

# HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

## **OPERATING PLAN 2007 – 08**

### Action for a better Herefordshire

“ A place where people, business and an outstanding natural environment will together bring about sustainable prosperity and well-being for all”.

- ...Putting people first
  - ...Promoting our county
  - ...Providing for our communities
  - ...Protecting our future
- Quality life in a quality county*

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## **Foreword**

*[To be added for the final version]*

**Neil Pringle**

**Chief Executive**

**Introduction**

This Plan set out what the Council intends to do between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008. The crucial issues are:

- ✓ raising our performance significantly across a range of national performance indicators so that we are judged to be improving well, instead of only adequately
- ✓ to the same end, striving to reach the harder standard for the Use of Resources Assessment, with the aim of reaching the highest level (4) during the period of the Corporate Plan 2009-10
- ✓ delivering the first phase of our comprehensive *Transformation Programme*, particularly through *Herefordshire Connects*, so that we both improve customer services and can make the multi-million pounds of efficiency savings needed to deliver the Council's priorities
- ✓ establishing a strong, effective and efficient Public Service Trust that unites, in one organisation, the executive functions of the Council and the commissioning arm of the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust
- ✓ further improving our now good performance in safeguarding children and young people; in particular ensuring that all assessments of children in need are carried out promptly
- ✓ implementing, with our partners, the first phase in the radical improvement of preventative and social care services to maximise the independence, well-being and choice of older people and adults with learning disabilities
- ✓ making good progress with our key infrastructure projects for a successful economy: *Rotherwas Futures* and *The Edgar Street Grid*
- ✓ securing a consistently high standard of planning and performance management across the Council to drive continuous improvement in services
- ✓ putting in place, with our partner organisations in *The Herefordshire Partnership*, the arrangements needed to capitalise fully on the opportunities provided by the Local Government White Paper, *Strong and prosperous communities*
- ✓ continuing to strengthen the scrutiny function's contribution to the continuous improvement in services

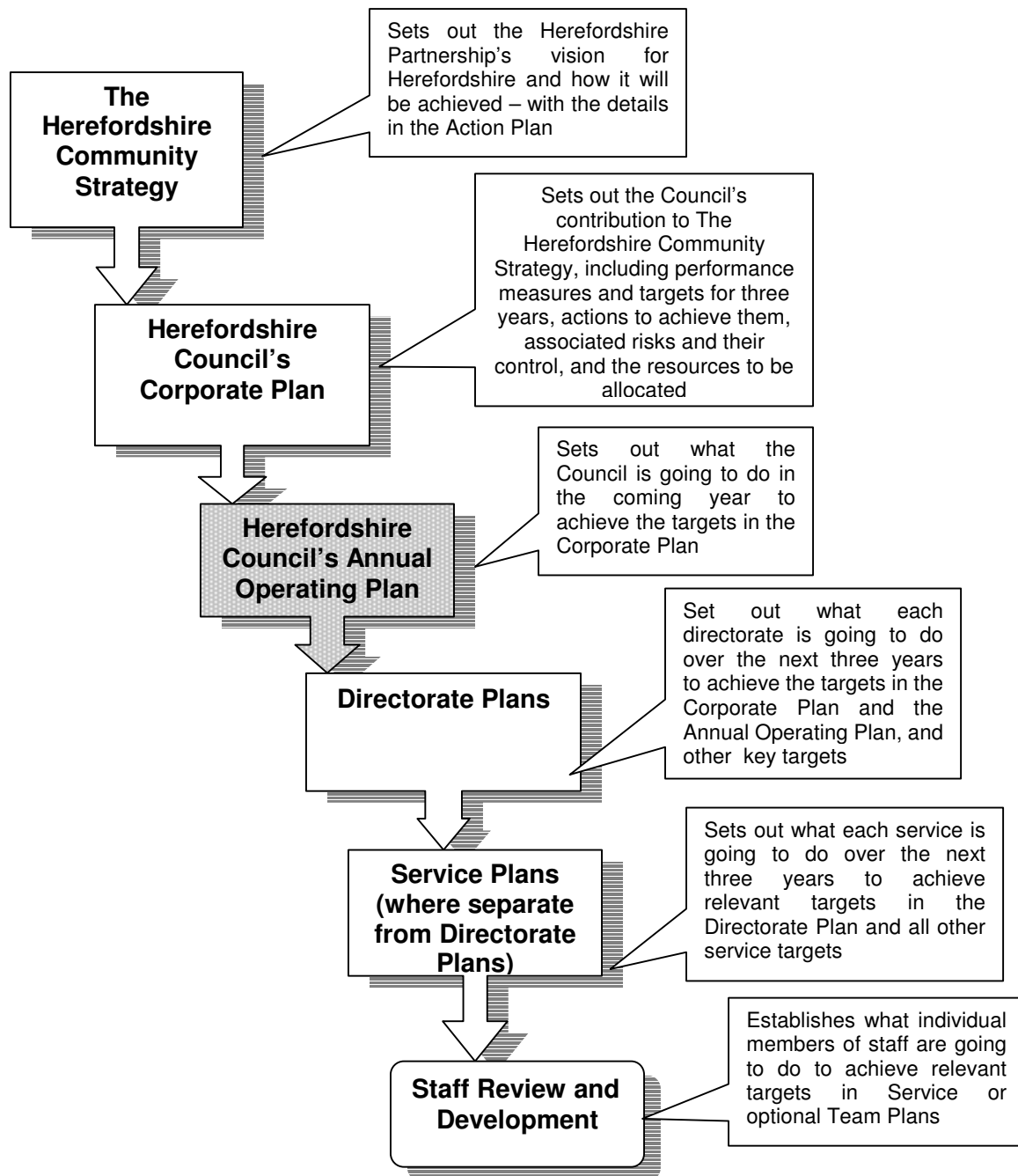
The Council's Corporate Plan 2007-10 describes the demographic, social and economic characteristics of Herefordshire; it identifies the main challenges facing the county and the Council; and it shows what the Council can do to respond to those challenges. On the basis of that analysis and the results of public consultation, it sets out the Council's objectives, priorities and targets for the next three years.

