

# A G E N D A

## Environment Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday, 24th October, 2005**

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Time: **2.00 p.m.**

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Place: **No 1 Committee Room, Shirehall,  
St Peters Square, Hereford**

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

*For any further information please contact:*

*Paul James, Members' Services, Tel:01432  
260 460 Fax:01432 260286*

***e-mail [pjames@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pjames@herefordshire.gov.uk)***

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**County of Herefordshire  
District Council**



# AGENDA

## for the Meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee

To: Councillor J.H.R. Goodwin (Chairman)  
Councillor W.L.S. Bowen (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors P.J. Dauncey, K.G. Grumbley, J.G.S. Guthrie, T.W. Hunt,  
J.W. Newman, Ms. G.A. Powell, Miss F. Short and J.B. Williams

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<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive apologies for absence.	
<b>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)</b> To receive any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
<b>4. MINUTES</b> To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September, 2005.	1 - 6
<b>5. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY</b> To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future. (Please refer to the Public Information pages in this agenda)	
<b>6. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK</b> To note progress upon the preparation of the Council Biodiversity Strategic Framework and actions in hand to support related activity.	7 - 10
<b>7. SECOND REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE USE OF POLYTUNNELS IN HEREFORDSHIRE</b> To consider whether revisions are needed to the code of practice in the light of experience through the growing season of 2005.	11 - 20
<b>8. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING</b> To advise Members on the progress of the 2005/06 Capital Programme for Environment Areas within the overall context of the Herefordshire Council Capital Programme.	21 - 28

<b>9. ENVIRONMENT REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING</b>	29 - 36
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<b>10. BEST VALUE REVIEWS - IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPROVEMENT PLANS</b>	37 - 54
To report the remaining actions and the exceptions to the programmed progress in the improvement plans resulting from the reviews of Commercial Enforcement, Development Control, Public Conveniences, and Public Rights of Way.	
<b>11. MONITORING OF 2005/2006 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - APRIL 2005 TO SEPTEMBER 2005</b>	55 - 60
To update Members on the exceptions to the targeted progress made by the Environment Directorate for the six months April to September 2005 towards achieving the performance indicators / targets which appear in the Council's Corporate Plan and are reported bi-monthly.	

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, Childrens' Services, Community Services, Environment, and Health. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises corporate 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

Formal meetings of the Committees are held in public and information on your rights to attend meetings and access to information are set out overleaf

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **Public Involvement at Scrutiny Committee Meetings**

You can contact Councillors and Officers at any time about Scrutiny Committee matters and issues which you would like the Scrutiny Committees to investigate.

There are also two other ways in which you can directly contribute at Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee meetings.

#### **1. Identifying Areas for Scrutiny**

At the meeting the Chairman will ask the members of the public present if they have any issues which they would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate, however, there will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Councillors will research the issue and consider whether it should form part of the Committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.

Please note that the Committees can only scrutinise items which fall within their specific remit (see below). If a matter is raised which falls within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee then it will be noted and passed on to the relevant Chairman for their consideration.

#### **2. Questions from Members of the Public for Consideration at Scrutiny Committee Meetings and Participation at Meetings**

You can submit a question for consideration at a Scrutiny Committee meeting so long as the question you are asking is directly related to an item listed on the agenda. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it **no later than two working days before the meeting** to the Committee Officer. This will help to ensure that an answer can be provided at the meeting. Contact details for the Committee Officer can be found on the front page of this agenda.

Generally, members of the public will also be able to contribute to the discussion at the meeting. This will be at the Chairman's discretion.

(Please note that the Scrutiny Committees are not able to discuss questions relating to personal or confidential issues.)

## **Remits of Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees**

### **Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing**

*Statutory functions for adult social services including:*

*Learning Disabilities*

*Strategic Housing*

*Supporting People*

*Public Health*

### **Children's Services**

*Provision of services relating to the well-being of children including education, health and social care.*

### **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

*Libraries*

*Cultural Services including heritage and tourism*

*Leisure Services*

*Parks and Countryside*

*Community Safety*

*Economic Development*

*Youth Services*

### **Health**

*Planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area*

*Health Improvement*

*Services provided by the NHS*

### **Environment**

*Environmental Issues*

*Highways and Transportation*

### **Strategic Monitoring Committee**

*Corporate Strategy and Finance*

*Resources*

*Corporate and Customer Services*

***Human Resources***

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public Register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
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- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.



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## **COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SHIREHALL, HEREFORD.**

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the meeting of Environment Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 26th September, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Present:** Councillor J.H.R. Goodwin (Chairman)  
Councillor W.L.S. Bowen (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: P.J. Dauncey, K.G. Grumbley, J.G.S. Guthrie, T.W. Hunt, J.W. Newman, R. Preece and J.B. Williams

**In attendance:** Councillors J.W. Edwards, P.J. Edwards, Cabinet Member (Environment), D.J. Fleet, T.M. James, J.C. Mayson, R.J. Phillips, J. Stone, J.P. Thomas, D.B. Wilcox, Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation), and R.M. Wilson.

**21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors G.W. Davis and Miss F. Short.

**22. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor R. Preece substituted for Councillor Miss F Short.

**23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors: WLS Bowen, JW Edwards, JHR Goodwin, KG Grumbley and JGS Guthrie declared personal interests as members of local Internal Drainage Boards.

**24. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th August, 2005 be approved and signed by the Chairman.**

Arising from resolution part b) of minute Item No. 19 (Presentation by Cabinet Member Highways and Transport) – which referred to a forthcoming meeting between the Director of Environment and the Director of the Highways Agency, the Director of Environment briefly reported that he had had a reasonably successful meeting with the Director of the Highways Agency and notes of that meeting would be circulated to Members. The Director planned to hold further meetings with the agency on a quarterly basis.

**25. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY**

No public suggestions had been received.

**26. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT OF HEREFORDSHIRE'S MAIN RIVERS**

The Committee considered the Environment Agency's management of flood risk on main rivers in Herefordshire.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Environment Agency (EA) was the Land Drainage Authority for Herefordshire and had responsibility for the management of main rivers such as the Wye, Lugg, Team, Monnow and Arrow. The Committee had requested an opportunity to receive a presentation from the Agency and to seek clarification of the Agency's roles, responsibilities and activities in Herefordshire.

The Chairman introduced Tim England, South East Area Flood Manager – EA Wales; Martin Cadogan, Asset Systems Management Team Leader and Angela Gray, Project Manager for Hereford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The following are the principal points made by Mr Tim England during his presentation to the Committee on Flood Management by the Environment Agency:

- The role of the Agency had changed over the years from land drainage to Flood Risk Management;
- He gave a brief overview of the legal history concerning the subject and highlighted the change in emphasis following the 1998/2000 major floods.
- He outlined the current flood defence and coastal defence organisations; the policy responsibility; principal legislation and organisational responsibility.
- The Agency's role included flood risk mapping; flood forecasting and warning; regulation; maintenance; flood alleviation schemes and acting as the reservoir regulatory Authority.
- Flood Risk Mapping involved the identification of the flood plain using historic data and hydraulic modelling. This mapping would enable the identification of risk areas, inform planning processes and the public. The Agency also used the mapping to consider the best risk management approach. The Committee were shown examples of Lidar Survey based data maps. Lidar involved aerial survey mapping, which can then be overlaid with Ordnance Survey and other information.
- The Agency undertook monitoring and forecasting of likely situations. This was done by a variety of methods including strategically placed rain and river gauges and information from the Meteorological Office. This enabled them to disseminate warnings; initiate their own operational response; raise public awareness and alert professional partners, such as the local authority, and emergency services.
- The Regulatory function involved liaison with Local Authority Planning and Development Control sections; the regulation of third party works on or near watercourses; the issue of Discharge Consents and Abstraction Licensing.
- He emphasised that in most cases the landowner was responsible for watercourse maintenance. However, the Agency did have powers, usually used in accordance with the principles of risk management, to clear blockages i.e. tree debris under bridges, the revetment of embankments; renewal of pumping station equipment and channel capacity schemes i.e. tree or soil removal.
- Flood Alleviation schemes were only considered as a last choice option. If, in accordance with risk management criteria, schemes were considered necessary they may include embankments; walls; diversion channels; pumping stations or a combination of these.
- As of October 2004, The Water Act 2003 transferred responsibility for enforcement of the Reservoirs Act to the Agency thereby ensuring a consistent approach to enforcement.

