

A G E N D A

Environment Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday, 25th September, 2006**

Time: **10.00 a.m.**

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

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

For any further information please contact:

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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, J.W. Hope MBE,
T.W. Hunt, J.W. Newman, Ms. G.A. Powell, R. Preece, Mrs. S.J. Robertson,
Miss F. Short and J.B. Williams

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY) To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
4. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 5h June 2006.	1 - 6
5. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
6. REVIEW OF THE TRAVELLERS POLICY To nominate a small team from this Committee to review the Draft Travellers' Policy before it is passed to the Cabinet Member for approval.	7 - 8
7. PROPOSED REVIEW OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING IN HEREFORDSHIRE To consider a scoping statement for a proposed review of household waste recycling in Herefordshire.	9 - 14
8. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING To advise Members on the progress of the 2006/07 Capital Programme for Environment Areas within the overall context of the Herefordshire Council Capital Programme.	15 - 22
9. ENVIRONMENT REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING	23 - 28

	To advise Members of the financial position for the Environment Programme Area budgets for the period to 31st July 2006.	
10.	MONITORING OF 2006/07 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - APRIL TO JULY 2006	29 - 32
	To update Members on the exceptions to the targeted progress made by the Environment Directorate for the four months April to July 2006 towards achieving:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the targets that appear in the Council's Corporate and Annual Operating Plans and which are reported monthly to respective Cabinet Members and, by exception, bi-monthly to Cabinet • the targets that appear in the Directorate Plan which are reported monthly to the respective Cabinet Members and, by exception, bi-monthly to Cabinet. 	
11.	HYDROPOWER BRIEFING	33 - 38
	To inform Members about the potential for developing hydropower within the County and how any proposals may relate to the Unitary Development Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, the Council's commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through its Carbon Management Action Plan, and the recently adopted Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy.	
12.	SAFETY ON THE A49 & A465 TRUNK ROADS	
	To receive an update on safety issues on the A49 and A465 trunk roads.	
	Agenda Item No 12 - Report issued at Meeting	
	The attached document entitled "Highways Agency Liaison Update" was issued to Members at the meeting on 25th September, 2006.	
13.	COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME	39 - 42
	To consider the Committee work programme for the remainder of 2006/07.	

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

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(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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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, 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, 5th June, 2006 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,
Ms. G.A. Powell, Miss F. Short and J.B. Williams

In attendance: Councillors: P.J. Edwards (Cabinet Member - Environment),
Mrs. J.P. French, T.M. James, J. Stone, D.B. Wilcox (Cabinet Member -
Highways and Transportation) and R.M. Wilson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That subject to indicating Councillor Ms G.A. Powell as being in attendance the minutes of the meeting held 27th March, 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

No suggestions were received from members of the public.

6. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (ENVIRONMENT)

The Committee received a presentation by the Cabinet Member (Environment).

A report had been prepared by the Cabinet Member (Environment) outlining the issues affecting the Environment Programme area and highlighting some of the specific challenges for 2006/07.

In presenting his report the Cabinet Member highlighted in particular:

- The central theme of his report endorsed the Council's corporate approach to management via Annual Operating Plans and Services Delivery Plans.
- Encouraging collective comment had resulted from the Comprehensive

Performance Assessment Team during their visit. He had demonstrated best practice to them by reference to the scrutiny review of the polytunnel Code of practice.

- Best Value performance indicator outcomes for April 2005 to March 2006 indicate steady progress which now needed to be consolidated and continued with.
- In addition to the successes on agenda pages 13 and 14 the directorate had made progress with land acquisition and detail proposals for the new Hereford Crematorium and the extension to the Hereford Cemetery. Work was continuing concerning public safety relating to unstable memorial stones.
- Contractors were progressing works to the Grafton Travellers Site.
- Responsibility under the Licensing Act 2003 had been successfully assumed with very few appeals emerging during the year.

The Committee noted the report by the Cabinet Member. The following is an outline of the questions and responses or comments made during the ensuing questioning of the Cabinet Member:

- Questioned on the use of grant income to support kerb side collection the Cabinet Member reported that 2 additional collection vehicles had been acquired using grant income enabling the collection area to be extended. While 60% of the County was covered, he emphasised that a balance had to be struck between the cost of collection and the resultant benefits. Various waste disposal methods in the joint counties, for example via the Estech plant, were not part of the PFI Contract.
- If the PFI Waste Contract failed then the contract contained provisions to send waste to landfill, however, alternative methods of disposal would need to be looked at. He was unable to comment in detail on the proposed disposal plant for Madley as this was subject to a planning application, possibly in July 2006.
- The Director reported that the PFI Waste Contract was still subject to complex and sensitive negotiations. A report would be presented to Cabinet and Members would be kept briefed. The PFI contract was being monitored by central government.
- Questioned on the power to enforce cleanliness issues (dog fouling, litter) the Cabinet Member commented that, rather than devolve the issue to the Parish Councils, he wished to see closer partnership working with the police possibly via Community Support Officers, who would be better placed to undertake enforcement in a consistent manner. In a rural county the cost had to be balanced against the effectiveness of the services provided. He also commented that Environmental Health officers were receiving training to enforce these new powers.
- While the Lifescapes project had ended in September 2005 the Council's Conservation – Management & Support section were working closely with English Nature, Herefordshire Nature Trust etc, to further develop the work through the Mapping Opportunities for Habitat and Landscape (MOHL) resources.
- While the number of Trading Standards prosecutions seemed low, when compared to consumer and business complaints, it was noted that prosecutions were dealt with under a statutory process with the service having a good track record of successful prosecutions.
- The Cabinet Member reported that while the Public Conveniences Best Value Review Improvement Plan set out a programme of renewal, resiting or disposal, the programme had been varied according to circumstances e.g. facilities had been renewed as part of the Leominster bus station refurbishment scheme. While the directorate budget had been reduced he

was keen to see the programme progress.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for his report and responding to the Committee's questioning.

7. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION)

The Committee received a presentation by the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation).

A report and presentation had been prepared by the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) outlining the issues affecting the Highways and Transportation Programme area and highlighting some of the specific challenges for 2006/07.

In presenting his report the Cabinet Member highlighted in particular:

- The Comprehensive Performance Assessment Team had made positive comments about the Council's Local Transport Plan; the Directorate's work to encourage cycling; its liaison with the Highways Agency to reduce accidents on the A49 and its work on the low-floor bus project.
- The Council and Herefordshire MIND received national recognition after a transport scheme aimed at helping people in isolated communities was short listed for an award.
- While some unavoidable disruption had been experienced, improvements to the City centre were progressing or completed.
- Improvements had been made to the cycle network and he highlighted the new cycle way along Roman Road.
- A major challenge would be to improve the condition of the roads. He highlighted that the government calculated financial allocation per head of population rather than on kilometres of road, which naturally disadvantaged rural counties. Other challenges would be to cut road casualties even further and to promote sustainable transport that served all the people of the County.
- He clarified in relation to agenda page 25 that the target was to reduce to less than 134 the number of people killed or seriously injured on the County's roads (averaging out to not more than 129 over the next three years) and to ensure that not more than 17 children are killed or seriously injured on our roads.