The Operating Plan has been prepared to begin to make a reality of those intentions in the coming year.

The actions, targets and milestones described in this Operating Plan flow directly from the Corporate Plan and the ambitions we share with our partners, which are embodied in the *Herefordshire Community Strategy 2006 – 2020* and the associated *Local Area Agreement* with the Government. In turn, all the Council's plans for individual

directorates, departments and services in 2006-07 will give effect to this overall Operating Plan.

The relationship between the *Herefordshire Community Strategy* and these various plans is shown on the following page.



- Aims**
- Performance indicators**
- Targets**
- Actions**
- Risks & their control**
- Resources**

## The Council's priorities

As set out in the Corporate Plan 2007-10, the Council's **top priorities** are:

- ✓ to **maximise the health, safety, economic well-being, achievements and contribution of every child**, with special emphasis on sound arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable children and sustained improvements in educational attainment
- ✓ to **enable vulnerable adults to live independently and, in particular, to enable many more older people to continue to live in their own homes**
- ✓ to **secure the essential infrastructure for a successful economy**
- ✓ to **sustain thriving communities, including by securing more efficient, effective and customer-focused services, clean streets, tackling homelessness and effective emergency planning**
- ✓ to **protect the environment**, including by **producing much less waste, recycling much more of what remains** and significantly **reducing carbon emissions**
- ✓ to **improve transport and the safety of roads**, including further reductions in the numbers of people killed or seriously injured
- ✓ to **promote diversity and community harmony** and **strive for equal opportunities** for all the people of Herefordshire, regardless of race, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, geographical location, income or age
- ✓ to **give effective community leadership**, working with partners to deliver the Herefordshire Community Strategy, including the *Local Area Agreement*

To make these things possible, the Council's **organisational priorities** are:

- ✓ to streamline its processes, assets and management structures, and **secure significant efficiency savings**, so as to keep down Council Tax increases and invest in priority service improvements
- ✓ to **ensure that its essential assets**, including schools, other buildings, roads and ICT, **are in the right condition for the long-term cost-effective delivery of services, and ensure business continuity** in the face of emergencies
- ✓ better to **understand the needs and preferences of service users and Council Tax-payers**, and to tailor services accordingly
- ✓ to **recruit, retain and motivate high quality staff**, ensuring that they are trained and developed so as to maximise their ability and performance
- ✓ to **embed corporate planning, performance management and project management systems** so as to continue to drive up service standards and efficiency

The rest of the Plan shows, for each of these priorities, what the Council aims to achieve in 2007-08, and the key actions it intends to take to do so. Many of the actions contribute to more than one of the priorities. Where they are of particular significance to more than one priority they are repeated, but mostly they are described in relation to the priority to which they contribute most.



# Challenges and responses: the action plan for 2007-08

## Part One: Making a reality of the Herefordshire Community Strategy

***Maximise the health, safety, economic well-being, achievements and contribution of every child, with special emphasis on sound arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable children and sustained improvements in educational attainment***

### The challenge

The overall challenge is to deliver, with our partners and across the whole of the Council's activities, fully integrated and coherent services for children and young people, as required by *Every Child Matters* and the *Children Act 2004*.

Within that framework, we must give the highest priority to ensuring that:

- services are provided on the basis of a sound understanding of the needs and wishes of children, young people and their families
- all children and young people are safeguarded, and enjoy and achieve to their maximum potential
- there is enhanced provision of appropriate family support and early intervention through children's centres, extended services around schools and support for parents
- there are effective services and support that meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities, learning difficulties or who are looked after
- the Council continues to work successfully with schools to raise the already impressive overall achievement of pupils across the county to even higher levels; and ensures that this extends to all Council maintained schools and all groups of pupils, with a particular emphasis on improving the achievements and life-chances of those with additional needs
- services promote healthy living for children and young people and families, and reduce health inequalities
- there is adequate housing for vulnerable young people (including those leaving care) and families
- that sound arrangements for children and young people are established, linked with the proposed Public Service Trust

## The Council's response

The full strategic response of the Council, with its partners, is set out in the statutory *Children and Young People's Plan 2006-09*. A selection of those targets, milestones and actions where the Council is in the lead are in this section. Those led by other partners are included in the section below - *Giving effective community leadership*.

### BE HEALTHY

We aim to increase the number of **schools accredited as Healthy Schools from 81 to 91**

We aim to **increase the percentages of babies who are breast-fed at six weeks old:**

**in the South Wye area from 33% *[subject to confirmation]* to 40%**

**amongst teenage mothers across the county from 25% *[subject to confirmation]* to 30%**

**overall from 82% *[subject to confirmation]* to 85%**

We aim for 11-14 year olds to have healthier lifestyles. *[Targets for reductions in smoking, obesity, alcohol consumption and drug use; for increases in participation in sport, physical activity and recreation, the percentage of children eating five portions of vegetables and fruit a day; and for better mental health will be decided after a teenage lifestyle survey has been carried out in February 2007]*

We aim to **reduce sexually transmitted infections amongst young people by 1%**

### STAY SAFE

We aim to increase children in need referrals to *[target to be set following service workshops in early February]*

We aim to complete *[x%]* of initial assessments of children in need within... *[target to be set following service workshops in early February]*

We aim to complete core assessments of children in need within....*[target to be set following service workshops in early February]*

We aim to reduce the percentage of children on the child protection register that are re-registrations by *[target to be set following service workshops in early February]*

By working closely with schools, requiring the recording of incidents and action to deal with bullying, we aim to **reduce from x to y the percentage of 11-15 year-olds who say**

they have been bullied in the last twelve months *[target to be added after the Teenage Lifestyle Survey - Feb 07]*

