducing Crime Initiative has overspent by £5,000, which is temporarily funded from corporate reserves until new sources of funding are identified.
9. Actual spend is 67%. However, commitments on Info in Bromyard capital scheme increases committed spend to 96% of the budget.

eModernisation Programme

10. The forecast for this area has increased by £19,000. This is mainly owing to the capital grant funded 'Encompassing Single Assessment for Older People and Supporting People' scheme being increased to £177,000, as this is now forecast to be spent in this financial year.
11. The flexible working pilot has been delayed further so the budget of £120,000, which was to be funded by BCA, is now showing in 2004/05.
12. Only 52% of the budget has been spent to date as a result of various delays.

Environment General

13. The forecast has decreased by £52,000 mainly owing to slippage on the Friar St capital scheme into 2004/05. Slippage on the Transport elements in the LTP from this financial year into 2004/05 is to be used to fund Highway elements in relation to achievable road schemes. There will be no impact, however, on the original allocations in programme areas, such as local safety schemes, despite underspends this year.

14. Spend to date represents only 63% of the total budget, while committed spend represents 79% of the total budget. This means that a large amount of programmed highways works is yet to be committed, undertaken and charged before the year-end. No conditional resources are expected to be lost despite continuing concerns over the delivery of the LTP programme for the year. Assurances have been received that the spending targets in this area will be achieved.

Social Development

15. The forecast has decreased by £667,000 owing to reductions in anticipated spend.
16. The Friar Street Museum Resource and Learning Centre capital project is due to start in January. The forecast for this year has decreased by £442,000 as actual spend will fall into 2004/05. There are three phases, with the first phase due to be completed in September. Phases 2 and 3 are dependent on lottery funding and prudential borrowing.
17. The Aylestone Hill Park amenity area forecast spend for this year has decreased by £123,000. The project has encountered various problems, such as a change in lead consultant and access road delays. The scope of this development is currently under review.
18. The Castle Pool forecast spend for this year has decreased by £73,000 because of issues surrounding the ecology of the pool delaying progress. This will be spent in 2004/05.
19. Actual spend to date represents 64% of the revised forecast. This programme area remains unfunded by £101,000 owing to a brought-forward overspend. Anticipated capital receipts will be used to repay the temporary funding from the corporate capital receipts reserve.

Economic Development

20. The forecast spend for this area has decreased by £1,303,000. This is mainly owing to the Herefordshire Strategic Regeneration Package - Rotherwas Match funding scheme. This budget relates to developing a variety of workspace schemes, transport improvements and business assistance; a mixture of revenue and capital spend. This is to be funded through grant funding from Objective 2, Rural Regeneration Zone and Single Regeneration Budget. The budget has been decreased in line with a recent claim for grant payment. This project is expected to carry on into 2004/05.
21. Actual spend represents 65% of the revised forecast.

Strategic Housing

22. Forecasts have been reduced to reflect anticipated spend. The savings will be put back into the Strategic Housing capital receipts reserve to meet future commitments.

Change in Budget £'000

- Learning Disability Development Fund budget has been moved to 2004/05 owing to delays on purchasing a relevant site for adaptation for accommodation for people living with carers. (240)
- Social Housing Grants budgeted spend has decreased owing to a cautious approach to placement following the abolition of the LASHG Grant. (838)
- Other Budget changes of less than £100,000 each 151

Decrease in Strategic Housing capital budget (927)

23. Actual spend remains low for the first nine months of the year at 41% of the revised forecast. Many schemes are committed to being spent with billing due to start in the near future.

Housing Revenue Account

24. The budget has decreased by £2,507,000 following the year-end audit, concluding that the LSVT levy cost should be charged in the year of transfer, 2002/03, rather than the year of payment to ODPM.

Plough Lane Accommodation

25. This budget is in relation to hardware and network IT infrastructure costs incurred in relation to the movement of some members of staff to accommodation at Plough Lane. The costs are being funded from the corporate capital receipt reserve until anticipated capital receipts resulting from property disposals are realised.

Capital Receipts

26. Appendix 4 gives a summary of the capital receipts received and anticipated for 2003/04.

Conclusion

The total predicted underspend on Basic Credit Approval funded capital schemes is £341,000. This can be managed by the swapping of financing resources through the capital receipts reserve. The current capital monitoring forecast, therefore, is that no conditional resources will be lost.

The monitoring arrangements in place for the capital programme continue to identify improvements in its overall management.

Alternative Options

There are no alternative options.

Consultees

Not applicable.

Risk Management

Capital monitoring is in itself is an integral part of risk management. The potential loss of conditional resources is identified and adjustments are made accordingly.

Background Papers

None identified.