The Committee noted the report and presentation by the Cabinet Member. The following is an outline of the questions and responses or comments made during the ensuing questioning of the Cabinet Member:

- While the Council were ready to start with the Ross-on-Wye flood alleviation scheme it had been put on hold due to problems with DEFRA funding. The Council were also working with the Environment Agency to get the best flood alleviation scheme for Belmont.
- Director level meetings continued to be held with the Highways Agency concerning safety on the A49. While some progress had been made, with a number of additional safety measures being installed at Ashton and other proposals being programmed (date yet to be announced), he would be keeping up the pressure for further and quicker action by the Agency.
- Questioned on aspects of train travel, and in particular trains unrepentantly terminating in Ledbury, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he had been in correspondence with Central Trains who indicated that the situation had been remedied in the new timetable. However, he was aware that the Central Trains franchise expired in December 2006.

- Having emphasised the employment and environmental aspects, a further bid for the Rotherwas Access Road had been submitted. The bid had been graded a Priority 1 scheme by the region's government Agencies, however, the outcome of the bid was still awaited from central government.
- Subject to contractual issues the park and ride scheme was progressing. The Committee suggested that local businesses/service providers be kept informed of the scheme in view of the limited parking facilities at some premises.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for his report and presentation and for his response to the Committee's questioning.

8. GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (GEM) PERFORMANCE 2005/06: ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee reviewed the Council's environmental performance, particularly in relation to Good Environmental Management (GEM) and ISO 14001, during 2005/06 to ensure that it continued to improve overall.

The Director of Environment reported that the GEM Annual Report summarised the Council's performance against internal objectives over the year and new developments. He highlighted progress with the Carbon Management Action Plan (CMAP) and that good environmental interest was being achieved in schools. The Council were progressing towards the corporate biodiversity target of increasing the percentage of council owned land without a nature conservation designation managed for biodiversity.

The Sustainability Manager highlighted key points from the GEM Annual Report, performance in relation to the GEM targets for 2005/06 and the proposed programme for 2006/07, based on the Corporate Plan, and the in-house elements of the Environment Strategy.

On scrutinising the report the following principal points were noted:

- Reasonably reliable data was now being collected in relation to electricity usage, however, water usage monitoring was problematical due to the inaccessibility of some water meters.
- Comment was made concerning possible conflict between not cutting hedges under the government Single Farm Payment Scheme and visibility under road safety.
- Over the coming years an increased commitment would be made towards improving air quality particularly in relation to vehicle pollution. The lead would be taken by the Environmental Health officers who monitor, and where necessary, produce specific action plans.
- Property Services were working with West Mercia Supplies to continue sourcing 100% renewable electricity.
- That positive progress was being made in relation to householder energy efficiency, which may be attributed to the fact that the County had some older style housing for which grant assistance may be available.

RESOLVED: That the GEM performance 2005/06: Annual Report be noted.

9. BIOFUELS BRIEFING

The Committee were informed about the rapidly developing biofuels industry and

how it related to aspects of Planning, Environmental Health and Trading Standards, the Council's commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through the Carbon Management Action Plan and the recently adopted Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy.

The Sustainability Manager reported that the use of biofuels was growing because they reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by replacing fossil fuels. Biofuels were produced from crops and did not increase CO₂ emissions because the carbon dioxide released when they were burnt was re-absorbed by the following year's crop. Her report briefly outlined the background to its use; local developments; the regulatory considerations, including Waste Management Licensing and planning considerations; set out a number of potential benefits and commented on the regional dimension.

During the course of debate the following principal points were noted:

- While the Regional Energy Strategy for the West Midlands (2004) set a stretching regional target of 5% renewable generation by 2010 (compared to a national target of 10%) and 10% by 2020, only 1% had been achieved by 2005. The sharp rise in the cost of fossil fuels may create an improved market for other fuels (e.g. wood).
- Local micro-generation could be considered, particularly in view of the alleged high loss of electricity between generator and end user.
- Following improvements in biomass boiler systems and knowledge gained from its use at Weobley School other schools will be visited during the summer to investigate possible energy improvements.
- It was suggested that with the increased use of crops as biomass, the use of genetically modified (GM) crops may appear again on the national agenda.
- The Committee suggested that the Cabinet Member (Environment) ensure that suitably skilled officers are included in any pre-planning discussion with potential business developers to ensure that biofuel options are considered at an early stage of any planning application discussions.
- To facilitate at a later stage a wider debate on power generation in or around the County, the Committee requested a similar briefing paper on the possible use of hydro generation systems.

RESOLVED: That the biofuels briefing report be noted and a further briefing paper on hydro generation systems be produced for discussion at a future meeting.

10. ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07

The Committee was informed of the latest position with regard to the Environment Capital Programme for 2005/06 and 2006/07.

The Director of Environment and the Director of Resources' representative reported that work on the 2005/06 outturn continued, however, spending on Local Transport Plan (LTP) schemes was expected to be close to the forecast amount. Spending on non-LTP schemes, largely funded by Prudential Borrowing was expected to be £740,000 less than forecast, which will be carried forward to 2006/07.

The total Capital Programme for 2006/07 showed £12,554,434. which had largely been based on the LTP. Appendix 1 to the report gave details of individual schemes.

The Committee noted that a bid under the Cycle Demonstration Towns Project had

been unsuccessful.

RESOLVED: That the Environment Capital Programme 2006/07 report be noted.

11. ENVIRONMENT REVENUE BUDGET 2006/2007 AND OUTTURN FOR 2005/2006

The Committee was informed of the latest position with regard to the Environment Budget for 2006/07 following formal approval of the Council's budget.

The Director of Environment and the Director of Resources representative reported that work was continuing to complete the final outturn but an underspending of around £800,000 was expected of which approximately £400,000 would be carried forward into 2006/07. The underspending was largely on Planning due to staff savings, additional building control and development fee income and Planning Development Grant income. The Director reported that following concern about an overspend on winter maintenance, tight control had been imposed on expenditure and this had led to a larger than expected underspend.

The Council approved a 2006/07 budget of £25,754,000 for the Environment Programme area. In addition to the effects of inflation a number of adjustments, both budget additions and expected efficiency savings, were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Environment Revenue Budget 2006/07 and Outturn 2005/06 report be noted

12. BEST VALUE REVIEWS - IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The Committee was updated on the remaining actions and the exceptions to the programmed progress in the improvement plans resulting from the reviews of Commercial Enforcement, Development Control and Public conveniences.