Following the presentation the Committee questioned the Agency representatives on a number of issues. The following indicate the principal points made:

1. Responding to how the Agency will apply its resources and expertise across the national boundary to ensure that Herefordshire was not disadvantaged by the recent reorganisation within the Agency, the Committee noted that while the political and budgetary responsibilities for the River Wye catchment area had changed from the EA Wales to the Midland Region the day to day technical work remained with Mr England's team in the Welsh Region.
2. Government as part of the review had made changes to the method of local representation. Local representation was now made through the Midland Regional Flood Defence Committee. The 18 seats on the Committee were divided between Local Authorities and DEFRA. Herefordshire, Gloucester City and South Gloucestershire had one seat, currently taken by Gloucester. Only 6 months of a four-year term had expired. It was therefore important that Herefordshire worked closely with the Gloucester representative to ensure that local issues were raised. Relevant contact details would be forwarded to the Head of Highways and Transportation for circulation to Members.
3. Questioned on the funding arrangements and the scope for local schemes to be promoted if they did not achieve priority ranking, the Committee were informed that following the major floods of 1998 and 2000 government funding had increased and, since the review of the agency, funding was now received as a block grant. While priority had been given to capital projects a further government review of funding levels was expected. Local schemes could still be promoted at regional level, which, if they didn't meet national funding criteria, may result in funding being raised by local levy.
4. The extent to which the EA resisted new development in areas of flood risk was raised. The EA responded that, as a statutory consultee, they were very effective in their response with advice on new developments. However, the decision on new development rested with the planning authority.
5. The accuracy of the latest flood risk maps were questioned. Particular reference was made concerning the flood data included as part of the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP), the accuracy of which had been called into question. The EA responded that initially maps had been issued as a rapid response to the floods of 1998 and 2000 and had lacked accuracy, but had been better than anything previously available. Since then the maps were updated regularly with more accurate data as it became available. However, the EA were undertaking an 18-month programme to Lidar (aerial survey) survey the main rivers within EA Wales, including Herefordshire which would provide even greater accuracy. The Agency agreed to provide a copy of the Herefordshire Main Rivers Maps to the Head of Highways and Transportation.
6. The Committee were informed that the EA did not have a formal programme of meeting Parish Councils, however, the Corporate Section of the EA would be happy to meet with such organisations.
7. In view of the fact that many communities rely on the security of existing flood defence systems and the effective management of rivers the EA were asked whether they had adequate resources to maintain and, where possible, improve the flood defence system in the County. The EA responded that their primary concern in relation to defence systems was to protect life and property. Proposed schemes were evaluated against government financial systems and against national priorities. While road accessibility was a low

priority the EA ensured that schemes provided a 'dry route' for emergency service access. However this may not be the most appropriate route for the local community.

8. Questioned on the Agency's work with the farming community to address problems associated with agricultural practices e.g. rain run-off; pollution; soil erosion; ploughing and planting near watercourse banks, the EA responded that the Agricultural Team in the Agency liaised with the farming community to minimise these issues.
9. Responding to what the EA was doing to inform the public and communities of the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies, public bodies and land owners that had interests in flood and watercourse management and what liaison or partnering arrangements were in place to co-ordinate the activities of the different agencies, the Committee were informed that while liaison was a common problem, the EA had mechanisms in place to address this issue.
10. It was noted that the EA organised local Flood Resilience Groups, comprised of representatives from Local Authorities, Emergency Services and major local businesses to discuss local flood risk management. The EA were working on improving the degree of private sector input. Details of the local Resilience Group would be forwarded to the Head of Highways and Transportation for circulation to Members.
11. Meetings of the Regional Flood Defence Committee are open to the public.
12. The EA have powers to remove obstructions or improve the main rivers. Responsibility for enforcing the maintenance of minor watercourses rests with the Local Authority or the Internal Drainage Board. However, while the EA also have the power to intercede, they preferred to work with the relevant body to resolve issues.
13. The remit of the EA is to administer and enforce flood risk management. In the majority of cases landowners are responsible for the clearance and maintenance of watercourses. The EA will only get directly involved if there is a benefit to the maintenance of flood risk. However, if a Councillor or Parish Council have concerns about a local watercourse they can contact the EA for advice.
14. Asked about how the EA reconciled its responsibilities for the environment and conservation with its responsibilities for managing key rivers and watercourses the EA responded that this was a difficult issue. It was emphasised that every scheme was subject to an environmental assessment and had to show value in undertaking it. It also had to show a potential for environmental enhancement. The Committee noted the improvement works by the Fisheries Section of the EA to the River Monnow.
15. Responding to a number of questions concerning the proposed flood defences for the Belmont roundabout area of Hereford (the south bank of the River Wye), the EA confirmed that DEFRA had now approved the scheme (£4m). While preliminary work by the EA had started, the main work on site could not start until 2007/08. The EA were already in talks with the developers (ASDA) about the design and necessary consents for the defence works, which would be provided by the developer. A number of obstacles still had to be overcome, one of which was planning permission for the works, which was expected to be submitted in July 2006. The EA confirmed they

were liaising with other agencies, including Welsh Water in relation to sewers and drains, in an attempt to provide a comprehensive scheme for the area. Hereford was getting a real defence scheme, part of which took into account known issues relating to 'climate change'. In relation to the protection of the north bank or areas around Lower Bullingham there were no proposals to undertake defence works. If in the future finance became available and a business case could be made then a scheme may be considered.

16. Works to the 'Stank' at Hampton Bishop and in the vicinity of the Holme Lacy Causeway (B4399) had been completed and no further works were planned. In the long term the EA may commission a review of the defences in that area.
17. The EA confirmed there had been a change in emphasis in the work of the Flood Section. Previously their work had centred on defence, now the emphasis was on risk management of the whole catchment. This may involve opening up previously blocked off defences to enable areas to flood or the provision of storm water storage areas in urban areas.
18. Normally it was the responsibility of the Highways Authority to clear debris caught under road bridges.
19. It was noted that historically the river Wye in Hereford had been dredged. Questioned on the merits of reintroducing dredging to reduce the likelihood of flooding the EA stated that they had investigated this option and, using current technology, could find no evidence of any benefit from a flood reduction point of view, in reintroducing the practice. Dredging the river would however have conflicting consequences for the leisure use of the river e.g. fishing versus boating.
20. The EA were invited to comment on whether an historical agreement governing the management of the dams at Rhyader had to ensure that the dams had spare capacity to hold flash flood water, as it was believed this wasn't now being provided for. The EA commented that they had no responsibility for the dams other than to enforce the Reservoirs Act – as mentioned in the presentation. They appreciated the dilemma for the water companies in meeting the need to supply water to customers. It was however emphasised that only 10 to 15% of the water in the Wye came from the catchment area around the dams.
21. The EA confirmed that, in common with local authorities, complaints from the public could be referred to the Ombudsman.

The Chairman thanked the EA representatives for attending and answering the Committee's questions. The Committee would wait with interest to see what improvements were brought about by the revised arrangements for the Regional Flood Defence Committees.

The meeting ended at 11.52 a.m.

**CHAIRMAN**





## HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**Report By: Director Of Environment**

### **Wards Affected**

County - wide

### **Purpose**

1. To note progress upon the preparation of the Council Biodiversity Strategic Framework and actions in hand to support related activity.

### **Financial Implications**

2. There are no direct financial costs arising from this report. A number of actions described in the report do however have financial implications but these have been covered within existing budgets, through partnership funding or utilising agreed processes for funding approval.

### **Background**

3. Your meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005 received a report setting out the strategic objectives which should form the basis of a framework for the Council's work in relation to biodiversity conservation. These are:
  - 1) To work in partnership with other organisations to add value to all our biodiversity conservation activities at regional, sub-regional and local levels.
  - 2) To ensure that biodiversity conservation is integrated into the Community Strategy (Herefordshire Plan).
  - 3) To promote co-ordinated action to benefit nature conservation by taking a lead role in developing, maintaining and implementing a Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Herefordshire.
  - 4) To set an example to others through managing as much of our land as possible for the benefit of biodiversity.
  - 5) To provide a high quality advisory service enabling planning and other regulatory systems to be operated responsibly and effectively.
  - 6) To maintain effective recording, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, including contributing to regional commentaries.
  - 7) To provide access to information upon the priority biodiversity habitats and species occurring in the County

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from William Bloxsome on 01432 261783

- 8) To promote the benefit of biodiversity conservation and associated actions to local communities throughout the County.
4. Work is progressing upon preparing the Framework Statement. However it has been delayed by other work, more specifically efforts to take advantage of funding opportunities and to assess the implications of new advice in relation to biodiversity conservation. These are described in this report.

### **Working in Partnership**

5. Regular meetings continue to be held with English Nature and Herefordshire Nature Trust upon a range of matters including progress in relation to Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, Herefordshire Biological Records Centre, Habitat and Special Wildlife Site Surveys, and specific projects. The strategic framework will provide for these meetings to continue, especially as they have lead to a greater understanding between all parties and benefited partnership working.

### **Biodiversity Conservation and the Community Strategy**

6. Following the publication and circular 04/2001 (DEFRA – Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) the Government identified Local Biodiversity Action Plans as one of the plans that can be subsumed into Community Strategies, as part of the rationalisation of local authority plans. The Environment Ambition Group and Environmental Co-ordinator will undertake this task. English Nature has contributed to the costs of the Environmental Co-ordinator post, partly upon the basis that this should be one of the tasks undertaken by the post holder and the process and actions for achieving integration within the Community Strategy will be a crucial component of the strategic framework.

### **Maintaining and Implementing a Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Herefordshire.**

7. Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (HBAP) was published in 2000 and a summary of the Council's contribution to this was set out in a previous report to this Committee. An updated HBAP with new targets is soon to be published by Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership. This takes into account regional habitat restoration targets for the West Midlands that have recently been published.
8. The appointment of a Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator for a 3-year period has been agreed with English Nature, who have entered into a partnership funding arrangement with this Council. The post holder will be charged with completing the review of HBAP and facilitating the implementation of its actions. This proposal extends the Council's contribution to the Biodiversity Action Plan process and should ensure more effective compliance with Audit Commission advice expressed in their Library of Local Performance Indicators.