APPENDIX 1

FUNDING OF REVISED 2003/04 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Capital Programme Area	2003/04 Revised Forecast 31/01/04	Credit Approvals	Grants	Revenue Contribution	Capital Receipts Reserves	Unfunded
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Education Capital schemes</i>	5,433	3,409	2,455	-	(431)	-
<i>Local Public Service Agreement schemes</i>	37	-	37	-	-	-
<i>Education Inspectorate schemes</i>	2,296	-	1,258	1,038	-	-
<i>Sure Start schemes</i>	430	-	430	-	-	-
Total Education	8,196	3,409	4,180	1,038	(431)	-
Social Care	411	215	196	-	-	-
P&F – Property	1,578	359	1,092	10	118	-
P&F – General	1,021	820	188	23	(15)	5
P&F – eModernisation	1,087	395	692	-	-	-
Environment General	10,668	9,711	593	-	284	80
Social Development	329	153	117	76	(118)	101
Economic Development	4,737	1,059	3,683	-	(5)	-
Strategic Housing	3,905	1,500	236	-	2,169	-
Plough Lane Accommodation	194	-	-	-	194	-
Revised Forecast	32,126	17,621	10,977	1,147	2,196	186
Housing Revenue Account	1,267	-	-	-	1,267	-
Total Revised Forecast	33,393	17,621	10,977	1,147	3,463	186
Revised Forecast 31/10/03	38,506	17,991	13,421	1,124	5,809	161
Change from revised forecast 31/10/03	(5,113)	(370)	(2,444)	23	(2,346)	25

Original budget	35,172	18,004	9,792	1,084	6,106	186
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APPENDIX 2

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BY PROGRAMME AREA

	Outturn	Original Budget	Revised Forecast 31/10/03	Revised Forecast 31/01/04	Change from previous forecast	Actual spend at 31/01/04	Actuals as a % of the revised forecast
Programme area	2002/03	2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Education	5,761	7,747	8,196	8,196	-	4,496	55%
Social Care	618	300	411	411	-	288	70%
P&F – Property	865	837	1,419	1,578	159	1,418	90%
P&F – General	320	1,047	1,050	1,021	(29)	679	67%
P&F – eModernisation	968	1,216	1,068	1,087	19	560	52%
Environment Planning	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environment General	9,745	10,501	10,720	10,668	(52)	6,672	63%
Social Development	873	995	996	329	(667)	210	64%
Economic Development	849	3,656	6,040	4,737	(1,303)	3,102	65%
Strategic Housing	3,687	5,494	4,832	3,905	(927)	1,613	41%
HCS	66	-	-	-	-	-	-
Joint Finance	1,358	-	-	-	-	50	N/a
Plough Lane Accommodation	-	-	-	194	194	91	47%
Outturn	25,114	31,793	34,732	32,126	(2,606)	19,179	60%
Housing Revenue Account	7,030	3,379	3,774	1,267	(2,507)	79	6%
Total Outturn	32,144	35,172	38,506	33,393	(5,113)	19,258	58%

APPENDIX 3

MAIN CAPITAL SCHEMES OF REVISED 2003/04 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Capital Programme Area	Schemes with a Revised Forecast >£500,000
	£'000
Education schemes:	
John Masefield High – 6 th Form block	776
St David's PRU – refurbishment of John Venn Unit	500
Marlbrook Early Excellence Centre – new building	734
National Grid for Learning various schemes	2,096
New Deal for Schools condition property schemes	1,027
P&F Property:	
Hillside Capital Scheme	1,092
P&F General schemes:	
Info in Bromyard	752
Environment General schemes:	
Rural areas & market towns integrated transport strategy	522
Rural low floor bus project	1,267
Capitalised maintenance of principal roads	970
Capitalised maintenance of non-principal roads	3,210
Capitalised assessment & strength of bridges	1,895
Economic Development schemes:	
Leominster Industrial Estate Access Road	2,257
Herefordshire Strategic Regeneration Package – Rotherwas	1,181
Strategic Housing schemes:	
Social Housing Grants	1,662
<i>Other schemes less than £500,000</i>	<i>12,185</i>
Revised Forecast	32,126

APPENDIX 4

CAPITAL RECEIPTS FOR 2003/04

Sale Detail	Directorate Share	Directorate Share	Corporate Share	Total receipt
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Received				
Artic Circle	50% Economic Development	10	10	20
RTB Clawbacks (75% set aside)	100% HRA	29	-	29
RTB Discounts (75% set aside)	100% HRA	4	-	4
Improvement grants	100% Strategic Housing	13	-	13
1.5 acres of land at Fir Tree Lane	100% Corporate	-	18	18
Coldnose Road	100% Corporate	-	42	42
Receipts from re-organisation	100% Corporate	-	160	160
Eign Road Pupil Referral Unit	50% Education	60	60	120
Thursfields	50% Social Development	40	40	80
Leominster / Wigmore Magistrates Court	50% Property	116	115	231
Sub Total		272	445	717
Anticipated				
Various	50% Property	73	74	147
Various	50% Social Care	126	126	252
Various	50% Social Development	58	57	115
Total		529	702	1,231

SCRUTINY ACTIVITY REPORT**Report By: County Secretary and Solicitor****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the work being undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees.