The Director of Environment reported that major elements of the improvement plans had been completed. Other elements would be closely supervised or monitored via the Integrated Performance Management report.

RESOLVED: that the report on the Best Value Reviews- Implementation of Improvement Plans be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.23 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

REVIEW OF THE TRAVELLERS' POLICY

Report By: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

Wards Affected

1. County-wide.

Purpose

2. To nominate a small team from this Committee to review the Draft Travellers' Policy before it is passed to the Cabinet Member for approval.

Financial Implications

3. There are no financial implications.

Background

4. The Herefordshire Travellers' Policy was agreed by Cabinet on 28th November 2002 and was to be subject to review. A new Draft Policy has now been produced, following a review of the existing Policy, by an Officer team led by the Environmental Services Manager. This report outlines proposals for a small team of Members from the Environment Scrutiny Committee to review the Draft Policy before it is passed to the Cabinet Member for approval.
5. A Draft Policy has now been completed by an Officer Team and has involved an input from the Travellers' Service, Planning, the Police, the Primary Care Trust and Children's and Young Peoples Services.
6. Having largely completed the review it is proposed that four Members of the Environment Scrutiny Committee are nominated to undertake a further review of the Draft Policy before it is passed to the Cabinet Member for Environment for adoption by the Council.
7. In undertaking this review Members will need to take account of a number of issues:
 - a. Some of the Policy Statements are those of external organisations and may reflect organisational policies of those organisations and therefore cannot be altered.
 - b. The Policy review has taken into account the latest legal position for Travellers. The law around Travellers is frequently established in Case Law and is therefore prone to change fairly quickly.
 - c. The area in the Draft Policy dealing with Housing Needs Assessment is currently being developed by Central Government and it is felt that at this stage it cannot be too prescriptive.
8. It is suggested that the Review of the Draft Policy by the Members of the Review Team determines and makes representations to the Cabinet Member (Environment) on the:
 - a. Acceptability of the Draft Policy for the Council.

- b. Identifies any areas that require amendment, addition or deletion.
- c. Identifies any further areas of work that need to be undertaken on the Draft Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT four Members of Environment Scrutiny Committee be nominated to form a Review Team for the Draft Herefordshire Travellers' Policy as detailed in paragraph 7.

PROPOSED REVIEW OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Report By: Director of Environment

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To consider a scoping statement for a proposed review of household waste recycling in Herefordshire.

Financial Implications

2. These are expected to be contained within existing budgets.

Background

3. At an informal meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee held 20th July 2006, Members identified a number of issues as possible areas for scrutiny. The meeting concluded that this Committee should review household waste recycling in the County and indicated a number of issues the review should cover. Strategic Monitoring Committee also indicated that the review should be completed by January 2007.
4. Based on the issues identified by Strategic Monitoring Committee a suggested scoping statement for the review, which includes the proposed terms of reference for the review, is attached at Appendix 1
5. If the Committee decide to approve the scoping statement and terms of reference for the Review it is suggested that the Committee appoint the Chairman and Members to complete the Review.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT (a) the Scoping Statement for a review of Household Waste Recycling in Herefordshire be agreed subject to any amendments the Committee would like to make;

(b) the Committee appoint the Members to serve on the Review Group;

and;

(c) the Committee appoint a Chairman of the Review Group.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None Identified

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Paul James, Committee Officer (Scrutiny) on 01432 260460

REVIEW:	Household Waste Recycling	
Committee:	Environment Scrutiny Committee	Chair: Councillor
Lead support officer:		

SCOPING

Terms of Reference

- To review the current methods of household waste recycling in Herefordshire and performance against Government targets.
- To investigate how improvements can be made to the recycling service in the future, in light of the previously adopted Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire & Worcestershire (The Strategy), changes in legislation, the review of the National Waste Strategy and new contractual arrangements.
- Following the review to advise the Cabinet Member (Environment) of the best policy to put in place to a) reduce waste and b) increase waste recycling in the Herefordshire.

Desired outcomes

- For the current household waste recycling service and future proposals to have been fully examined in public and in an open and transparent way (subject to confidentiality imposed by contracts or ongoing contract negotiations.).
- For Members of the Review to have considered the various recycling methods currently available and proposals for the future to meet Government targets in line with the adopted Strategy.
- For any future service to be capable of implementation in Herefordshire in collaboration with partner organisations.

Key questions

- How is the current household waste recycling service performing in the context of Government targets and legal requirements?
- What issues have been raised by the public – how has the Council responded – what has been the reaction of the public?
- What are the internal/external factors that affect recycling in Herefordshire and what level of influence does the Council have to change these factors?

- Within the legal framework, what options are there to improve the current policy particularly in line with the adopted Strategy?
- What areas of household waste recycling can/should be improved?
- Can or should kerbside collection be expanded to other areas of the County?
- Are the current bring-site facilities sufficient?
- Are the Household Waste Site facilities sufficient eg capacity, opening times, range of collection, ease of use?
- Is the Council's current policy towards 'green bag' recycling appropriate and what is the public perception concerning this policy?
- Is recycling understood by the public - Is it clear what can and cant be recycled – what are the barriers to getting the public to reduce waste – how can these barriers be overcome?
- What would be the implications of changing the recycling service (e.g. financial cost, increased need for resources, environmental cost/benefit etc).
- What means of measurement are or can be used to judge the success or otherwise of any policy. Are national targets being met – are local targets set at appropriate levels?

Links to the Community Strategy

The Review Group will identify how the outcome of this review contributes to the objectives contained in the Herefordshire Community Strategy including the Council's Corporate Plan and other key plans or strategies.

Timetable

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Agree approach, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/dates	First meeting of Review Group to be held in September or early Oct 2006
Collect current available data	
Collect outstanding data	
Analysis of data	
Final confirmation of interviews of witnesses	
Carry out programme of interviews	
Agree programme of site visits	
Undertake site visits as appropriate	
Update to Environment Scrutiny Committee	-

Final analysis of data and witness evidence	
Prepare options/recommendations	
Present Final report to Environment Scrutiny Committee	4 th December 2006 or a special meeting?
Present options/recommendations to Cabinet	Jan/Feb 2007
Cabinet response	
Implementation of agreed recommendations	
Members	Support Officers

DRAFT

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

Report By: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

1. To advise Members on the progress of the 2006/07 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 increased to £13,216,000 from £12,554,000 notified to the previous meeting (see Appendix 1). This is a net increase of £662,000 and relates to:
 - LPSA 2 grant for Street scene and Road Safety totalling £310,000;
 - An increase in budget on Public Toilet improvements made available through the receipt generated from the sale of old sites of £161,000;
 - A reduction in budget in relation to Hereford Crematorium of £147,000 due to delays in land acquisition resulting in two months slippage in the programme.
 - Slippage in the 2005/06 Capital Programme in relation to Leominster Closed Landfill Monitoring Infrastructure and Pembridge and Grafton Travellers' Sites totalling £324,000.