### **Managing Council Land For Biodiversity**

9. The previous report on biodiversity conservation referred to the Corporate Plan indicator relating to 'land owned or managed by the Council, that does not have any nature conservation designation, but is managed for biodiversity purpose'. One of the tasks for the Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator, when appointed, will be to work with colleagues within the relevant Divisions of the Council to help them

increase the amount of land within this category. A target has been set to increase the extent of the land managed in this way from the present 2.49% to 3.3% in 2009 and the Strategic Framework will incorporate this as a primary task to be approached on a corporate basis.

### **Biodiversity and Planning Advice**

10. Government has just issued a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS9) on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. It has also issued an associated circular (ODPM 06/2005): 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System'. The full implications of these have yet to be assessed. However it is clear that biodiversity will have a higher profile as a material consideration in planning decisions. A report will be prepared for the Cabinet Member for the Environment upon the staff implications arising from this and also on monitoring requirements (see para. 13 below) in the light of the new Government provisions in relation to Local Development Frameworks.
11. Interpreting and disseminating the new Government guidance to relevant officers, agents and the public in general will be crucial if efforts to protect biodiversity are to be successful. The Strategic Framework will need to indicate how the Council proposes to tackle this issue. An interim Supplementary Planning Document on Biodiversity has been approved and this will need to be reviewed in the light of PPS9 and Circular 06/2005. Work to develop a training event for planning officers within the Council is also in hand.

### **Recording, Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms**

12. This Council and English Nature jointly fund Herefordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC). The development and maintenance of such centres on a County basis is a priority for the national agency. Herefordshire's record centre is in the third year of its establishment phase and a report is being prepared upon its future development and operation.
13. Under the new planning framework, the Council has to monitor the impact of development upon (inter-alia) biodiversity within an Annual Monitoring Report. The matters it should report upon include:
  - 1) Change in priority habits and species (by type): and
  - 2) Changes in area designated for their historic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub regional and local significance.

Collecting the relevant data will have resource implications and the Cabinet Member will need to be briefed upon this.

### **Access To Information On Priority Biodiversity Habitats And Species.**

14. The Herefordshire Biological Record Centre is developing as the primary source of information upon habitats and species within the County. It relies for such information upon voluntary recorders, local nature conservation groups and organisations such as Herefordshire Nature Trust and English Nature. The information is used for research and monitoring purposes. However, one of its key

purposes is to provide information to inform planning and development decisions. Accessibility by all concerned in the development process is important. The relationship between information providers and those requiring data from the record centre is a complex one. The provisions of the Environmental Information Regulations add to this complexity. The strategic framework will set out the Council's approach to making information as freely available as possible and how it would wish to see accessibility improved.

## Promoting Biodiversity To Communities

15. Promoting and enabling communities, be they local communities or interest groups, to support biodiversity projects and actions will be the key to ensuring that we maintain all those wildlife and natural features that are so important to the distinctive character of this County. The Strategic Framework will look to set out the basis for the role to be undertaken by this Council in relation to these activities. The Council recently completed the "Herefordshire Lifescapes" project, which was a pilot project funded substantially from external sources (LEADER+ and English Nature) to investigate how biodiversity and landscape potential might be promoted to local communities. Local groups are continuing some of the initiatives instigated through the project. Wider opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement have been mapped and details will be circulated to parishes in due course. The Forestry Commission in their regional forestry work is supporting this approach and other groups are also looking at it with interest. The Strategic Framework intends to take this approach on board so far as it might be possible.

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT subject to any comments the Committee may wish to make the report on the issues being considered for inclusion in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Framework be noted.**

## Background Papers

- Biodiversity Conservation Within Herefordshire – Report to the Environment Scrutiny Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005.
- Herefordshire Biodiversity action Plan – Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership, 2000
- Draft Review of Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2005-10, Feb 2005.
- A Development Plan for Herefordshire Local Biological Record Centre, June 2001.

## **SECOND REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE USE OF POLYTUNNELS IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

**Report By: Head of Planning Services**

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

1. To consider whether revisions are needed to the code of practice in the light of experience through the growing season of 2005.

### **Background**

2. The Environment Scrutiny Committee last considered this matter at their meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2004. An extensive review by the Poly tunnels Review Working Group was considered and, in the light of its findings, an updated Code of Practice was forwarded to the Cabinet Member (Environment) for approval. Cabinet on 14th October, 2004 accepted the findings and, subject to slight amendment, agreed to adopt the revised Code of Practice. Since that time the Code of Practice has been in operation as non-statutory planning guidance.
3. The decision by Cabinet to approve the Code of Practice provided for it to be reviewed in two years time, i.e. in 2006. This report is, therefore, made at an interim stage with the intention of reviewing progress to date along with a brief review of related issues.
4. The agreed Code of Practice is included at **Appendix 1** of this report.

### **2004/2005**

#### **Planning Applications**

5. Current practice in Herefordshire is to require planning applications where poly tunnels are intended to remain in place for over two years or the method of cultivation involves plants being grown in bags or on raised beds i.e. they are not being grown in the ground. There have been 8 planning applications submitted for Poly tunnels in the last 12 months. They are:

Planning Applications for Polytunnels 2004/05			
Application	Location	Brief Description	Outcome
Southern Area Committee			
SW05/2351/F	"Asparagus Patch", Blakemere	1 polytunnel	Approved 10/08/05
Central Area Committee			
CW04/4212/F	Brick House, Bush Bank	2.59 ha of polytunnels	Approved 09/03/05
CW05/0698/F	Marden	Polytunnels for "Raised Bed" cultivation	Withdrawn pending EIA
CW05/2947/F	Brick House, Bush Bank	Renewal of permission in respect of two polytunnels (ref CW05/0698)	(undetermined)
Northern Area Committee			
NW04/3669/F	Credale Nursery, Upper Hill, Leominster	2 polytunnels	Approved 22/04/05
NW04/4304/F	Moreton View Nursery, Gate Burley	Polytunnel nursery at	Approved 02/02/05
NE05/0223/F	Baddy Marsh Farm, Lower Eggleton, Ledbury	27.5m by 16m polytunnel	Approved 05/01/05
NE05/0283/F	Mathon Road, Colwall	Replace polytunnel with glasshouse	Approved 17/03/05

6. The principal issue encountered in the matters referred to above has been the polytunnels erected at Marden which was the subject of a retrospective application for planning permission. The application was withdrawn when it became clear that the suspected presence of protected species on the site meant that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was required before determination. The case is awaiting the submission of an EIA, which will now have to wait until early spring 2006 due to the

seasonal nature of the species to be studied. Meanwhile it is anticipated that the "plastic" covering of the polytunnels will be removed at the end of the 2005 growing season in any event. The Council's solicitors consider that it would not be expedient to take enforcement action in respect of these polytunnels pending the anticipated re-submission of the application for planning permission supported by an appropriate EIA.

#### Notifications in Accordance with the Code of Practice

7. Most of the polytunnels in the County have been the subject of notifications in accordance with the Code of Practice. These are cases where the intention is to move the polytunnels after a maximum of two years and the crops are grown in the ground. Since the Environment Scrutiny Committee in June 2004 there have been 12 notifications.

<b>Notifications for Polytunnels since June 2004</b>			
<b>Date received</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Company</b>
23/09/2004	Wickton Court, Stoke Prior Nr Leominster, HR1 3ET	John Davies/Peter Gwynne  Brook Farm, Marden, Hereford, HR1 3ET	S & A Soft Fruits Ltd  Brook Farm, Marden, Hereford, HR1 3ET
24/01/2005	Homme Farm, Ross on Wye, Hereford, HR9 7TF	Eric Drummond  The Homme, Hom, Green, Ross on Wye, HR9 7TF	Eric Drummond
28/2/2005	Pencoyd Court Farm, Harewood End, Hereford, HR2 8JY	AJ & CI Snell  Pencoyd Court Farm, Harewood End, Hereford, HR2 8JY	
27/01/2005	Lower Hope Livestock and Fruit Ltd, Ullingswick, HR1 3JF	S.D Wells  Lower Hope Livestock and Fruit Ltd, Ullingswick, HR1 3JF	S.D Wells
31/3/2005	Haygrove Farm, Falcon Lane, Ledbury, HR8 2PY	Mr A Davison  Redbank, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2JL	Haygrove Ltd  Redbank, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2JL
18/4/2005	Biddlestone Orchards, Llangarron, Ross on Wye, HR9 6NT	R.L Oakeley  Biddlestone Orchards, Llangrove, HR9 6NT	Biddlestone orchard
29/3/2005	Drakeley Farm, Marden, Hereford	John Davies/Peter Gwynne  Brook Farm, Marden, Hereford, HR1 3ET	S & A Produce Ltd  Brook Farm, Marden, Hereford, HR1 3ET

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from P.J. Yates,  
Development Control Manager on (01432) 261782

28/4/2005	Brick House Farm, Canon Pyon, Hereford, HR4 8PH	Mr V Powell  Brick House Farm, Canon Pyon, Hereford, HR4 8PH	
28/4/2005	Pennoxstone Court Farm, Kings Caple, HR1 4TX	Mr Neil Cockburn  Pennoxstone Court Farm, Kings Caple, HR1 4TX	
06/06/2005	Wharton Court, Leominster, HR6 0NX	S&A Soft Fruits Ltd, Brook Farm, Marden, Hereford, HR1 3ET	
02/08/2005	Front Pump Field, Lower Hope, Ullingswick, Hereford, HR1 3JF	Lower Hope Fruit Ltd, Lower Hope Estate, Ullingswick, Hereford	
11/08/2005	Wharton Court, Leominster, HR6 0NX	S&A Soft Fruits Ltd, Brook Farm, Marden, Hereford, HR1 3ET	

8. In accordance with the code of practice all of the notifications above have been submitted on the basis of the polytunnels being present on the same site for no more than two years.
9. In September 2005 the polytunnels listed above covered a total of approximately 183 hectares (approximately 420 acres). It should be noted however that, in the nature of these polytunnels, in many cases they are in different locations from previous years.