## ENJOY and ACHIEVE

- We will continue to ensure that at least 85% of three year-olds have access to good quality early years education
- We will work with schools to raise to even higher levels performance in the top GCSE grades, in particular **increasing from *[61.8% to 67% - subject to confirmation]* the proportion of pupils in schools maintained by the Council achieving 5 A\* - C GCSEs, or the equivalent, including English and Maths**
- By working in partnership with schools to tackle disaffection by means of the Behaviour Support Plan and the Behaviour Support Policy produced by each school, we aim to **reduce school absences:**
  - **in secondary schools maintained by the Council, from 7.4% to 6% of half-day sessions**
  - **in primary schools maintained by the Council, from 4.9% to 4% of half-day sessions**
  - **the number of children looked after by the Council continuously for at least 12 months, who missed at least 25 days of schooling during the previous school year, to fall from 14 to no more than 8**
  - We aim to **reduce the conception rate of under 18s by 24% from a baseline of 37.2 per 1000**

## POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

- By encouraging Duke of Edinburgh Awards and other initiatives we aim to **increase from x to y the number of 11-15 year-olds volunteering *[Baseline and target to be established in light of the Lifestyle survey in Feb 07]***
- Through the implementation of our *Community Involvement Action Plan for Young People* and by progressively embedding the Hear by Rights Standards by 2010, we will develop and maintain a good understanding of the needs and wishes of children and young people. The key measures of our success will be to **increase from 19% to 28% the percentage of young people who feel that they can influence decisions affecting important local services**

## ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

- Working with schools and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), we aim to **reduce to less than 4.9% of 16-18 year-olds those not in education, employment or training**
- We aim to **increase from 12 to 46 the number of young people who had been looked after by the Council in their 17<sup>th</sup> year who are engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19**
- By working with schools, the LSC and further education colleges to broaden the range and flexibility of the curriculum and available qualifications, including increased vocational options, we aim to **increase from 88% to 96% the proportion of pupils in schools maintained by the Council achieving 5 or more 5A\* - G grades at GCSE, or the equivalent**
- By implementing our *Homelessness Strategy* and by securing, with partners, an increase in the supply of both temporary and settled housing, we aim to **remove the need for the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for households with children**

## **SERVICE MANAGEMENT**

- Building on the work of the *Children and Young People's Partnership Board*, we will **establish [by – target date] Children's trust arrangements** with all the relevant local partners, linked to the proposed Public Service Trust between the Primary Care Trust and Herefordshire Council
- We will complete, with partners, the development and **implementation of the *Herefordshire Common Assessment Framework (CAF)*, with targets set by June 2007**, to identify children with additional needs and ensure that early intervention services are put in place
- We aim to **increase by at least 5% the number of families receiving support**
- Fully involving parents, carers and children, we will develop and implement a joint commissioning strategy with Health, the voluntary sector and other partners to **deliver service improvements for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Implementation of the strategy will commence in April 2007, when targets will be set.**
- We aim to increase by 30 the number of schools with an approved school travel plan, giving cumulative coverage of 82% of schools

## ***Enabling vulnerable adults to live independently and, in particular, enabling many more older people to continue to live in their own homes***

### **The challenge**

The principal challenges for the year are to:

- implement major improvements in the pattern and quality of services so as to meet future needs as efficiently and effectively as possible. Key elements in this will be -
  - (i) working with communities and partners to develop to the full the opportunities for the rapidly growing numbers of older people to have fulfilled lives and contribute to society
  - (ii) implementing, with our partners, the first phase of our programmes of radical improvement in preventative and social care services to maximise the independence, well-being and independence of older people and adults with learning disabilities
  - (iii) establishing the future needs of 18-65 year-olds with mental health problems or physical disabilities and developing programmes to meet them efficiently and effectively so as to maximise their independence, well-being and choice
  
- continue to tackle homelessness successfully

### **The Council's response**

**We aim to increase the number of people of 65 or over helped to live at home per 1,000 population from 79.8 to x *[to be proposed]*** by working with partners to begin the implementation of our four-year service transformation programme, including:

- reduced waiting times for assessment and care packages
- co-ordinating and develop a range of rehabilitation, prevention and independent living services;
- establishing community wardens across the county
- expanding the *Signposting Scheme*;
- piloting a local care sitter service
- expanding the provision of Supporting People services
- targeting further sites with Fire Service outreach workers
- continuing the Trading Standards *Doorstep Crime Campaign*

- increasing significantly the number of older people receiving direct payments to purchase social care

By the same means, we aim to:

- **reduce from 34,691 to 31,222 the number of emergency unscheduled acute hospital bed-days in NHS hospitals occupied by a person aged 75 or more commissioned by Herefordshire Primary Care Trust [Revised target due mid Jan]**
- **increase the satisfaction of people over 65 using home care services provided through Herefordshire Social Care or directly purchasing services using direct payments (measured as a reduction of at least 10% in the gap between the proportion satisfied in 2006 and 100%, and the gap in 2009) [Revised target due mid Jan]**

By working with our partners, and through extensive consultation with older people and other interests, we intend to **have in place by [date to be confirmed] a comprehensive Older People's Strategy, with clear targets and actions to achieve them**

Through the Joint Team with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and implementation of the agreed plan to identify potential claimants, we aim to:

- **increase the number of people in receipt of Pension Credit from 7,980 to 8,138**
- **increase the number of people aged 60 or over in receipt of Council Tax benefit from 7,117 to 8,061**
- **increase the number of people in receipt Attendance Allowance from 6,470 to 6,702**

Working with partners to begin the implementation of our four-year service transformation programme, using improved assessment tools, providing improved advice and support, and supporting more people to move into their own homes from registered care, we aim to **increase the number of people with learning disabilities per 1,000 population aged 18-64 helped to live at home from 2.5 to x [target to be confirmed]**

Working with partners to implement the *Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Best Value Review Action Plan* and through the development of a new deaf-blind service, we aim to **increase the number of people with**

**physical disabilities per 1,000 population aged 18-64 helped to live at home from 4.8 to 5.1**

Working with our partners in a co-located joint service, with expanded early intervention, deliberate self-harm and carers' support services, we aim to **increase the number of people with mental health problems per 1,000 population aged 18-64 helped to live at home from 3.7 to 4.4**