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 July 2006. Care is being taken to ensure the forecast spend accurately reflects the expected spend in 2006/07. The Environment General Capital Working Group is keeping the overall spending position under careful review.
6. The actual spend against each scheme is shown as at 31st July 2006.
7. The total spent or committed to 31st July is £5.438 million or 41.1% of the Revised Forecast. The actual amount spent is £1.320 million.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

ENVIRONMENT GENERAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06

	Original Budget 2006/07	Revised Forecast as at 31 st July	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	% Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN</u>					
<u>Hereford Integrated Transport Strategy</u>					
Walking and Access					
Pedestrian Route & Disabled Access Imps	75	75		45	60.0
City Centre Pedestrian Enhancement	200	200		56	28.0
Cycling					
Cycle Network Development	200	200		138	69.0
Public Transport Minor Schemes					
Accessible Bus Network	45	45		45	100
Park and Ride					
Christmas Park and Ride	20	20		1	5.0
Park and Ride Permanent Site Development	150	150		50	33.3
Rotherwas Access Road					
Rotherwas Access Road	500	500		343	68.6
Roman Road					
Roman Road				(11)	0.0
Hereford Intelligence Transport System					
Hereford Intelligence Transport System	95	95		95	100

	Original Budget 2006/07	Revised Forecast as at 31 st July	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	% Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>Rural towns and Market Towns</u>					
<u>Transport Strategy</u>					
Walking and Access					
Pedestrian and Disabled Access Imps	20	20		11	55.0
Rural Footway Improvements	95	95		1	1.0
Cycling					
Network of Cycle Routes and Parking	200	200		28	14.0
Public Transport Minor Schemes					
Public Transport Minor Improvements	60	60		41	68.3
Rural Rail Improvements	50	50		2	4.0
HGV Projects	50	50		13	26.0
Travel Awareness Campaign	35	35		13	37.1
Accessibility Partnership Development	30	30		30	100.0
<u>Countywide Strategy</u>					
Hearts and Minds					
School Travel Plan Support	25	25		25	100

	Original Budget 2006/07	Revised Forecast as at 31 st July	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	% Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Minor Safety Schemes					
Minor Safety Improvements	300	300		308	102.7
Traffic Calming					
Traffic Calming	150	150		21	14.0
Safer Routes to Schools					
Safer Routes to schools inc 20mph zones	385	385		99	25.7
Speed Control					
Speed Limits	60	60		38	63.3
Monitoring					
Monitoring	40	40		17	42.5
Highways Maintenance					
Capitalised Maintenance of Principal Roads	1,728	1,728		1,177	68.1
Capitalised Maintenance of Non Principal Roads	3,547	3,547		1,763	49.7
Footways	1,064	1,064		109	10.2
Embankments	100	100		6	6.0
Bridge maintenance					
Capitalised Assessment & Strength of Bridges	900	900		541	60.1
Rights of Way Improvements	25	25		17	68.0
Transport Staff costs allocated over LTP	301	301		301	100.0

	Original Budget 2006/07	Revised Forecast as at 31st July	Change in Forecast	Spend/ Known Commitments	Appendix 1 % Spent/ Committed
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>Non LTP SCHEMES</u>					
Hereford Crematorium	1,047	900	(147)	40	3.0
Leominster Closed Landfill Monitoring Infrastructure	500	697	197	2	0.2
Public Convenience Improvements	200	361	161	361	100
Grafton Travellers Site	200	339	139	226	66.7
Pembridge Travellers Site	58	60	2	60	100
Waste Performance & Efficiencies	74	74	0	74	100
LPSA 2 Street Scene		94	94	94	100
LPSA 2 Road Safety		216	216	12	6
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	12,554	13,216	662	6,192	46.8

	Original Budget 2006/07	Revised Forecast as at 31 st July
	£000	£000
<u>FUNDING</u>		
Supported Capital Expenditure Revenue	10,475	10,475
Prudential Borrowing	1,560	1,211
Prudential Borrowing Slippage 2005/06	247	807
LPSA 2 Funding		310
Bus Priority Scheme		
Completing the Jigsaw	-	
Grafton Travellers Site	100	239
Waste Performance & Efficiencies Grant	74	74
Capital Receipts Reserve	98	100
TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE	12,554	13,216

Notes:

SUPPORTED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (REVENUE) SCE(R)

An approval to borrow in order to finance capital expenditure and permits an authority to pay for capital expenditure out of credit rather than cash. SCE(R) is issued before the start of the financial year to which it relates, and can only be used in respect of capital expenditure defrayed in that year. SCE(R) can be used in relation to any kind of capital expenditure

PRUDENTIAL BORROWING

Borrowing used to finance capital expenditure which does not have SCE(R) support. The financing costs of such borrowing have to be met from revenue budget savings or directly from Council Tax.

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

1. To advise Members of the financial position for the Environment Programme Area budgets for the period to 31st July 2006. The report lists the variations against budget at this stage in the year.

Financial Implications

2. It is expected that all Environment directorate budget variances will be contained within the overall 2006/07 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 2006/07 has increased from the amount reported to the last meeting of the Committee, which was £25,754,000 to £26,576,350. This is mainly due to revision of Central Support budgets.
5. The net Budget for 2006/07 incorporates budget of £413,000 brought forward from 2005/06 in Planning in relation to Planning Delivery Grant (£209,000) and Conservation projects (£104,000) and in Highways & Transportation in relation to Street Lighting (£100,000).
6. In overall terms the Environment Budgets are expected to come in budget. Although Planning Fee and Car Park income is being closely monitored any variation on budget due to these income streams will be handled corporately, in line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Management Strategy.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

7. The spending on these services is being managed within budget except for the additional costs incurred in relation to the clean up operation at Cadbury's factory. A funding application has been lodged with the Food Safety Act Fighting Fund which, if successful, will mitigate the forecast overspend of £33,000.
8. Based on the latest information on volumes, the Waste Disposal P.F.I contract expenditure is currently expected to break even.

Highways and Transportation

9. The Highways budgets continue to be under considerable pressure in relation to road maintenance including verge and drainage maintenance, street cleansing and public toilets. Every effort will be made to contain spending within the budget,

10. Budget adjustments have been made to incorporate the additional pressures on Winter Maintenance £200,000, Street Cleansing £100,000 and Public Conveniences £100,000. Roads maintenance budget has been reduced by £400,000 in order to meet these pressures.
11. Also, the income budget for Car Parking has increased by £200,000 and the resulting additional expenditure budget will be used to meet Public Transport costs in accordance with the Local Transport Plan Strategy.