### Enforcement Issues

10. There is currently one Enforcement Case outstanding in the County at Pennoxstone Court. In this case the same farmholding has several areas under polytunnels with Code of Practice notifications and one area which is under polytunnels without notification. The landowner has proved reluctant to submit any application and enforcement proceedings may yet prove necessary to create a "Deemed Application" for the Council to consider.
11. There is, of course, the outstanding enforcement notice at Brierley Court which was the subject of a public local inquiry in July 2005 and concerned both caravans and polytunnels. That case has been called-in by the Secretary of State and until the decision is known no further action is appropriate

### Case law

12. In addition to the Brierley Court case there is also an outstanding case in Waverley Borough Council where an enforcement notice concerning caravans and polytunnels is currently the subject of a public local inquiry. The Inspector's decision, when it is made, may help to establish the planning basis for control of polytunnels.



## NFU Code of Practice

13. Members may be interested to note that the National Farmers' Union has, along with British Summer Fruits Ltd., published its own Code of Practice. The principal differences between their Code of Practice and the Herefordshire Code are:
- The NFU code recommends a minimum distance of 30 metres between polytunnels and the nearest dwelling; the Herefordshire Code specifies 50 metres
  - The NFU Code does not recommend a maximum period for polytunnels to remain in one location (assuming that they are moved frequently anyway)
  - The NFU code includes no provision for consulting local parishes or other interested parties before erecting polytunnels.

## Countryside Agency.

14. The Countryside Agency has commissioned a consultancy, Entec, to investigate the issue of polytunnel development. The intention is to help the Countryside Agency develop its own policy stance on this type of development. They are currently in the process of analysing responses from their own selection of consultees, including local planning authorities, but have yet to publish any results.

## Comment

15. Polytunnels remain a controversial issue due to their large scale and the non-statutory basis of the control the Council seeks to exercise through the Code of Practice. Case law may yet provide an improved definition of development which would either bring polytunnels fully within planning control or exclude them altogether. In the meantime the legal basis of control has remained unchanged in the past 12 months.
16. Demand to erect polytunnels will continue for the foreseeable future as they are now an essential part of agricultural production for "summer fruits".
17. In the absence of a definitive legal definition for when polytunnels come within planning control the Code of Practice is the best available means of control. Interestingly, as part of the new development plan system (i.e. the Local Development Framework), pre-application consultation can be required through the forthcoming Statement of Community Involvement. In this regard the current Code of Practice accords with the principles of the new planning system.
18. NFU/BSF Code of Practice has been developed for the benefit of suppliers and their clients and should not be regarded as superior to the Herefordshire Code. In particular it does not require any pre-consultation and would permit polytunnels as close as 30 metres from the nearest dwelling whereas the Herefordshire Code specifies 50 metres.
19. It is important to bear in mind that the principal impact, in planning terms, of polytunnels is their effect on the landscape. The Code of Practice seeks to preserve the landscape in the long term by requiring the plastic covering to be removed in winter and permitting the polytunnels themselves to remain in use on the same site for only two years. This is a pragmatic approach which allows for agricultural production to take place whilst preserving the landscape in the long term.

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT the Committee;**

- a) note the experience of the past 12 months of operation of the Code of Practice;**
- b) require a further report in the event of any significant change in case law which would change the basis of the current Code of Practice**
- c) recommend to the Cabinet Member (Environment) that the pre-consultation requirements of the Code of Practice be incorporated into the draft Statement of Community Involvement currently in preparation**
- d) recommend to the Cabinet Member (Environment) that the Code of Practice should continue in operation subject to a full review in October 2006**
- e) determines any further submission it may wish to make to the Cabinet Member (Environment).**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

## THE HEREFORDSHIRE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE TEMPORARY AGRICULTURAL USE OF POLYTUNNELS

### 1. Introduction

This Code of Practice is intended to apply to the use of temporary polytunnels, which consist of metal frames, covered with polythene and where crops are grown in the existing soil. In addition, the Code of Practice is not intended to have effect where, in the opinion of Herefordshire Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA) on the facts available, that planning permission is required.

### 2. The Code of Practice

The code requires a grower to provide the LPA with information on a Polytunnel Checklist. This information will be used to determine if planning permission is required.

If planning permission is not required the grower undertakes to provide notice to the Council confirming that notification has been given to the relevant Parish Council(s) and nearby neighbours of the intention to erect polytunnels.

### 3. Terms of the Code of Practice

- Siting of polytunnels will be 50 metres from the nearest elevation of any dwelling subject to variation of that distance by agreement with that neighbour.
- The grower will submit a landscape impact statement accompanied by mitigation measures. This may include the use of less reflective coloured ground cover plastic and less luminant polythene (less reflective) on the polytunnels.
  - The grower is encouraged to use less reflective coloured ground cover plastic and less luminant polythene (less reflective) on the polytunnels and to make provision for screening where appropriate.
  - Siting of polytunnels shall be restricted to 2 years (being a complete season) subject to the polythene covering being removed from the frames for a minimum period of 6 months in any calendar year. There shall be no return to the land, which has been covered within 2 years.
- Polytunnel framework shall be removed from the land in accordance with the statement on the Polytunnel Checklist.
- Notice will be given by the grower to the Council confirming written or verbal notice has been given to the Parish Council(s) and nearby neighbours.

Polytunnel users will use all reasonable endeavours to -

- Avoid disturbance to nearby residents at unsociable hours.  
By best management practice avoid noise nuisance to nearby residents from unsecured polythene, pumps or other activity sources.
- Store unused polythene away from public view, waste polythene to be removed from the land and be recycled.

Compliance with the terms of this code will bring benefits to growers, residents who live near to polytunnel sites and Herefordshire Council, in terms of information and notice.

Herefordshire Council as Local Planning Authority will regard compliance with terms of the Herefordshire Code of Practice as a material consideration when investigating any complaint or consideration as to the expediency of instigating enforcement action.

# POLYTUNNEL CHECKLIST



The purpose of this checklist is to provide Planning Services with information on which to advise a grower on the need for planning permission. If it is clear from the information provided by the grower that planning permission is required the code of practice does not apply. A separate checklist form should be completed for each location where a grower wishes to erect polytunnels.

Name and address of applicant	Site of Polytunnel (if different)
Full name .....	Address .....
Address .....	.....
.....	.....
..... Postcode .....	.....
Tel. No. ....	..... Postcode .....

1. Approximate date erection of polytunnels commencing:	
2. Overall size of farm:	
3. Type of crop:	
4. Method of growing – in ground, grow bag on the ground or off-ground:	
5a). Area covered by polythene b) height of polytunnel c) method of irrigation d) any other services connected e.g. electricity.	a) ..... b) ..... c) ..... d) .....
6. Expected period of time polythene to be in position	
7a. Approximate date of removal of metal hoops, fixings and frames from land: 7b. Written confirmation that land has been cleared shall be sent to Planning Services within one month of 7a.	
8. Method of disposal of waste polythene:	
9. Location plan enclosed:	Yes / No
10. Submission of a landscape impact statement to include a map showing where polytunnels can be viewed from and proposed mitigation measures. E.g. leaving hedges untrimmed, erecting grey/green mesh wind breaks, tree planting.	
Do you wish the information provided to remain confidential	Yes / No

Signed ..... (Applicant/Agent)

Date .....

Notice may be sent to the Local Planning Authority by Fax: 01432 261970, or to: Planning Services, PO Box 230, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford, HR1 2ZB.

## NOTICE TO HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

From:	
If you have any comments to make or wish to discuss my proposal please telephone:	

Prior notice of the proposed erection of polytunnels at:	
Expected date of erection:	
Expected date of removal:	
I confirm I have notified the relevant Parish Council(s) and near neighbours	Signed: ..... Dated:.....

Please send this notice to Planning Services, Herefordshire Council, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford, HR1 2ZB, or by fax: 01432 261970.



## CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

Report By: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

### Purpose

1. To advise Members on the progress of the 2005/06 Capital Programme for Environment Areas within the overall context of the Herefordshire Council Capital Programme.

### Financial Implications

2. Capital Budgets for the Environment Programme Areas for 2005/06 are shown in Appendix 1, on an individual basis, with funding arrangements indicated in overall terms.
3. The total of the Capital Programme has been decreased from £13,461,000 notified to the previous meeting (see Appendix 1) to £12,047,000. This is a net reduction of £1,414,000. The project in relation to City Centre Enhancements for £2,000,000 has transferred to Economic Development Capital Programme and a number of relatively minor changes have increased the Programme by £586,000.