Working with partners, and in consultation with service users and their representatives, we intend **before the end of 2007 to establish the future needs of 18-65 year-olds with mental health problems or physical disabilities; and to have a clear understanding of the services and support programmes that will be needed to meet them cost-effectively**

By implementing with our partners our *Homelessness Strategy Action Plan* and developing more affordable housing, we aim to **decrease from 416 to 160 the number of people accepted as homeless during a year in respect of whom the Council has a full statutory duty**

We intend to deliver the priorities set out in the Herefordshire Supporting People Strategy Annual Review *[measurable targets(s)/milestones to be added]*

## ***Securing the essential infrastructure for a successful economy***

### **The challenges**

It's crucial over the coming years to ensure that Herefordshire has the right infrastructure to strengthen the competitiveness of its economy and so to secure better paid, higher value-added jobs. This requires:

- a flexible, skilled workforce
- good transport infrastructure
- a good supply of industrial and commercial sites
- incentives to help new businesses prosper and grow
- a focus on attracting and retaining knowledge and high-technology industries

Over the next twelve months, the Council has to work with its partners in taking the decisive next steps to deliver that infrastructure and the rest of the *Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005 to 2025*.

### **The Council's response**

***[Seeing if there are other key items of transport infrastructure that could be added]***

We intend to **tender for the development partner for the retail element of the Edgar Street Grid** ***[target date? Any other major milestones?]***

We aim for **the Rotherwas access road to be mostly completed by March 2008**, with a view to its opening in June.

We intend to **start phase two of Rotherwas Futures, tendering for construction by January 2008**.

Creation of *The Learning Village* in Hereford City ***[major milestone(s)?]***

*The Market Towns Initiative* ***[major milestone(s)?]***

By establishing a new grant scheme to encourage employers and by running a support programme of seminars and events, we aim to **increase the number of people employed in technology and knowledge intensive industries from 9,900 to 10,286**



We also aim to **restrict to no more than 0.72%** the decline in the total number of VAT-registered businesses *[to be tested]*

Through these and other measures, we aim to **reduce the gap in average wage levels between Herefordshire and the rest of the West Midlands from 0.87:1 in 2005 *[-06? ]* to 0.88:1**

## ***Sustaining vibrant and prosperous communities, including by providing more efficient, effective and customer-focused services, clean streets, tackling homelessness and effective emergency planning***

### **The challenge**

We must continue action across a wide range of complementary areas vital to the future of communities across the county:

- tackling the continuing problems of affordable housing and continuing successfully to combat homelessness
- building on success in reducing the overall level of crime, with a particular drive to reduce the number of violent offences, crime related to the misuse of drugs and alcohol, and anti-social behaviour
- working in even more effective and focused partnerships across all sectors to maintain and improve community services, including the full modernisation of those provided directly by the Council to make them more cost-effective and user-friendly
- the fuller engagement of people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities in the life and development of their communities
- maintaining our successful partnerships to ensure that all people are safeguarded at times of emergency

### ***The Council's response***

By implementing with our partners our *Homelessness Strategy Action Plan* and developing more affordable housing, we aim to **decrease from 416 to 160** **[subject to confirmation]** the number of people accepted as homeless during a year in respect of whom the Council has a full statutory duty

By implementing our Community Involvement and Communication Action Plan, enabling more communities to draw up their community/parish plans, making the best possible use of the county's Community Fora, capacity-building and training for community volunteers and agencies, and support for activities that enable communities to come together more, we aim to:

- increase the proportion of adult residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local community from 35% in 2005 to 40% in 2007
- increase the proportion of adult residents reporting that they have engaged in formal volunteering of an average of two or more hours a week from 17% in 2005 to 22% in 2007.

**[baseline to be checked – shown as different in the draft CP]**

By working in partnership with other agencies and voluntary and community groups (including the provision of cleansing equipment for them to use), and by a targeted programme of deep cleansing and enforcement action, we aim to:

- **reduce from 18% in 2005-06 to 17% the proportion of relevant land and highways that fall below an acceptable level**
- **reduce from 3% to 2% the proportion of relevant land and highways from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible**
- **reduce from 2% to 1% the proportion of land and highways from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible**
- **maintain our current grade of 1 (very effective) in the year-on-year reduction in the total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with 'fly-tipping'**
- **increase the percentage of people satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area**

*[there will be a three-year target in the Corporate Plan but no annual target in the AOP, although we will report annually on the basis of the Annual Satisfaction Survey]*

- **increase from 90% in 2005-06 to 95% the percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point where the Council is legally entitled to remove the vehicle**

Through the implementation of the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership Strategy, the Hereford Against Night-Time Disorder Scheme, and the work of the Community Alcohol Service, including the Alcohol Referral Scheme, we aim by March 2008:

- for the number of violent crimes to have fallen by 11% against the 2003 figure
- for the number of criminal damage incidents to have fallen by 20% against the 2003 figure
- for there to have been a 5% fall, compared with the 2003 figure, in the proportion of people who think that the following things are a problem:
  - o speeding traffic
  - o vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles
  - o people using drugs
  - o people dealing drugs
  - o people being drunk or rowdy in public places

We aim for the proportions of survey respondents who find it easy to access key local services to be as follows (the 2005 baseline figures are shown in brackets) *[baseline figures to be added]*:

- a library: 72%
- a sports or leisure centre: 71%
- a cultural or recreational facility: 57%
- a local shop: 91%
- a post office: *[under review in light of the Post Office's recent announcement of major reductions in the network]*
- a shop selling fruit and vegetables: 82%
- a green space: 80%

We aim to increase the percentage of adults who use:

- sports and leisure facilities once a month from 25% in 2005 to x% in 2007
- parks, open spaces, play areas and other recreational facilities at least once a month from 41% in 2005 to x% in 2007
- libraries at least once a month from 32% in 2005 to x% in 2007
- museums or galleries at least once every six months from 19% in 2005 to x% in 2007
- theatres or concert halls at least once every six months from 32% in 2005 to x% in 2007