Planning

12. Although during the first 4 months of the year Planning Fee income is slightly exceeding it's budget, current forecasts based on income patterns in previous years and the possible impact of the introduction of Design & Access Statements indicate that it is likely that Fee income will fall £130,000 below target. Fee income will be closely monitored throughout the year and reductions in expenditure budgets will be made where possible to maintain expenditure within budget.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 2006/07 be noted subject to the comments which members may wish to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

Environment Directorate

Appendix 1

Summary	2006/07 Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn 2006/07 £'000	Gross Exp to Period 4 £'000	Income to Period 4 £'000	Net Exp/(Inc) to Period 4 £'000	Budget to Period 4 £'000	Over/(Under) spend to Period 4 £'000
Environmental Health & Trading Stds	13,278	13,311	3,504	(1,370)	2,135	3,315	(1,180)
Highways & Transportation	10,379	10,379	4,328	(1,482)	2,846	2,457	389
Planning	2,919	3,049	1,327	(959)	368	707	(339)
	26,576	26,739	9,159	(3,811)	5,349	6,479	(1,130)

Environmental Health & Trading Stds

Appendix 1

Areas of Activity	2006/07	Forecast	Gross Exp to Period 4	Income to Period 4	Net	Budget to Period 4	Appendix 1
	Budget £'000	Outturn 2006/07 £'000			Exp/(Inc) to Period 4 £'000		Over/(Under) spend to Period 4 £'000
<u>Operational Budgets</u>							
Air Pollution	(33)	(33)	4	(48)	(44)	(11)	(33)
Landfill and Contaminated Land	115	115	14		14	38	(24)
Water Pollution	1	1	10	(12)	(2)	0	(2)
Pest Control	(70)	(70)	6	(59)	(52)	(23)	(29)
Dog Control	37	37	7	(2)	5	12	(7)
Animal Health and Welfare	7	7	12		12	2	10
DEFRA Grant	0	0	2	(32)	(30)	0	(30)
Licensing	(312)	(312)	17	(86)	(69)	(104)	35
Trading Standards	50	50	20	(8)	12	17	(5)
Commercial team	21	54	11		11	7	4
Pollution Control	37	37	19	(23)	(4)	12	(16)
Travellers Sites	(29)	(29)	13	(30)	(17)	(11)	(6)
Cemeteries	(14)	(14)	33	(49)	(16)	(4)	(12)
Crematorium	(313)	(313)	65	(167)	(102)	(104)	2
Waste Collection (Domestic)	3,133	3,133	766	(59)	707	774	(67)
Waste Collection (Trade)	(501)	(501)	69	(443)	(374)	(199)	(175)
Waste Disposal	6,825	6,825	1,264	(337)	927	1,719	(792)
Recycling	594	594	170		170	198	(28)
<u>Operational budgets</u>	9,548	9,581	2,502	(1,355)	1,148	2,323	(1,175)
Staffing Budgets	2,463	2,463	827		827	821	6
Staff Related Running Costs	169	169	49		49	56	(7)
Management & Overheads	346	346	126	(15)	111	115	(4)
Support Services - ICT SLA	171	171					
Central Support	581	581					
<u>Total Environmental Health & Trading Stds</u>	13,278	13,311	3,504	(1,370)	2,135	3,315	(1,180)

Highways and Transportation

Appendix 1

Areas of Activity	2006/07 Budget £'000	Forecast 2006/07 £'000	Gross Exp to Period 4 £'000	Income to Period 4 £'000	Net Exp/(Inc) to Period 4 £'000	Budget to Period 4 £'000	Over/(Under) spend to Period 4 £'000
Operational Budgets							
Roads Maintenance	2,411	2,411	718		718	627	91
NRSWA	(120)	(120)	8	(38)	(30)	(40)	10
Winter Maintenance	740	740	279		279	250	29
Drainage/Flood Alleviation	142	142	13		13	36	(23)
Street Lighting	869	869	153	(2)	151	242	(91)
Bridgeworks	68	68	29		29	17	12
Shop mobility	17	17	1		1	5	(4)
Street Cleansing	962	962	307		307	264	43
Public Conveniences	357	357	108		108	142	(34)
Public Transport (incl. Rural)	1,183	1,183	551	(474)	77	233	(156)
Traffic management	88	88	30	(25)	5	25	(20)
Transport Planning	56	56	27	(14)	13	19	(6)
Road Safety	3	3	6	(7)	(1)	1	(2)
Bus Stations	(14)	(14)	15	(8)	7	(1)	8
Concessionary Travel	832	832	244	(9)	235	209	26
Car Parking	(1,580)	(1,580)	332	(742)	(410)	(489)	79
DeCrim. of Parking enforcement	(310)	(310)	28	(160)	(132)	(146)	14
Searches	(2)	(2)		(1)	(1)	(1)	0
S.38 Fees	(44)	(44)			0	(15)	15
Operational Budgets	5,658	5,658	2,849	(1,480)	1,369	1,154	215
Staffing Budgets	2,648	2,648	1,036		1,036	883	153
Staff Related Running Costs	92	92	42		42	31	11
Management & Overheads	993	993	399	(2)	397	386	11
Support Services - Legal & Admin	9	9	2		2	3	(1)
- ICT SLA	228	228					
Central Support	751	751					
Total Highways & Transportation	10,379	10,379	4,328	(1,482)	2,846	2,457	389

Planning

Appendix 1

Areas of Activity	2006/07 Budget £'000	Forecast 2006/07 £'000	Gross Exp to Period 4 £'000	Income to Period 4 £'000	Net Exp/(Inc) to Period 4 £'000	Budget to Period 4 £'000	Over/(Under) spend to Period 4 £'000
Operational Budgets							
Building Control:							
Building Control Fees	(641)	(711)		(248)	(248)	(214)	(34)
Building Control	34	34	1		1	11	(10)
Development Control:							
Development Control Fees	(1,304)	(1,104)		(497)	(497)	(435)	(62)
Development Control	41	41	15		15	13	2
Forward Planning	30	30	19	(5)	14	10	4
Conservation							
Conservation Grants	44	44	19	(120)	(101)	15	(116)
Conservation Management	116	116	11	(20)	(9)	39	(48)
Operational Budgets	(1,680)	(1,550)	65	(890)	(825)	(561)	(264)
Staffing Budgets	2,891	2,891	946	0	946	964	(18)
Staff Related Running Costs	203	203	62	0	62	68	(6)
Management & Overheads	747	747	254	(69)	185	236	(51)
Support Services - ICT SLA	150	150					
Central Support	608	608					
Total Planning	2,919	3,049	1,327	(959)	368	707	(339)

MONITORING OF 2006/07 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – APRIL TO JULY 2006