### Considerations

5. The report has been largely based on the latest round of capital monitoring, which involved an examination of all schemes at the end of September 2005. Care is being taken to ensure the forecast spend accurately reflects the expected spend in 2005/06. The overall spending position is being kept under careful review by the Environment General capital-working Group.
6. The actual spend against each scheme is shown as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005.
7. The total spent or committed to 30<sup>th</sup> September is £6.171 million or 51.2% of the Revised Forecast. The actual amount spent is £3.768 million.

### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT subject to any comments the Committee may wish to make the report be noted.**

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.





# Appendix 1

## ENVIRONMENT GENERAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06

	Original Budget 2005/06	Revised Forecast as at 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	% Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN</b>					
<b>Hereford Integrated Transport Strategy</b>					
<b>Walking and Access</b>					
Pedestrian Crossing improvements	5	6	1	10	166.7
Pedestrian Route & Disabled Access Imps	70	60	(10)	60	100.0
<b>Cycling</b>					
Cycle Network Development	200	100	(100)	14	14.0
<b>Public Transport Minor Schemes</b>					
Bus Priority Measures	50	110	60	7	6.4
Passenger Transport Initiative Rail	35	10	(25)	-	-
Passenger Waiting Facilities	30	30	-	(3)	-10.0
<b>Park and Ride</b>					
Christmas Park and Ride	20	20	-	11	55.0
Park and Ride Sites analysis	40	40	-	15	37.5
<b>Rotherwas Minor Schemes</b>					
Rotherwas Integrated Access	50	50	-	3	6.0
<b>Rotherwas Access Road</b>					
Rotherwas Access Road	260	270	10	286	105.9

	Original Budget 2005/06	Revised Forecast as at 30th September	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	% Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Roman Road</b>					
Roman Road	933	1,074	141	1,017	94.7
Hereford Strategy Development	40	40	-	8	20.0
<b>Rural towns and Market Towns Transport Strategy</b>					
<b>Walking and Access</b>					
Pedestrian and Disabled Access Imps	20	30	10	34	113.3
Rural Footway Improvements	60	120	60	36	30.0
<b>Cycling</b>					
Network of Cycle Routes and Parking	200	91	(109)	8	8.8
<b>Public Transport Minor Schemes</b>					
Public Transport Information Access Points	50	20	(30)	7	35.0
Rural Rail Improvements	40	10	(30)	2	20.0
Passenger Waiting Facilities	40	40		30	75.0
<b>North West Herefordshire HGV Study (Formerly Pembridge Bypass)</b>					
North West Herefordshire HGV Study	46	41	(5)	-	-
<b>Countywide Strategy</b>					
<b>Hearts and Minds</b>					
Travel Awareness	35	35	-	33	94.3
School Travel Support	25	25	-	25	100.0

	Original Budget 2005/06	Revised Forecast as at 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	% Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Minor Safety Schemes</b>					
Minor Safety Improvements	300	300	-	196	65.3
<b>Traffic Calming</b>					
Traffic Calming	150	80	(70)	64	80.0
<b>Safer Routes to Schools</b>					
Safer Routes to schools inc 20mph zones	380	220	(160)	123	55.9
<b>Speed Control</b>					
Safety Cameras		27	27	27	100.0
Village Speed Restrictions	40	50	10	37	74.0
Vehicle Activated Signs	20	20	-	11	55.0
<b>Monitoring</b>					
Monitoring	40	40	-	12	30.0
Accessibility Planning and Development Work	20	20	-	1	5.0
<b>Highways Maintenance</b>					
Capitalised Maintenance of Principal Roads	2,610	1,095	(1,515)	545	49.7
Capitalised Maintenance of Non Principal Roads	3,309	4,843	1,534	2,680	55.3
Footways	390	600	210	327	54.5
<b>Bridge maintenance</b>					
Capitalised Assessment & Strength of Bridges	650	650	-	425	65.4
Transport Staff costs allocated over LTP	301	301	-	-	-

	Original Budget 2005/06	Revised Forecast as at 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	% Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Non LTP SCHEMES</b>					
Hereford Crematorium	547	547	-	4	0.7
Leominster Closed Landfill Monitoring Infrastructure	220	220	-	8	3.6
Extension to Hereford Cemetery	20	20	-	55	275.0
Public Convenience Improvements	215	215	-	25	11.6
City Centre Enhancements	2,000	-	(2,000)		
Grafton Travellers Site		400	400	-	-
Completing the Jigsaw	-	28	28	28	100.0
Waste Performance & Efficiency	-	74	74	-	-
Salt Barn	-	75	75	-	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>13,461</b>	<b>12,047</b>	<b>(1,814)</b>	<b>6,171</b>	<b>51.2</b>

	Original Budget 2005/06 £000	Revised Forecast as at 30 <sup>th</sup> September £000
<b>FUNDING</b>		
Supported Capital Expenditure Revenue	10,459	10,459
Prudential Borrowing	2,875	875
Prudential Borrowing Slippage carried over from 2004/05	127	127
Traffic Calming Developer Contribution		44
Bus Priority Scheme		3
Safety Cameras		27
Waste Performance & Efficiency Grant		74
Completing the Jigsaw	-	28
Grafton Travellers Site		300
Capital Receipts Reserve	-	110
<b>TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE</b>	<b>13,461</b>	<b>12,047</b>



**ENVIRONMENT REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING****Report By: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT****Purpose**

1. To advise Members of the budget monitoring position for the Environment Programme Area budgets for the period to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005. The report lists the variations against budget at this stage in the year.

**Financial Implications**

2. It is expected that all budget variances will be contained within the overall 2005/06 Revenue Budget for Environment.

**Considerations**

3. The detailed report on Budget Monitoring is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.
4. The total Environment Budget for 2005/06 has increased from the amount reported to the last meeting of the Committee which was £23,892,000 to £24,093,980.
5. The Budget for 2005/06 incorporates net underspending of £491,000 brought forward from 2004/05 from Highways and Transportation (-£439,000), Environmental Health and Trading Standards (£170,000) and Planning (£760,000). This excludes any underspending or overspending on the Waste Management PFI contract which is transferred to reserves.

**Highways and Transportation**

6. This service area was previously known as Environment General. Budgets for Waste Management, Cemeteries, Crematorium and Travellers Sites have been transferred to Environmental Health and Trading Standards (previously known as Environment Regulatory).
7. It is anticipated that Winter Maintenance costs could exceed the budget by £200,000 in the event of a standard winter. This overspending together with expenditure incurred in relation to Emergency Maintenance of £150,000 will need to be met by Road Maintenance budget for 2005/06. These budgets are also experiencing significant pressures in the areas of verge and drainage maintenance which leaves expenditure on Roads Maintenance for 2005/06 very tight. Programmes are being reviewed to contain spending within the maintenance budgets.
8. The income budget for Car Parking looks likely to exceed its income target by £200,000 however there is a slight fall in the expected income from De-criminalised Parking of £30,000.
9. With forthcoming renegotiation of contracts in relation to Public Transport, an overspending of £35,000 is expected in 2005/06 rising to £250,000 in 2006/07. Some of these additional costs can be mitigated by the increase in Car Parking income.

10. It is anticipated that expenditure on Street Cleansing could exceed budget by £160,000 and on Public toilets by at least £50,000. This overspending will be contained within within the Highways and Transportation budgets.

### **Environmental Health and Trading Standards**

11. This service area was previously known as Environment Regulatory. Budgets for Waste Management, Cemeteries, Crematorium and Travellers Sites have been transferred from Highways and Transportation.
12. The spending on these services looks very much in line with the budget at present. It is expected that expenditure will exceed budget by £50,000 on Licensing as income has not increased in line with running costs.
13. The Waste Disposal P.F.I contract budget is expected to break even after taking into account the virement to Homelessness in 2005/06. The position is worse than 2004/05 because of the increased proportion of the contract (i.e. up to 25.7% from 24.77%) being borne by the Council and a reduction in the amount received for P.F.I. credits because of a change in basis being used.

### **Planning**

14. During the first six months, building control and development fee income is above budget by approximately £280,000. Whilst income continues to be buoyant, volumes of applications are falling and income targets are only expected to be exceeded by £200,000 for the year.
15. £304,000 of the 2004/05 Planning delivery grant has been brought forward into 2005/06.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 2005/06 be noted subject to the comments which members may wish to make.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified.