We also aim to increase the adult public's perceptions of improvement in the quality of life in terms of each of the following:

- access to nature
- activities for teenagers
- affordable decent housing
- clean streets
- community activities
- cultural facilities
- education provision
- facilities for young children
- health services
- job prospects
- parks and open spaces
- public transport
- race relations
- road and pavement repairs
- shopping facilities
- sports and leisure facilities
- the level of crime
- the level of pollution
- the level of traffic congestion
- wage levels and the local cost of living

*[Baselines to be added from the autumn 2006 General Survey, the results of which will be available at the end of January. There will three-year targets in the Corporate Plan. Although there will not be annual targets, there will be annual reporting of how perceptions are changing on the basis of the Annual Satisfaction Survey]*

We aim to **increase the satisfaction of adult residents with their local community as a place to live from 80% in 2005 to 87% in 2007.**

Working with our partners to deliver our annual programme of risk assessment, emergency planning and exercising, business continuity management within the Council , advice to business and other organisations, and effective communications with the community, **we will comply fully with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.**

## ***Protecting the environment, including by producing much less waste, recycling much more of what remains and significantly reducing carbon emissions***

### **The challenge**

Building on the strong foundations we have laid in recent years, over the next year we must further improve our performance in respect of:

- safeguarding Herefordshire's beautiful countryside as a place where people can live, work and enjoy, and which continues to be a magnet for responsible tourism
  - reducing waste and pollution across the county
  - our direct contribution from the way we conduct our operations
- and do so within tightly constrained resources.

### **The Council's response**

We intend to **adopt the Unitary Development Plan**, providing consistent county-wide policies for environmental protection and sustainable development.

Through our maintenance of highway verges, school grounds, cemeteries, smallholdings, parks, open spaces and other landholdings, we aim to **increase from 2.59% in 2005-06 to *[target to be set]* the proportion of Council-owned or managed land, without a nature conservation designation, that is managed for biodiversity.**

We aim to **increase from *x to y [baseline being established, then target to be set]* the proportion of land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest within the local authority area that is in favourable condition.**

We aim to **increase the numbers for key species *[HCS indicator; baseline being established, then target to be set]***

By increasing participation in the kerbside collection of recyclables, supporting new facilities for waste diversion and recycling and improving the performance of household waste sites, we aim to:

- **reduce the amount of household waste collected per head in a year from 521.7 kilograms in 2005-06 to 515 kilograms**
- **reduce from 75.93 % to 75.4% the proportion of household waste that is landfilled**
- **increase the proportion of household waste recycled from 17.46% in 2005-06 to 18%**

Through the implementation of *The Herefordshire Partnership's Carbon Management Action Plan*, we aspire to see a **reduction in carbon emissions per head of the population**

*[Indicator and target under consideration; an additional indicator relating directly to the Council's reduction of carbon emissions may be proposed]*

## ***Improving transport and the safety of roads, including further reductions in the numbers of people killed or seriously injured***

### **The challenge**

Over the coming year we must:

- improve the condition of the roads for which the Council is responsible, at a time when recurrent Government financial support for highways is set to fall
- build on our achievements by cutting road casualties even more
- continue to do all we can to promote sustainable transport that serves all the people of the county, including those who don't have a car

### **The Council's response**

By means of Local Transport Plan safety schemes, improving the condition of roads more generally and through road safety training in schools, we aim to:

- **reduce from 141 to x *[target to be set]* the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions**
- **reduce from x to y the number of people slightly injured in roads traffic collisions**

We aim to **reduce the percentage of adult residents in Herefordshire who usually travel to work for their main job by driving a car or van on their own. *[Baseline currently being established through the General Survey; then target to be set].***

Primarily by means of targeted bus subsidies, the provision of bus lanes and other public transport infrastructure, and by introducing park and ride facilities, we aim to:

- **control the increase of annual average traffic volumes to no more than 8% compared with 2003-04**
- **increase from 3,248,935 in 2005-06 to 3,948,000 the number of passenger bus journeys a year**

We will measure people's perceptions of traffic congestion ***[HCS and LAA indicator; three-year target to be set; no annual target but annual reporting on the basis of the Annual Satisfaction Survey]***

By providing improved cycleways, traffic and road safety schemes, the safer routes to schools programme, and highway and footway maintenance, we aim to increase the



number of cyclists using public cycle parking facilities by 5% every two years and **increase by *x* [*target to be set*] the number of cycling trips in a year compared with 2003-04.**

***Promoting diversity and community harmony and striving for equal opportunities for all the people of Herefordshire, regardless of race, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, geographical location, income, or age***

## **The challenge**

Over the coming year we must:

- accelerate our progress against the *Local Authority Equality Standard*
- meet existing and new statutory requirements to promote equality and eliminate unfair and unlawful discrimination in respect of race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation
- continue the sound equal opportunities policies and practices the Council has established for the selection and development of its staff, and further increase the diversity of our workforce
- develop our plans in response to the community cohesion requirements in the Local Government White Paper, *Strong and prosperous communities*

## **The Council's response**

Working with *The Herefordshire Equality Partnership Board*, we will **complete by March 2008 our *Comprehensive Equality Policy Action Plan*** and continue a comprehensive programme of awareness training, information sharing and networking with elected member, staff and community organisations **so as to attain Level 3 of the *Local Authority Equality Standard***.

We will **review and reprioritise our programme of equality impact assessments.**  
*[add target dates]*

We will **ensure that all Directorates and Human Resources have equality impact action plans that are realistic and achievable, and are monitored and reported against every six months** *[add target dates]*.