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 four months April to July 2006 towards achieving:
 - the targets that appear in the Council's Corporate and Annual Operating Plans and which are reported monthly to respective Cabinet Members and, by exception, bi-monthly to Cabinet
 - the targets that appear in the Directorate Plan which are reported monthly to the respective Cabinet Members and, by exception, bi-monthly to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

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

Content

3. Cabinet considers an Integrated Performance Report bi-monthly which includes a report on performance against corporate performance indicators, each of which is "traffic lighted" red, amber or green. By exception all red "traffic lighted" indicators are reported in full to Cabinet.
4. For the four-month period to July 2006 none of the indicators for which the Environment Directorate and the Cabinet Members for the Environment and Highways and Transportation have responsibility received a red "traffic light".
5. Performance against all other indicators is within 10% of target. In addition performance, where ascertainable, against those indicators where data is not available either monthly or quarterly also appears to be on target.
6. There are no exceptions to report.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT subject to any comments which Members may wish to raise, the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Integrated Performance Report to Cabinet.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Graham Dunhill, Director of Environment on 01432 260041

Figures from Integrated Performance Report											
	Indicator	CMB Lead	Cabinet Lead	HC Corp Plan	LAA	LPSA2	HCS KPIs	Status	06/07 Target	Reason	
HCS 52	Number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on roads	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1	1	1	1	G	134	06/07 Target to achieve three year average of less than 129 for period 06-08	
HCS 54	% of Streets and public areas falling below grade B for cleanliness - Litter	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Edwards	1	1	1	1	G	18%		
HCS 56a	Amount of household waste collected per person per annum	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Edwards	1	1		1	G	520kg		
HCS 60e	Net perceived improvement: Level of traffic congestion	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1	1		1	G		Although an action plan is being developed, there is still a need for the Partnership to engage with the Environment Directorate to agree a target	
HCS 7	Traffic (AADT) volumes into Hereford	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1	1		1	G	105		
HCS 7	Traffic (AADT) volumes on the principal rural road network	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1			1	G	105		
HCS 56b	% of household waste going to landfill	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Edwards	1	1		1	G	75.90%		
	Biodiversity - HC land	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1				G	2.8%		
	Indexed number of cycling trips	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1				G	107		
	Principal Roads condition - top quartile rating	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1				G	5%		
HCS 27	Number of under 16s Killed or seriously injured (KSI) on roads	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1	1			G	15		
	Number of bus passenger journeys per year on public buses	Mr Dunhill	Cllr Wilcox	1				G	3,817		

HYDROPOWER BRIEFING

Report by: Director of Environment

Wards affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform Members about the potential for developing hydropower within the County and how any proposals may relate to the Unitary Development Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, the Council's commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through its Carbon Management Action Plan, and the recently adopted Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy.

Financial implications

2. None.

Considerations

3. The Unitary Development Plan, Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy and the Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy.

Background

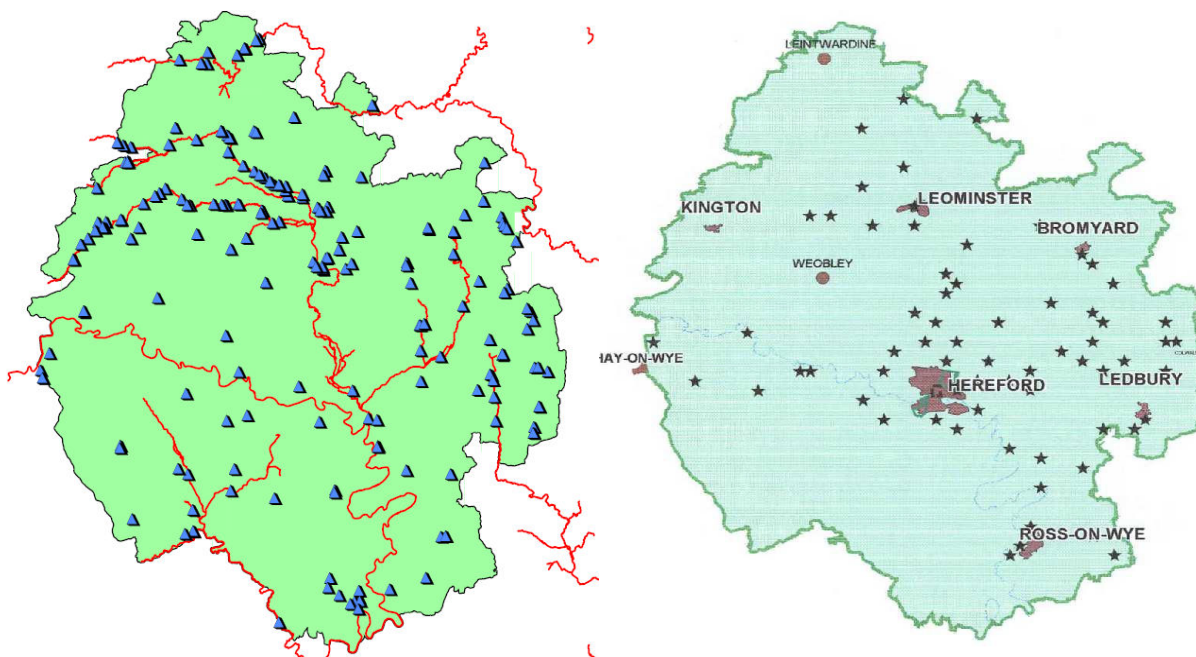
4. Herefordshire Council's Environment strategy states the Council's commitment to promoting the use and development of appropriate sources of renewable energy "where they are economically and environmentally sustainable through the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)". The UDP acknowledges that investment in renewable energy can help meet commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and notes government policy to stimulate the development of renewable energy sources – as long as they are "economically viable and environmentally acceptable". Any benefits that accrue from the development of renewable energy, says the UDP, "should be balanced against the need to take full account of the impact upon the landscape of the County, local amenity, and the potential for pollution".
5. A key aspect of renewable energy schemes is that the generation of energy is decentralised, that is, it occurs at various locations located as close to demand clusters as possible, and is managed locally. This minimises power losses through transmission, increases opportunities for local economic development and employment and ultimately improves energy security by means of diversity of supply, local choice and local control.
6. For decentralised renewable energy systems to meet their potential they should include a mix of different energy sources, to include as many as possible from wind, solar thermal, solar electric, biofuels and hydropower. Such a mix would reflect that called for in the government's recent Energy Review.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Trish Marsh,
Sustainability Manager on 01432 261930