Financial Implications

2. None

Background

3. This report summarises the matters considered by the Scrutiny Committees since the last report by this Committee to Council. It is intended to help keep Council aware of the work being undertaken.
4. The work of the Committees is analysed below as far as practicable under the following five roles for overview and scrutiny: holding the executive to account, best value reviews, policy development and review, external scrutiny, and improvement (performance management and review).

Summary By Programme Area**Education**

5. The Education Scrutiny Committee met on 5th April 2004 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	Inspection Advice and School performance Service Stage 3 report
Policy Development and Review	School Transport – Interim report Pupil Admissions – Transfer of year 6 Pupils to High Schools
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Herefordshire Childcare Information Service School Opinion Survey – Quality of LEA Services Ofsted School Inspections Race Relations Act 200 – Monitoring of Incidents in Schools Monitoring of Capital and Revenue

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Tim Brown Committee Manager (Scrutiny)
on 01432 260239

	Expenditure Sure Start – 2 Year Plan Early Years Education – “Communication Matters”
Other	

6. The Environment Scrutiny Committee met on 2nd April, 2004 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	Implementation of Improvement Plans
Policy Development and Review	Car parking Strategy Polytunnels
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Capital Budget Monitoring Revenue Budget Monitoring Performance Indicators
Other	Work Programme

7. The Health Scrutiny Committee met on 6th April, 2004 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	West Midlands Regional Overview and Scrutiny Survey
Other	Ear Nose and Throat Service Consultation Health And Social Care Involvement Strategy Event

8. It is also scheduled to meet on 29th April, 2004 to finalise its response to the consultation.

9. The Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee met on 8th April, 2004 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	-
Best Value Reviews	Adoption and Fostering Services – update Physical Disability Services – Stage 1 Report
Policy Development and Review	
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Supporting People Programme Budget/Performance Monitoring
Other	Work Programme

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Tim Brown Committee Manager (Scrutiny) on 01432 260239

9. The Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee met on 15th April, 2004 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Performance Indicators Revenue Budget
Other	Work Programme

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

WORK PROGRAMMES

Report By: County Secretary and Solicitor

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the updated work programmes adopted by the Social Care and Housing and Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committees.

Background

2. In February, 2004 the Committee confirmed its own work programme and noted the updated work programmes for the Education and Environment Scrutiny Committees. The Health Scrutiny Committee work programme was reported to the Committee in December 2003 and is still current.
3. In fulfilling the co-ordinating role prescribed for it in the Constitution the updated work programmes of the Social Care and Housing and Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committees are now attached. The work programmes of the other Scrutiny Committees are still current, the Environment Scrutiny Committee having refined its programme slightly on 2nd April.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the position on the work programmes of the other Scrutiny Committees be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme 2004-2005

Date	Items
June 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Report Outturn • Performance Monitoring (&LPSA) end of year outturns • SSI Inspection Report – Older People • SSI Inspection Report – Fostering (NCSC/CSCI) • Scoping reports for Committee Reviews
Sept 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Plans – mid year review • Performance Monitoring four months (&LPSA) • Budget 2004/5 four month report • Best Value Reviews – progress reports
December 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring six months (&LPSA) • Budget 2003/04 six month report • Better Care Higher Standards (Annual Report) • SSI Annual Review of Performance • Best Value Reviews – progress reports
April 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring 10 months (&LPSA) • Supporting People Strategy & Improvement Plan • Budget 10 month report • Herefordshire Plan Ambition Groups • Best Value Reviews – progress reports

Further additions to the work programme will be made as required

Reviews on services for older people and the provision of supported housing for vulnerable people are being scoped.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2004/5

June 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance monitoring (outturns) • Budget outturns • Adult Learning Inspection progress • Staffing Report • Update on Festivals • South Wye • Herefordshire Plan – ambitions monitoring • Annual Report by the three Programme Area Cabinet Members
September 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sickness figures • Performance monitoring (4/5 months) • Leisure Trust • Parks and open spaces • Implementation of Countryside Rights of Way Act • Hereford City – update on progress • Creative industries and Tourism Programme – external funding exit strategy
December 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit report • Performance monitoring (6months) • Staffing report • Herefordshire Plan Monitoring
January 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 2/RRZ/SRB/Leader + projects • Performance monitoring (8/9 months) • Parish Council Liaison • Levering of external funding – achievements • Adult Learning – results of re-inspection
April 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring (10 months) • Town Centre management

NB: Special joint seminar with Education Directorate and Connexions to be agreed.