We will keep up-to-date our statutory *Race Equality Scheme*, which will be reviewed by April 2008, and our *Disability Equality Scheme*

In doing all this, **we will take account of the equalities implications of the results of our surveys that ask the public about ease of access to key services and factors affecting the quality of life, setting targets and actions accordingly.**

By reviewing the effectiveness of our recruitment and selection activities, and changing them where necessary, we aim to:

- increase from 0.89% *[figure to be confirmed]* in 2005-06 to **X** the percentage of employees from black and ethnic minority backgrounds
- increase from 1.89% *[figure to be confirmed]* in 2005-06 to **X** the percentage of employees from black and ethnic minority backgrounds who are amongst the top 5% of wage earners
- increase from 0.39% in 2005-06 to **X** the percentage of employees declaring a disability

We intend **by September 2007** to have developed our response to the **community cohesion requirements** in the Local Government White Paper, ***Strong and prosperous communities***

***Giving effective leadership, working with partners to deliver the Herefordshire Community Strategy, including the Local Area Agreement***

**The challenge**

The new *Herefordshire Community Strategy* to 2020 provides the foundations for an even more successful *Herefordshire Partnership*. This is buttressed by the LAA, which provides the core of the *Partnership Action Plan*, with clear targets and performance management arrangements to ensure delivery.

The Local Government White Paper, *Strong and prosperous communities* puts an even greater emphasis on local authorities leading effective partnerships in their areas to improve their communities and the quality of life. The Government proposes new legislation to give effect to this.

At the same time, the Council and the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust have proposed a trail-blazing Public Service Trust.

The challenge is to take full advantage of these unprecedented opportunities to improve significantly the quality of life of the county’s whole population.

At the same time, the Council must continue to maintain confidence in local democracy.

**The Council’s response**

***[Add key milestones when identified for implementation of the Local Government White Paper]***

***[Add target timetable for establishing the Public Service Trust]***

Fuller details are set out in *The Herefordshire Community Strategy 2006 to 2020*, and many of the key targets and actions are described in the earlier parts of this Action Plan. This section includes those where organisations other than the Council have the lead responsibility, albeit that in many cases the Council makes an important contribution.

***[Format to conform to rest of the action plan in the final version]***

Lead Organisation	Targets
Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership	<b>Through the implementation of the <i>Herefordshire Crime, Disorder and Drugs Reduction Strategy 2005- 8</i> and <i>LPSA targets</i>, we aim by 2007-08 to: (2004-5 data as baseline, unless otherwise specified)</b>
<b>HCS 45</b>	- reduce violent crimes in Herefordshire by 11% (LPSA target so baseline 03/04)
<b>HCS 42b</b>	- reduce the incidence of criminal damage in Herefordshire by 20% (LPSA target so baseline 03/04)
<b>HCS 43</b>	- decrease by 5% the proportion of people who think that the following are a

<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Targets</b>
	problem: speeding traffic vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles people using drugs people dealing drugs people being drunk or rowdy in public places
<b>HCS 42c</b>	Reduce all recorded crime by 15%
<b>HCS 25</b>	Reduce the number of young people (under 25) who are victims of crime in Herefordshire by 6%
<b>HCS 36</b>	Reduce re-offending by young people in Herefordshire by a further 5% by 2006 (measured in calendar years)
<b>HCS 48</b>	[Measure of Priority and Prolific Offenders Scheme – LAA PI]
<b>HCS 42a</b>	Reduce British Crime Survey comparator crimes by 15%, using 03/04 baseline– LAA PI
<b>HCS 49a</b>	To record no more than 600 domestic burglaries per year in Herefordshire
<b>HCS49b</b>	To record no more than 1,086 vehicle crimes per year in Herefordshire
<b>HCS 50</b>	To increase the number of Class A drug supply offences brought to justice in Herefordshire by 25%– LAA PI
<b>HCS 46</b>	Increase the numbers of drug users in treatment to 720
<b>HCS 47</b>	[Measure of Drugs Intervention Programme – LAA PI]
<b>HCS 51a</b>	To increase the number of calls to the Herefordshire Women’s Aid helpline by 10%
<b>HCS 51b</b>	To increase the number of domestic violence incidents reported to the police in Herefordshire by 10%
<b>HCS 51c</b>	To increase the number of arrests for domestic violence by 10% in Herefordshire
<b>HCS 51d</b>	To increase the number of sanction detections in Herefordshire for domestic violence incidents by 5%
<b>HCS</b>	[Increase in the percentage of people who feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in the local area – new mandatory LAA PI]
<b>HCS</b>	[Increase in the percentage of people who feel that parents in their local area are made to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children – new mandatory LAA PI]
<b>HCS 44</b>	Fear of Crime new mandatory LAA PI

<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Targets</b>
Primary Health Care Trust	the new public health agenda Choosing Health
Primary Health Care Trust	- [mortality rate from cancer for people under 75 – HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	- [mortality rate from circulatory diseases for people under 75 – HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	- [no. of deaths per annum from chronic diseases – HCS and LAA PI]
Primary Health Care	- [mortality rate from accidents – HCS PI]

<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Targets</b>
Trust	
Primary Health Care Trust	- [all causes standardised mortality rate for deprived areas of Herefordshire – HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	- [percentage of adults who smoke – HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	- [percentage of adults who consume more than the recommended intake of alcohol per week – HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	- [percentage of adults eating fewer than five portions of fruit and vegetables on a typical day – HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	- [percentage of adults undertaking thirty minutes or more of moderate physical activity at least five days per week – HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	Working with our partners, particularly in the NHS and the community sector, to ensure that parents get the advice and support they need, we aim to:
Primary Health Care Trust	- increase from 25.4% to 40% by 2008 the proportion of babies born in the South Wye area who are breastfeeding at six weeks [CP, LAA and LPSA2G target]
Primary Health Care Trust	- increase from 15.1 % to 30% by 2008 the proportion of babies born to teenage mothers in the county who are breastfeeding at six weeks [CP, LAA and LPSA2G target]
Primary Health Care Trust	- increase from 41.7% to [target to be agreed] by [time to be agreed] the percentage of all babies in the county breastfeeding at six weeks [HCS PI]
Primary Health Care Trust	[Healthier lifestyles of 11-14 year-olds: - reduction in percentage smoking
Primary Health Care Trust	- increase in percentage participating in sport or other physical activities
Primary Health Care Trust	- increase percentage of children walking or cycling to school – new mandatory LAA PI (check description and who leads)
Primary Health Care Trust	- increase in percentage eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day
Primary Health Care Trust	- reduction in percentage obese
Primary Health Care Trust	- reduction in alcohol consumption
Primary Health Care Trust	- reduction in drug use] [HCS and LAA PIs]
Primary Health Care Trust	[Measure of sexually transmitted infections in young people – HCS PI]