7. The Regional Energy Strategy for the West Midlands (2004) sets a stretching regional target of 5% renewable generation by 2010 (the national target is 10%) and 10% by 2020. It calls upon Local Authorities to “encourage proposals to for the use of renewable energy resources ... through their Development Plans” (see also RPG11).
8. Hydropower systems convert potential energy stored in water held at height into kinetic energy and use it to turn a turbine and produce electricity. According to the British Hydro Association, small-scale hydropower is one of the most cost-effective and reliable clean energy technologies. Definitions vary, but generally and for the purposes of this paper, a hydroelectric plant that produces less than 1000 kW (1MW) of electricity is termed micro-hydro (sometimes the phrase mini-hydro is used for plants between 100kW and 1MW). Such installations can be operated as local power sources or, above a certain threshold, can supply to a grid. Improvements in small turbine and generator technology mean that useful amounts of power can be produced from even a small stream; there are several examples of hydropower plants in the 50kW range selling electricity to the national grid.
9. The energy available in a body of water depends on the mass of water flowing per second and the height (or head) through which the water falls. There are many hydroelectric system designs but they are generally divided into three categories: low, medium and high head. Low head systems can be installed in, for example, old mill sites with a weir and sluice. High head schemes are geared to fast-flowing upland streams.
10. Small-scale hydropower has particular advantages over wind, wave and solar power, namely: a high efficiency (70 - 90%); a high capacity factor (typically greater than 50%); a high level of predictability, a slow rate of change (output power varies only gradually from day to day, not from minute to minute), robustness (systems can be engineered to last for 50 years or more) and little effect on the local environment (small-scale hydro is in most cases 'run-of-river' requiring no water storage).
11. Hydropower requires the water source to be relatively close to the site of power use, or to a suitable connection to the national grid. It is possible for single households with a mains connection located near a hydro source to install a micro-hydro system. Allowances should be made for seasonal variations in water flow, such as having access to a back up power system.
12. Capital costs are fairly high, but lower if some basic infrastructure, such as an old mill or weir, is already present. The Energy Saving Trust estimates that for low head systems (not including the civil works – so assuming an existing pond or weir), costs will be in the region of £4,000 per kW installed up to about 10kW, and dropping per kW over that level. For medium heads they estimate a fixed cost of about £10,000, and then about £2,500 per kW up to around 10kW. Running costs after installation are minimal.
13. To assess the suitability of a potential site, its hydrology needs to be known and a professional site survey carried out to determine actual flow and head data. For a run-of-river scheme the capacity of the scheme will be limited by the mean flow value. According to the British Hydro Association, preliminary investigations by a hydrologist will typically require 2-3 days' work and will cost between £300 and £1000 at 2004 figures. If the outcome were promising this would need to be followed by a feasibility study.

Local developments

14. Activities to promote biofuels development and the take-up of wind and solar power are already underway in Herefordshire. Little progress has been made to date in establishing the feasibility of hydropower. However a local conservation group called the Lugg Valley Heritage Network is actively interested in exploring the feasibility of installing hydroelectric plants along the length of the River Lugg.
15. The obvious sites to explore for possible hydropower development are those with existing or historical water mill, weir or sluice infrastructure. The Lugg Valley Heritage Network has referred to “one hundred water wheels” that once generated power along the Lugg. The map (below left) indicates the 193 weirs identified on OS maps of the county.



16. The first known mill in Herefordshire was at Wellington, dated by dendrochronology to 696 AD. By the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 there were at least 116 mills in the county as seen on the second map (below right). This includes 16 in and around the manor of Leominster. There were probably several more unrecorded mills in the town of Hereford. Altogether 348 mills are listed in the council's Sites and Monuments Record dating from the medieval period to the 20th century. However, a complete survey has not been carried out and there were probably far more in total.
17. Some river flow data is maintained at the National River Flow Archive, managed by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. This tells us that of the rivers flowing through Herefordshire, the faster ones include the Lugg, which at Lugwardine has a mean flow of around 11.2 m³/s, the Arrow at Titley Mill, which flows at around 2.4 m³/s and the Wye at Belmont, which reaches 47.4 m³/s. Most other gauging stations in the county show rivers flowing at around 1 m³/s or less. A scan of local OS maps suggests that a head of more than 5m will be difficult to achieve given the terrain.
18. As a rough calculation, a micro-hydro installation (with a 70% efficiency) running on the Lugg at Leominster with average flow of 5.64 m³/s and a head of 1.5m would give

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Trish Marsh,
Sustainability Manager on 01432 261930

a power output of 59kW. With a load factor of 66% (which scales the output according to the proportion of time that the turbine is actually used to produce power) the energy output over a year would be around 342 MWh, enough to meet the annual electricity demand of 100 homes.

19. Alternatively the electricity generated by such a scheme could be sold directly back to the grid. At current prices small renewable producers can get around 6.5p per kWh as well as Renewables Obligation Certificates or ROCs (see 27) worth 4p per kWh, putting the direct financial benefit at around £35,500/yr. Assuming a total cost of construction in the region of £100,000 - 200,000 (excluding grants), return on investment could be envisaged within 3-6 years.
20. Alternatively, assuming the average household electricity bill is around £300, the financial benefit of such a scheme that directly meets the electricity demand of 100 homes would amount to around £30,000/yr plus ROCs worth around £13,000/yr (see para 27).

Regulatory considerations

21. Planning permission will be required for most hydro developments. While likely to be generally supportive, planners will have concerns for the visual appearance of the scheme; potential noise impacts on nearby residents; preservation of structures of historical importance; and environmental impacts, on which the Environment Agency and English Nature will also be consulted. Special consideration will need to be given to the needs of any migratory fish.
22. The appropriate licence must be granted by the Environment Agency, depending on whether water is being abstracted (even if it is being returned later), impact on migratory fish and on the structural alterations required for the surrounding land. An environmental impact assessment may also be required, depending on the size of the scheme.
23. It is also necessary to establish whether the required permissions will be granted to use all the land required – both to develop the scheme and to maintain the necessary access to it. Since water-courses often form property boundaries, the ownership of the banks and existing structures may be complex.

Grants and funding

24. The Government's Low Carbon Buildings Programme offers grants to "community" hydropower schemes, which must be owned and operated by non-profit organisations such as councils, schools and housing associations, and run for the benefit of the local community. A grant of up to 50% of project costs can be obtained up to a maximum of £30,000 from stream 1 of this programme. Smaller grants are available for domestic schemes, and considerably larger grants will be available when stream 2 comes online.
25. South Somerset Hydropower Group, supported by South Somerset District Council, now has ten members producing electricity on the region's waterways. This initiative has attracted cash from the Council, a £45,000 grant from the South Western Electricity Board's green electron fund and, in 2002, a £95,000 grant from the Energy Saving Trust (Times article, 'Hydro power to the people,' 1 September 2006).

Potential benefits

26. Supporting increases in renewable energy generation capacity contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the county and helps fulfil the objectives of the Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy, to which the Council is signed up.
27. Creating and managing the associated new technology and infrastructure will boost economic regeneration and provide skilled jobs in the area. The payback from the sale of electricity will be boosted by an additional revenue stream from Renewables Obligation Certificates, which are issued for each unit of renewable electricity produced, and which are currently trading for around £40 per MWh/year.
28. Including hydropower in the county's renewable energy portfolio will contribute to the diversity and breadth of the renewable energy choices available locally (see para 7).