**Summary**

	<b>Actuals to Period 6 £000</b>	<b>Budget to Period 6 £000</b>	<b>Variance to Period 6 £000</b>	<b>2005/06 Budget £000</b>
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Trading Stds</b>	<b>3,590</b>	<b>5,449</b>	<b>(1,859)</b>	<b>11,143</b>
<b>Highways &amp; Transportation</b>	<b>4,229</b>	<b>4,624</b>	<b>(415)</b>	<b>9,143</b>
<b>Planning</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>1,231</b>	<b>(717)</b>	<b>2,681</b>
<b>Central Support Costs</b>				<b>1,127</b>
	<b>8,333</b>	<b>11,304</b>	<b>(2,991)</b>	<b>24,094</b>

Areas of Activity	Actuals to Period 6 £000	Budget to Period 6 £000	Variance to Period 6 £000	2005/06 Budget £000
<b><u>Environmental Health &amp; Trading Standards</u></b>				
<b>Operational Budgets</b>				
Air Pollution	(41)	(16)	(25)	(32)
Landfill and Contaminated Land	39	63	(24)	112
Water Pollution	(4)	0	(4)	1
Pest Control	(46)	(37)	(9)	(52)
Dog Control	6	18	(12)	36
Animal Health and Welfare	(26)	3	(29)	7
Licensing	(262)	(152)	(110)	(304)
Trading Standards	24	25	(1)	49
SMSS Head of Env. Health/Trading Standards	16	109	(93)	246
SMSS Commercial team	4	10	(6)	21
SMSS Pollution Control	14	18	(4)	36
Travellers Sites	(5)	(10)	5	(28)
Cemeteries	(10)	6	(16)	(13)
Crematorium	(134)	(145)	11	(305)
Waste Collection (Domestic)	1,316	1,171	145	2,829
Waste Collection (Trade)	(396)	(103)	(293)	(160)
Waste Disposal	1,457	2,994	(1,537)	5,564
Recycling	152	71	81	227
<b>Total Operational Budgets</b>	<b>2,104</b>	<b>4,025</b>	<b>(1,921)</b>	<b>8,234</b>
<b>Staffing Budgets</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2,712</b>
<b>Staff Related Running Costs</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>197</b>
<b><u>Total Environmental Health &amp; Trading Standards</u></b>	<b><u>3,590</u></b>	<b><u>5,449</u></b>	<b><u>(1,859)</u></b>	<b><u>11,143</u></b>

Areas of Activity	Actuals to Period 6 £000	Budget to Period 6 £000	Variance to Period 6 £000	2005/06 Budget £000
<b><u>Highways and Transportation</u></b>				
<b>Operational Budgets</b>				
Highways - Prof. & Engineering	110	164	(54)	113
Highways - Roads Maintenance	1,280	934	346	2,330
Highways - NRSWA	(33)	(59)	26	(117)
Highways - Winter Maintenance	134	162	(28)	530
Highways - Drainage/Flood Alleviation	34	33	1	139
Highways - Street Lighting	(45)	348	(393)	777
Highways - Bridgeworks	59	28	31	67
Highways - Public Rights of Way	102	94	8	223
Highways - Shopmobility	7	8	(1)	16
Street Cleansing	453	366	87	789
Public Conveniences	181	138	43	252
Environmental Support Group/Sustainability	20	19	1	38
<b>Total Operational Budgets</b>	<b>2,302</b>	<b>2,235</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>5,157</b>
<b>Staffing Budgets</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>1,176</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>2,353</b>
<b>Staff Related Running Costs</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>Support Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>121</b>
<b><u>Total Highways</u></b>	<b><u>3,728</u></b>	<b><u>3,508</u></b>	<b><u>220</u></b>	<b><u>7,928</u></b>

Areas of Activity	Actuals to Period 6 £000	Budget to Period 6 £000	Variance to Period 6 £000	2005/06 Budget £000
<b>Operational Budgets</b>				
<b>Transportation/Other:</b>				
Transport - Prof. & Engineering	45	28	17	(292)
Transport - Public Transport (incl. Rural)	578	882	(304)	876
Transport - Design/Planning	24	14	10	29
Transport - Traffic management	5	39	(34)	86
Transport - Road Safety	(7)	2	(9)	3
Transport - Bus Stations	(1)	(4)	3	(14)
Transport - Concessionary Travel	60	129	(69)	311
Highways- Car Parking	(690)	(576)	(114)	(1,200)
Highways- DeCrim. of Parking enforcement	(235)	(289)	54	(449)
Transport - Searches	(1)	(1)	0	(2)
Highways - S.38 Fees	(6)	(21)	15	(43)
Director of Environment	21	6	15	(101)
<b>Total Operational Budgets</b>	<b>(207)</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>(416)</b>	<b>(796)</b>
<b>Staffing Budgets</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>(191)</b>	<b>1,698</b>
<b>Staff Related Running Costs</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>(33)</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Support Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>196</b>
<b><u>Total Transportation</u></b>	<b><u>501</u></b>	<b><u>1,116</u></b>	<b><u>(635)</u></b>	<b><u>1,215</u></b>
<b><u>Total Highways &amp; Transportation</u></b>	<b><u>4,229</u></b>	<b><u>4,624</u></b>	<b><u>(415)</u></b>	<b><u>9,143</u></b>

Areas of Activity	Actuals to Period 6 £000	Budget to Period 6 £000	Variance to Period 6 £000	2005/06 Budget £000
<b><u>Environment Planning</u></b>				
<b>Operational Budgets</b>				
<b>Building Control:</b>				
Building Control Fees	(427)	(313)	(114)	(625)
Building Control	6	17	(11)	33
<b>Development Control:</b>				
Development Control Fees	(598)	(436)	(162)	(872)
Development Control	107	20	87	40
Forward Planning	68	14	54	29
Conservation Grants	(48)	21	(69)	43
Conservation Management	(95)	34	(129)	68
Management and Administration	(90)	238	(328)	521
<b>Total Operational Budgets</b>	<b>(1,077)</b>	<b>(405)</b>	<b>(672)</b>	<b>(763)</b>
<b>Staffing Budgets</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>3,047</b>
<b>Staff Related Running Costs</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Support Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>146</b>
<b><u>Total Planning</u></b>	<b><u>514</u></b>	<b><u>1,231</u></b>	<b><u>(717)</u></b>	<b><u>2,681</u></b>



## **BEST VALUE REVIEWS – IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

**Report By: Performance Officer**

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

- 1 To report the remaining actions and the exceptions to the programmed progress in the improvement plans resulting from the reviews of Commercial Enforcement Development Control, Public Conveniences, and Public Rights of Way.

### **Financial Implications**

- 2 There has been no variation to the financial implications identified in the individual Improvement Plans.

### **Background**

- 3 In response to comments from Members and Officers, the reporting arrangements have been developed by consolidating the reports and only reporting on exceptions to the programmed actions. That is, where actions have been completed earlier than programmed or where the timetable has not been met.
- 4 The Best Value Review of Commercial Enforcement has now been completed and the Cabinet Member's draft Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix 1 for comment by the Committee before being finalised by the Cabinet Member.
- 5 Appendix 2 of this report covers the following improvement plans:
  - Development Control
  - Public Conveniences
  - Public Rights of Way
- 6 In response to concerns regarding performance against Best Value Performance Indicators relating to Planning Applications determined within specified timescales, an action plan has been drawn up. Progress against these actions are attached as Appendix 3.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT Members note and comment on, where appropriate, the implementation of the improvement and action plans.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified.





### BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMERCIAL ENFORCEMENT

#### 1 Introduction

This report is the outcome of the Best Value Review of:

- Environmental Health Commercial (Food Safety and Health and Safety)
- Trading Standards
- Licensing including Taxi Licensing

This improvement plan intends:

- Identify Outcomes
- Set key tasks
- Allocate responsibilities
- Set “stretching” targets and performance measures and indicators
- Specify a timetable
- Identify the financial and environmental impacts of the actions
- Ensure the implications of the Hampton Review as it progresses should be taken into account

#### 2 Preferred Option

The preferred option as recommended by the Environment Scrutiny Committee and endorsed by Strategic Monitoring Committee is to:

##### **Re-engineer the current services to deliver more efficient services**

The service can, through a combination of measures improve its overall efficiency. The use of the Council’s SIPs process and the introduction of a contact centre may enable the current relationship between the “Back Office” and the “Front Office” to be re-engineered. By re-engineering these services greater capacity should be created to deliver services to the public and businesses alike. Greater capacity also allows the service to target more resources on meeting the Council’s Corporate Objectives as well as meeting the requirements of the various Regulatory Agencies.

Whilst this approach does provide scope for greater capacity it will not deliver enough capacity for any of the services to deliver comprehensive enforcement services across the full range of regulatory services. This would mean the Council needs to be quite specific, not only about what it will do with this extra resource, but also what it will not be able to do. Therefore Service Plans will need to be explicit about which work is high priority and which work is lower priority. The Service Plans will need to be explicit about the risks associated with such prioritisation and how such prioritisation fits with the Council’s Corporate Objectives and the requirements of Regulatory Agencies.

#### 3 Identified Outcomes

To achieve these efficiencies the Services will need to undertake the following tasks:

- Create a Contact Centre to handle incoming service requests.

- Re-engineer the current “Front Office” and “Back Office” functions to maximise the principle of dealing with service requests in one transaction and by minimizing referrals to the “Back Office”.
- To maximise the service’s capacity to provide “on-line” forms and advice for businesses.
- Facilitate through the use of IT – flexible working for staff.
- Create a Divisional recruitment plan to ensure professional staff can be recruited and retained by the Division.
- A Gap Analysis on areas where Risk Assessment has not been undertaken.
- Undertake a review of possible joint working arrangements with neighbouring authorities.
- Review the current working practices to maximise the potential for joint working between the three teams.
- Review the funding made available through the fee income from Liquor Licensing to expand the service and to help deliver an out of hours service (this would be cross Division service, including Environmental Protection).
- Ensure that there is integration of the Regional Consumer Direct Service into the Trading Standards Service and the Council’s SIPs programme

In addition the Council will need to take into account the provisions of the Bill announced in the Queens Speech to implement the recommendations of the Hampton review.

Central Government, through the Treasury, are driving the recommendations of the Hampton Review at a rapid pace. This is evidenced by an announcement in the Queen’s Speech that a Bill would be introduced later this year to establish a Central Trading Standards Agency. This new Agency will see some restructuring of trading Standards Services as a consequence.