<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Targets</b>
Through the implementation of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Learning and Skills Council Local Strategic Plan, we aim by 2007-08 to increase the number of Herefordshire residents aged 19 and over achieving:	
Learning and Skills Council	- a Level 2 qualification, excluding manufacturing and engineering, from 1,738 to 1,872
Learning and Skills Council	- a Level 2 qualification in manufacturing and engineering from 35 to 57

Lead Organisation	Targets
Learning and Skills Council	- a Level 3 qualification, excluding manufacturing and engineering, from 825 to 878
Learning and Skills Council	- a Level 3 qualification in manufacturing and engineering from 26 to 44
Learning and Skills Council	[Measure of basic skills – HCS PI]
Learning and Skills Council	[% of working age population qualified to at least Level 3 – HCS PI]
Learning and Skills Council	[% of working age population qualified to at least Level 4 – HCS PI]

To maintain high-levels of public confidence in open government and local democracy, **the Council will:**

- overseen by its independently chaired *Standards Committee* and through the work of this committee and the *Monitoring Officer*, **uphold in its affairs the highest standards of corporate governance, propriety, integrity and impartiality** *[SMART target to be proposed, e.g. adverse Standards Committee findings]*
- through the work of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and the Finance Officer, **uphold its financial and audit duties to ensure good financial management and governance** *[SMART target to be proposed, e.g. satisfactory Annual Audit Letter in this respect]*
- **review its complaints and compliments process by** *[target date]* to ensure it is accessible and responsive and to **avoid findings of maladministration against the Council being issued by the Local Government Ombudsman**
- **provide for all new Council members full induction training on the responsibilities of being a councillor, Cabinet member, committee member and of scrutiny more generally**

Working with the *Herefordshire Association of Local Councils*, we will **provide training and support to enable the county's town and parish councils to demonstrate best practice and be at the forefront of national developments**

*[SMART target to be proposed]*

## Part Two: Organisational improvement

***Streamlining processes, assets and structures, and securing significant efficiency savings, so as to keep down Council Tax increases and invest in priority service improvements***

### The challenge

Over the next year we must:

- make the first tranche of recurrent and cumulative cash-releasing savings under the *Herefordshire Connects* programme
- achieve these savings without detriment to our customers
- continue to modernise and improve the quality, accessibility and positive impact of our services on people's quality of life

### The Council's response

We will **implement the *Herefordshire Connects* programme**  
***[confirmation of the level of savings and key milestones to be added]***

As part of this, we will **rationalise our front and back office functions**  
***[key deliverables/milestones to be added]***

Through e-procurement, benchmarking against other organisations, streamlining procedures and other initiatives, we will **continue to improve the value for money we get from procuring goods and services.**  
***[key deliverables/milestones to be added]***

We will **review our *Accommodation Strategy***, including the disposal of properties, the cessation of leases and the relocation of staff in the light of future needs for office accommodation.  
***[key deliverables/milestones to be added]***

We will invest in order to maximise recurrent savings; in particular, we will continue our comprehensive programme of investment in ICT and **meet the following targets for e-government:**  
***[key deliverables/milestones to be added]***



***Ensuring that essential assets, including schools, other buildings, roads and ICT are in the right condition for the long-term cost-effective delivery of services, and ensure business continuity in the face of emergencies***

## **The challenge**

The Council must ensure that:

despite the need for overall reduction in expenditure, it maintains a prudent programme for the renewal and maintenance of its key assets

it has in place tried and tested plans and systems to maintain services in the event of disaster or other crises

we continue to raise our performance as the use of resources to meet the much more demanding standards required under the new framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

## **The Council's response**

We will complete our new **ICT network** to make our operations more efficient and effective, with the network **available for at least 98.5% of the time**

By disposing of some dilapidated property and bringing up to standard the buildings we retain following the completion of our *Accommodation Strategy*, we will **raise the proportion of the gross internal floor space in ODPM categories A and B to at least X [target to be proposed]**

By embedding our business continuity plans for all parts of the Council's activities and services through an annual programme of risk assessment and business continuity management, we will ensure that we **comply with the *Civil Contingencies Act 2004*, in particular so as to safeguard the most vulnerable people in the county**

We will embed risk management across all aspects of the Council's work and take all other measures necessary to **maintain our *Use of Resources* score at 3.**

## ***Understanding the needs and preferences of service users and Council Tax-payers, and tailoring services accordingly***

### **The challenge**

As the Council strives to achieve more with less and concentrates available resources on priority areas, it must be more than ever careful to ensure that it roots all that it does in a solid understanding of what customers and the public need and want.

### **The Council's response**

Through our network of local *Info Shops*, the state-of-the-art *Info by phone* service and the full implementation of e-government, we will provide **better, faster and more responsive services to individual customers, with full corporate implementation by late 2007** [*Spell out measurable key deliverables/milestones*]

By means of an action plan to define customer standards for individual services where they don't already exist, the embedding of our new customer relations management and complaints handling systems, a programme to continue encouraging customer feedback, and a rolling programme of training for complaints officers and other staff, we aim to **increase from 29 % to 50% the proportion of those making complaints who are satisfied with how their complaint has been handled**

By implementing our *Community Involvement* and *Communications Strategy* action plans, giving effect to agreed parish plan aspirations, the implementation of changes following a review of the *Community Fora* and conducting annual customer satisfaction surveys, we aim to **increase the proportion of adult residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local community from 35% in 2005 to 40% in 2007**