Further considerations

29. More research is needed in order to determine whether the potential for such schemes would be of sufficient benefit to Herefordshire and what the potential is for securing any external funding.
30. To identify whether there are viable sites for hydropower development in the county it would be prudent to first carry out a scoping study. Such a study might be available for around £10,000, although the commercial rate is well above this figure. It would look at river flow and dynamics and assess overall potential for hydropower.
31. The British Hydropower Association is looking to conduct a study of England and Wales in the near future and it may be possible to establish information relevant to Herefordshire from this.
32. Subsequently, if appropriate sites are located and there existed the desire to pursue the development of a hydropower scheme, it would be necessary to carry out a full feasibility study of each site as discussed earlier (see para 13).

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted, subject to any comments members may wish to make to the Cabinet Member (Environment).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None Identified.

HIGHWAYS AGENCY LIAISON UPDATE

Report By: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To update Members regarding issues of concern relating to Trunk Roads in the County raised with the Highways Agency.

Financial Implications

2. None

Considerations

3. The Council has established liaison arrangements with the Highways Agency to enable issues of mutual concern to be raised and hopefully addressed. The Director of Environment and Head of Highways and Transportation hold regular meetings with the Highways Agency at a senior level to monitor and review progress and a regular quarterly meeting of appropriate officers, chaired by the Head of Highways and Transportation, takes place to discuss strategic and operational matters. These arrangements help to ensure communication channels are kept open and allow issues of concern to be raised.
4. In addition to the above, the Head of Highways and Transportation arranged meetings over recent months between relevant local members and the Highways Agency to discuss issues of local concern.
5. The following provides an update on key issues that have recently been raised with the Agency.

A49 Ashton Bends

6. Following considerable discussion with the Highways Agency regarding safety concerns at this location, the Agency have confirmed that a scheme aimed at addressing these concerns will be implemented. The introduction of anti-skid surface treatment was completed in April 2006 and a scheme of improved signing is planned for introduction by the end of the year with works currently planned to start in December. Proposals to reduce the speed limit in the area to 40mph are currently being considered for future introduction, subject to the necessary legal processes being completed. The Agency has undertaken to update the Council on progress with the legal process through the regular liaison meetings. Subject to completing the legal process associated with reducing the speed limit, this may be implemented during 2007/8. Members will be updated further when the Agency confirms the timetable for implementation.

Speed Limit at Wellington Marsh

7. Concerns have previously been expressed regarding speeds on the A49 through Wellington Marsh and the Agency had been asked to consider reducing the current speed limit. The Agency has evaluated the potential for this and intends to pursue the introduction of a 50mph speed limit in this area. Initial publication of the propose orders is anticipated by the end of 2006 with implementation, subject to consideration of any objections received, likely to follow during 2007.

ASDA Development Highway Works

8. The Head of Highways and Transportation, in his statutory role as Traffic Manager, raised significant concern with the Highways Agency regarding the severe traffic congestion in Hereford caused by the ongoing works associated with the works at the A49 / A465 roundabout required to provide the access to the new ASDA development. The Highways Agency are responsible for managing these works and as a result of representations made, whilst the works are continuing to cause congestion, improved liaison arrangements have now been established to ensure the Council is consulted on temporary traffic management arrangements and the effects of the works are minimise as much as possible. This involves daily updates on the traffic management arrangements planned. The works will continue to be monitored and issues of concern raised with the Highways Agency.

Road Safety Strategy Development

9. The Council is keen to work more closely with the Agency to address road safety concerns and achieve reductions in road casualties on the trunk road network in the County. This is particularly important given the Council's ambitious Local Public Service Agreement targets to further reduce road casualties in the County. To this end, a workshop was held with the Highways Agency and other local authorities in the West Midlands Region to review the approaches currently taken and opportunities for improvement. It is hoped that this workshop will provide the basis for further work with the Agency to tackle road safety concerns on trunk roads in the County, for example in relation to joint working on road safety education initiatives.

Conclusion

10. The Director of Environment recognises the importance of maintaining effective liaison arrangements with the Highways Agency to ensure the Council's concerns in relation to the management and improvement of trunk roads in the County are effectively addressed. The arrangements that have been established provide appropriate forums to address issues of strategic and operational concern. Further updates will be provided to future meetings of this committee.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Members note the content of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Richard Ball, Transportation Manager, 01432 260965

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Report By: **Chairman, Environment Scrutiny Committee**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

- 1 To consider the Committee work programme for the remainder of 2006/07.

Financial Implications

- 2 None

Background

- 3 In accordance with the Scrutiny Improvement Plan a report on the Committee's current Work Programme will be made to each of the scheduled quarterly meetings of this Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the current Work Programme is attached at appendix 1.
- 4 While the programme has based on the programme agreed by Committee in December 2005, it has been varied by the Committee at subsequent meetings or by me as Chairman according to circumstances following consultation with the Vice-Chairman and the Director of Environment. Members are reminded that guidance for developing an effective work programme is contained in the Scrutiny Handbook previously issued to Members.
- 5 The Vice-Chairman and I are aware of a number of other issues for consideration. These have been discussed with the Director and will be added to the program as it is further developed. The issues are listed at the foot of the programme.
- 6 Should any urgent, prominent or high profile issue arise, as Chairman I may consider calling an additional meeting to consider that issue.
- 7 Should Members become aware of any issues they consider may be added to the scrutiny programme they should contact either myself as Chairman or the Vice-Chairman to log the issue so that it may be taken in to consideration when planning future agendas or when revising the work programme.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT subject to any comment or issues raised by the Committee the Committee work programme be approved and reported to Strategic Monitoring Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

APPENDIX 1

4th December 2006	
Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Environmental Management (GEM) Monitoring • Capital Budget • Revenue Budget • Report on Performance Indicators
Scrutiny Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings of the Travellers Policy Development Review Group. • The findings of the Polytunnel Review Group. • The findings of the Household Waste Recycling in Herefordshire Review Group.
12th March 2007	
Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Strategy Issues • Capital Budget • Revenue Budget • Report on Performance Indicators • Annual Review of Service Plans
Scrutiny Reviews	

Items for consideration as the programme is further developed:

- Scrutinising progress with the Local Transport Plan (LTP2) and any associated issues.
- The effect on Herefordshire of changes to the Single Farm Payments system (e.g. hedge cutting, drainage ditch clearance)
- Implications arising from the Hampton Review (concerning regulatory inspections and enforcement – within the context of this Committee).
- Any specific issues arising from Council Strategies or Plans.
- Contribute to policy development of LTP3.
- Consideration of revised/reviewed Flood Defence Policy.