It is clear that the implementation of the Hampton Review will continue apace over the next few years and the improvement plan will need to take account of the changes being introduced to regulatory Services. The Government, through the Cabinet Office have indicated that the Local Authority Better Regulation Unit (LABREG) is now up already developing radical proposals to implement a new approach at a local level. LABREG is committed to consultation on these issues and is looking to develop the best possible policies for local enforcement consistent with the Hampton principles. Initially LABREG is focussing on:

- Developing a clear set of priorities for local regulatory services
- Codifying and generalising best practice (including best practice in the area of compliance incentives for business)
- Risk-based enforcement
- Developing a better performance management system for local regulators

Clearly many of these issues overlap or have a direct impact on the recommendations in the improvement plan.

#### **4 Peer Assessment of Trading Standards**

Also included in this improvement plan are the actions identified following a Peer Assessment of Trading Standards.

**COMMERCIAL ENFORCEMENT – IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Officer(s)</b>	<b>Start / Finish</b>	<b>Financial / Environmental Implications</b>	<b>Indicator for Improvement</b>
	Improved capacity Improved customer satisfaction	Create a Info by Phone Centre to handle incoming service requests.	EHTS Staff moved to "Info by Phone" Submit to IEG	Head of Service	April 2006 By 15 Sept 05	Cost neutral - long term savings / none	Customer satisfaction Cost of service
	Improved capacity Improved customer satisfaction	Re-engineer the current "Front Office" and "Back Office" functions to maximise the principle of dealing with service requests in one transaction and by minimizing referrals to the "Back Office".	Redesign processes in line with CRM (across all activities within EHTS)	MP / PN / SL / MH / RPK / Waste manager	Commence 1/9/05 complete April 2006	Cost neutral - long term savings / none	Customer satisfaction Cost of service
	Improved responsiveness	To maximise the service's capacity to provide "on-line" forms and advice for businesses.	In line with CRM (across all activities within EHTS)	MP / PN / SL / MH / RPK / Waste manager	Commence 1/9/05 complete September 2006	Spend to save	Customer satisfaction Responsiveness
	Improved capacity Improved customer satisfaction Improved responsiveness	Facilitate through the use of IT – flexible working for staff.	Identify potential participants lead by Division moving to Plough Lane	MP / PN / SL / MH / RPK / Waste manager	Commence 1/9/05 complete April 2006	Reduced accommodation needs / reduction in travel	Customer satisfaction Cost of service Responsiveness

Priority	Outcome	Action	Milestones	Officer(s)	Start / Finish	Financial / Environmental Implications	Indicator for Improvement
			Implement flexible working policy (across all activities within EHTS)			Reduced accommodation needs / reduction in travel	Customer satisfaction Cost of service Responsiveness
	Improved capacity Reduction in staff turnover	To create a Divisional recruitment plan to ensure professional staff can be recruited and retained by the Division.	<p>Implement market forces / supplement.</p> <p>Succession planning</p> <p>Utilise SRDs / implement career development posts and conclude job evaluation</p> <p>Promote professional development support through training agreements and payment of professional fees.</p> <p>Develop secondment opportunities internally and with partners.</p> <p>Establish more structured approach towards training of staff in "difficult to recruit" posts such as</p>	MP / PN / SL / MH / RPK / Waste manager	Ongoing – produce document by 30/12/05	Cost saving	Staff turnover

Priority	Outcome	Action	Milestones	Officer(s)	Start / Finish	Financial / Environmental Implications	Indicator for Improvement
			TSOs and EHOs Promote pride in Herefordshire.				
	Improved performance	A Gap Analysis be undertaken on areas where Risk Assessment has not been undertaken. This work needs to be dovetailed with the outcome of the Local Authority Better Regulation Unit (LABREG) response to the Hampton Review. Work is being undertaken to establish national priorities for the various national agencies who control these regulatory services	Undertake analysis prior to reassessment of National Priorities being established through LABREG	Divisional Management Team	Finish internal analysis by April 2006 Remaining work will need to meet the national timetable.	At this stage this is difficult to determine – the Government have indicated that some authorities do not spend enough money on regulatory services and consequently perform poorly. Benchmarking data is poor and is probably strongest for Trading Standards	Establishment of revised BV166 (part of LABREG work plan)
	Improved capacity	Undertake a review of possible joint working arrangements with neighbouring authorities.	Undertake Analysis of areas where Joint Working may be possible	Divisional Management Team	September 2006	Cost Savings	Cost of Service
	Improved capacity	Review the current working practices to maximise the potential for joint working between the three teams.	Compare / collate back office processes	MP / SL / PN	After the re-engineering takes place	Efficiency Savings	Cost of services Customer satisfaction

Priority	Outcome	Action	Milestones	Officer(s)	Start / Finish	Financial / Environmental Implications	Indicator for Improvement
							Staff Opinion Survey Satisfaction
	Improved performance	Review the funding made available through the fee income from Liquor Licensing to expand the service and to help deliver an out of hours service (this would be cross Division service, including Environmental Protection).	Service restructure following the implementation and transitional phase of the Licensing Act 2003	SL/RK/AET	April 2006	Efficiency Saving	Customer satisfaction
	Improved capacity	To ensure that there is integration of the Regional Consumer Direct Service into the Trading Standards Service and the Council's SIPs programme	Start up of the Regional Consumer Direct Call Centre (being established in Coventry)	MPP	April 2006	Efficiency Saving	Percentage of Herefordshire Consumer Advice Calls dealt with by Consumer Direct
	Improved performance	The Council will need to review the provisions of the Bill announced in the Queens Speech to implement the recommendations of the Hampton review.	Produce a summary of effects	AET	Finish 30/04/06	To be determined	To be determined

**Peer Assessment Improvement Plan for Trading Standards**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Officer(s)</b>	<b>Start / Finish</b>	<b>Indicator for Improvement</b>
H	Engagement with Head of Service, Director and elected Member in the development of the Service	Regular updates and briefings to Director and Member with HOS and other Service Managers Cabinet reports to be submitted where appropriate Secure Members/directors attendance at TSI Conference/Year Ahead Symposium Member to visit office/work shadow Attendance by H.O.S at TS Service Meetings.		Trading Standards Manager / Head of Service	From May 2005 – in progress	
H	Review of Leadership to understand how effective it is	Trading Standards Manager to undertake Corporate Management Competencies programme including 360° assessment Undertake Management Development Programme		Trading Standards Manager	Sept 2005 - 2007	Percentage of SRDs completed within timeframe
H	Engage with a wider range of stakeholders when formulating Policy and Strategy. Balance the needs of different stakeholders when developing policies and strategies	Undertake a stakeholder analysis and review, including using Herefordshire Partnership, Local Area Forums/Citizens Panel for consultation and setting priorities	Effective Involvement through regular consultation and formulation of Policy and Strategy	Trading Standards Manager/QM	In line with Business Planning Process 06/07 September / October 2005	

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Officer(s)</b>	<b>Start / Finish</b>	<b>Indicator for Improvement</b>
H	Communicate relevant policies, strategies and plans to local consumers, consumer representatives and stakeholders	Publish on dedicated TS Website				Customer/Business Satisfaction Survey LAF's /Customer Panel
H	Policy and Strategy is not reviewed and assessed for effectiveness	6 monthly review meeting with PTSO's		TS Management Team	September 2005 6-Monthly	
M	Involve and encourage staff in the development of service policies, strategies and plans	Annual Staff away day to develop Service Plan		Trading Standards Manager	In line with Business Planning Process October 2005	Staff Opinion Survey and Herefordshire Driver results
H	Establishment of formal/informal strategic Partnerships	Engage with key stakeholders		Trading Standards Manager/Hos	Ongoing	
H	Ensure that data reporting for TSS activities is accurate, appropriate and aligns with NPF requirements	Engage with Software provider	In progress	Trading Standards Manager / Lc&Ta	May 2005 to March 2006	
M	Understand the marginal costs of Service provision as a means to help service	Activity based cost analysis undertaken	Activity based costing implemented and used to	Finance Officer / Finance Section	In line with Service Planning Process	



Priority	Outcome	Action	Milestones	Officer(s)	Start / Finish	Indicator for Improvement
	planning and prioritisation		measure efficiency and drive performance Information provided to appropriate Officers		06/07 OCT 2005	
M	Evaluate new technological developments that might impact upon Service delivery	Investigate flexible working practices and new technology	Use of ICT to assist Service delivery improvement	Trading Standards Manager / Ptso's Service Area /	Ongoing	
L	Make services more accessible, especially to present non-users	Identify and survey non-users. Use of questionnaire/Info Shops		Trading Standards Manager/QM	March 2006	
M	Set clear standards for Service provision based on consultation	Consult stakeholders Use of LAF's/Customer Business Satisfaction Surveys		Management Team / Research Team	October 2006	Results of customer satisfaction survey
H	Ensure that Customer and Business Satisfaction Survey questionnaires align with NPF reporting format	Align questionnaires	In progress	Trading Standards Manager / QM	Nov 2005	Results of customer satisfaction survey

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Officer(s)</b>	<b>Start / Finish</b>	<b>Indicator for Improvement</b>
H	Recording, review & analysis of complaints / compliments / comments regarding Service	Implementation of dedicated Corporate CRM system for recording and analysis of Comments, Complaints & Compliments		I T Section	October 2005	Results of customer satisfaction survey
M	Staff feedback of actions / outcomes derived from Herefordshire Driver and Staff Opinion Survey.	Standard team meeting agenda item./ Team Away Day		Trading Standards Manager / Head of Service	April 2006	Staff perception measured by Herefordshire Driver & SOS
L	Talks, exhibitions and seminars undertaken by the Service to be evaluated and assessed for effectiveness / improvement	Pro-forma to be produced Use of pro-forma by all staff undertaking such activity Data used to inform / improve Service delivery	Analysis of pro-formas	All Staff Trading Standards Manager / Management Team	Ongoing	
H	Key performance data to be aligned with requirements of the NPF & Peer Review Model	Trends to be monitored Key data to be benchmarked Targets to be established Reviewed by EH & TS Management Team monthly		Trading Standards Manager / Eh & Ts Management Team	March 2006	.

## Appendix 2

### Improvement Plans from Best Value Reviews

#### Development Control

Priority	Outcome	Action	Milestones	Officer(s)	By When	Progress	Indicator for Improvement
High	Improved quality and accessibility of highways design advice Improved speed of applications processing and responsiveness of service	Review and update current Highway Design Guide	Adopt Manual for Streets when published by DfT in November 2005	Team Leader Transportation	December 2003 Date revised to July 2005	In progress by Owen Williams. Draft consultation expected November with publication due December 2005.	BV109 – Determine applications within 8/13 weeks

#### Public Conveniences

Priority	Outcome	Action	Milestones	Officer(s)	By When	Progress	Indicator for Improvement
High Priority – 2003/5	Improved provision of facilities	Refurbishment programme in progress	Tenbury Road, Bromyard scheduled for Summer 2005. Accelerated closure programme to be agreed.	HOS Property	To be completed 2004/5	Tenbury Road in progress. Programme being finalised.	Public perception indicator

#### Public Rights Of Way

Priority	Outcome	Action	Comment	Officer(s)	By when Revised Dates	Progress	Indicator for Improvement
High	Increase throughput of Diversion Orders	Research, devise and write a fast-track method for determining applications for Diversion Orders	Staff time – possible offset through income generation. Now part of strategy.	RH/MM	1/7/02 – Date revised to November 2004	Strategy to be submitted for approval by the Cabinet Member in November.	



### APPENDIX 3

#### Development Control Action Plan

Actions	Milestone/Target/When	By When	Lead officer(s)* and resources	Progress to end of September 05
Participate in implementation of corporate GIS project	Publish details of MVM based planning register on line Improve "Pendleton" score and meet requirements of BVPI 205	October 2005	Head of Planning Planning Services User Group DC Manager ICT	Data cleansing and validation complete. Implementation continuing towards go live date in early November.
Participate in implementation of corporate Electronic Record & Document Management System	Implement corporate ERDDMS Capture historic Planning and Building Control records. Re-engineer DC and BC business processes	Early 2006	ICT Project Manager Head of Planning DC & BC Managers Planning Services User Group	Corporate ERDMS currently on hold. Alternative UK Planning on line documentation and application handling package being evaluated.
Maintain sufficient staff and financial resources to deliver planning services	Fully staff existing structures	Ongoing	HoS DC Manager DC Team Leaders	Currently 3 vacancies in DC. 1 currently advertised and 2 awaiting recruitment authorisation.
	Maintain register of external contractors / self employed staff	Ongoing	DC Manager Team Leaders / CADPOG	Maintain updates to CADPOG register of available staff.
	Consider paying retainers to potential consultants in order to ensure availability	June 2005		Considered but found not to be good value for money
	Payment of Market Forces Supplements	Ongoing	HoS Head of HR	May need to be re-considered following recruitment round in November.
	Create and develop trainee posts	Aug 2005	HoS DC Manager Head of HR	Requirement for career graded posts to enable recruitment at entry level
	Visit schools to promote careers	June 2005, March 2006	DC Manager / Personnel	DC Manager to develop programme

Actions	Milestone/Target/When	By When	Lead officer(s)* and resources	Progress to end of September 05
Current development plan coverage for Herefordshire	Adoption of Unitary Development Plan BVPI 200	Early/mid 2006	HoS Forward Planning Manager	UDP Inquiry concluded in June. Inspectors report awaited before mid 2006. UDP adoption anticipate late 2006.
Improve back office through:	Re-engineering processes for the determination of applications	Sept 2005	HoS DC Manager DC Team Leaders	Continue with review and overhaul of current DC practise eg despatch of decision notices
	Implement & utilise Corporate GIS	October 2005	Planning Service and ICT	Corp GIS available from early November to provide internet application searches and access to MVM 20/20 records
	Document Management system providing external/internal access to back office	March 2006		See comments re: UK Planning
	Electronic submission of planning applications	December 2005		Level 2 integration with Planning Portal in place. Electronic applications now being received.
	Consultation by email	December 2005		Means of electronic capture of application documentation required eg UK Planning before e-consultation possible.
	Monitoring of area team and individual performance	Ongoing	HoS DC Manager DC Team Leaders	Ongoing
Information gather from other Authorities	Carry out statistical and process benchmarking exercises with high performers	July 2005	HoS DC Manager & Team Leaders	DC Manager to undertake
	Visit other Authorities who operate a single planning committee	July 2005	Marie Rosenthal / Member / Head of Service	Committee Services to arrange

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Milestone/Target/When</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Lead officer(s)* and resources</b>	<b>Progress to end of September 05</b>
Conduct staff meetings on issues raised by the Staff Opinion Survey	Agreed action following meeting	June 2005	Head of Planning Services	Considered and discussed at monthly DC staff meeting
Identify training needs in SRD's	Training programme for SRDs	May 2005	DC Team leaders	Ongoing as part of SRD programme
Revise processes for S106 agreements	Agree process with legal Services	Nov 2005	HoS DC Manager Legal Services Manager	Possible report to Planning Committee on 25 <sup>th</sup> November





## **MONITORING OF 2005/2006 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – APRIL 2005 TO SEPTEMBER 2005**

**Report By: Director of Environment**

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

1. To update Members on the exceptions to the targeted progress made by the Environment Directorate for the six months April to September 2005 towards achieving the performance indicators / targets which appear in the Council's Corporate Plan and are reported bi-monthly.

### **Financial Implications**

2. All expenditure in respect of performance indicators / targets is from approved budgets.

### **Content**

3. The report of exceptions to the targeted performance is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.
4. Performance against all other indicators is within 10% of target. In addition performance, where ascertainable, against those indicators which are reported annually also appears to be on target.
5. Also included, for comparative purposes, are the targets and out-turns for 2004/5, the targets for 2005/6 and the performance from April to July 2005.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the exceptions monitoring report in relation to the 2005/2006 local and national performance indicators be noted, subject to any comments which Members may wish to raise.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified.



# APPENDIX 1

## ENVIRONMENT

### National:

Ref	Target/Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Target 2005/6	Performance Apr - July	Performance Apr - Sept	Comments
	<b>Strategic objective</b>					
BV199a	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level	27%	25%	12%	14%	Stretch Target have been negotiated in LPSA2G

## HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

### National:

Ref	Target/Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Target 2005/6	Performance Apr - July	Performance Apr - Sept	Comments
BV100	Local authority road works per kilometre of traffic sensitive road	3.1861	1.1	0.0	0.0	Target for 2005/6 in line with Joined Up Programme
	<b>Fair Access</b>					
BV165	The percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people.	93.1%	99% 65%	30% Addition work to compensate for failure of Commercial road resurfacing in planning stage	30% Order with HJS to undertake works to improve outcome. Onsite works imminent	BVPI definition amended – revised targets for 2005/06
BV178	The percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way that were easy to use by members of the public – CSS/CA Methodology used to measure	45%	47%	54.6%	54.6%	This is the result of the first 2.5% random network survey carried out in May 2005 second 2.5% survey will be Nov 2005.

PIs 2005/6 - Performance April to September 2005

Local:

Ref	Target/Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Target 2005/6	Performance Apr - July	Performance Apr - Sept	Comments
	Kilometres of rural footways constructed	1.5km	1.0km	2.01km	2.01km	Included Roman Road scheme
	% of days public conveniences facilities closed	2.15%	1.1%	1.4%	3.1%	Problem With lighting in East Street / Union Walk problem with water management system now removed
	Number of Penalty Charge Notices issued – amended indicator	23,562	23,000	6,489	9,635	Below target at this stage due to staff shortages and amended shift patterns to increase coverage in response to complaints.
	<b>Network Serviceability</b>					
	The percentage of major roadwork schemes that over-run the published completion date.	20%	0%		40%	
	<b>Bridges</b>					
	Number of bridges inspected to safeguard structural integrity (two year rota).	428	395	70	280	Schedule to finish late Autumn

**PLANNING**

**National:**

Ref	Target/Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Target 2005/6	Performance Apr - July	Performance Apr - Sept	Comments
	<b>Service delivery outcome</b>					
BV109a	Determine major commercial and industrial applications within 13 weeks	46%	60%	41%	44%	Action plan to address issues has been formulated and in progress.
BV109b	Determine minor commercial and industrial applications within 8 weeks	51%	65%	56%	53%	
BV109c	Determine other applications within 8 weeks	64%	80%	64%	67%	

**Local:**

Ref	Target/Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Target 2005/6	Performance Apr - July	Performance Apr - Sept	Comments
	Percentage of applications invalid on receipt (919 out of 3686)	30%	<25%		38%	Sampling undertaken in September