Through these means and the service improvements described elsewhere in this Plan, and also by enabling more communities to draw up town and parish plans, building community and voluntary sector capacity and enabling more opportunities for people in communities to come together, we aim **to increase from 80% to 87% the proportion of adults satisfied with their community as a place to live.**

Through the implementation of our *Community Involvement Action Plan for Young People*, including the establishment of the *Herefordshire Youth Council* and the operation of the *Community Fora*, we will maintain an up-to-date understanding of the needs and wishes of children and young people. A key measure of our success will be to **increase from 19% to 28% the percentage of young people who feel that they can influence decisions affecting important local services.**

Working with partners, and in consultation with service users and their representatives, we intend **before the end of 2007 to establish the future needs of 18-65 year-olds with mental health problems or physical disabilities; and to have a clear understanding of the services and support programmes that will be needed to meet them cost-effectively.**

We will continue to operate robust procedures so as to **comply with the *Freedom of Information Act* and data protection legislation, aiming for 100% compliance with the 20-day time-limit for responding to FOI requests and the 40-day target for data protection requests. *n 40 days]***



***Recruiting, retaining and motivating high quality staff, ensuring that they are trained and developed so as to maximise their ability and performance***

## **The challenge**

The Council has loyal and dedicated employees, committed to excellence in serving the people of Herefordshire. But the ever-rising expectations of the public and Government, the fresh challenges of a fast-moving world and the need to work in new ways with our partners to achieve more with less, can only be met if we continue to have the right managers and front-line employees with the right understanding, skills and motivation. These must, therefore, be continually updated and renewed.

Specific challenges are:

- re-skilling for the new business process and behaviours required to deliver the *Herefordshire Connects* programme successfully
- dealing successfully with the proposed executive merger with the PCT to form the Public Service Trust
- as part of these, developing key skills in respect of effective planning and performance management to drive continuous improvement in standards of services across the Council
- completing and rolling-out the workforce strategy for social care to secure adequate recruitment and retention
- developing and implementing the workforce changes needed to deliver modernised, high-performing adult social care services
- to maximise productivity and contribute to the drive for big efficiency savings, we must reduce sickness absence and strike the right balance in employee turnover
- even more effective two-way communications between employees at all levels

## **The Council's response**

***Our Pay and Workforce Strategy*** will continue to be the comprehensive response to these challenges; it will reflect changing and future envisaged needs through **monthly reviews, beginning in April 2007, by the Pay and Workforce Strategy Board**

Part of the *Strategy* is our commitment to ***Investor in People* accreditation**, which we aim to **achieve for the whole Council by October 2007**

We will **continue our comprehensive programme of employee training and development**, basing it on a sound understanding of current skills and future skills needs, identifying the need for NVQs and other formally accredited training, and linking core skills to pay and grading. Success will be measured by setting targets for

attainment and for monitoring progress against these targets. ***[Confirm performance targets in final version from agreed Pay and Workforce Strategy.]***

In particular, we will deepen and extend our programmes to **ensure that all managers are well-equipped to plan their services and manage performance effectively to deliver the Council's priorities.** Success will be measured by evaluating the impact of the revised management development provision. ***[Confirm performance targets in final version from agreed Pay and Workforce Strategy.]***

We will **raise completion rates of SRDs from 94% to 95%, requiring directors and heads of service to have in place auditable systems to ensure that all SRDs are completed to a satisfactory and consistent standard.** We aim for an assessment that the systems employed are satisfactory when they are audited in ***[add date]***

By improved management of attendance, provision of timely management information, and the active engagement of Human Resources in recommending interventions and improvement, we aim to **reduce sickness absence from an average of 10.5 days per FTE in 2005-06 to 9 days per FTE in 2007-08.**

Through better workforce planning, including the analysis of skills shortages and national trends, by promoting careers at the Council in schools, colleges, universities, and at national events, and by improving our recruitment and retention procedures, we aim to **maintain annual employee turnover at no more than 9%. and to aim for minimum acceptable levels of turnover**

we will pay **special attention to the recruitment and retention of employees to ensure effective service delivery, with priority given to the Children's and Adult's social care workforce, through the development and delivery of workforce plans. We will measure success against the delivery of those plans, which will be developed by April 2007, and their impact on service delivery.**

We will continue to improve understanding and motivation throughout the organisation by **implementing our *Communications Strategy Action Plan.*** We aim to:

- maintain a robust and measurable team briefing system that provides positive and effective dialogue between managers and their teams, **achieving 150 team briefs by Sept 2007.**
- establish an employee news package that is guaranteed to reach everyone across the council - **achieving high scores for readability, relevance and credibility, aiming for a 70 per cent score in Nov 2007 benchmarking**
- develop relevant and useful content for the intranet – starting with **an online induction for new employees by June 2007**

## ***Embedding corporate planning, performance management and project management systems so as to continue to drive up service standards and efficiency***

### **The challenge**

The Audit Commission assessed the Council in late 2005 to be improving only adequately. Effective planning and performance and project management are crucial to accelerating the rate of improvement.

In the 2005 Corporate Assessment the Audit Commission confirmed that the Council had sound frameworks for planning and performance management but identified as the principal weakness that they were not operating to a consistently high standard across all departments. In particular, this had contributed to the shortcomings in respect of the safeguarding arrangements for children identified in the Joint Area Review, which have now been remedied.

The Commission reviewed the operation of the Council's performance management arrangements again in autumn 2006. Its overall conclusion was that, "The Council is making steady progress in strengthening its...arrangements and in embedding a performance culture."

It went on, however, to say that the improvements were not yet sufficient to meet the standard to which the Council aspires and not yet embedded across all parts of the organisation. It made a number of recommendations about how the Council could complete the job.

The systematic use of project management is more important than ever, particularly to ensure the delivery of the *Transformation Programme* and the full realisation of its benefits, in terms of both efficiency savings and improved customer services.

### **The Council's response**

The Council aims to be **judged by the Audit Commission to be improving well by 2007 and to be improving strongly by 2008.**

We will:

**develop a clearer set of priorities – each with a basket of indicators and measures designed to provide a high-level picture of progress, beginning with a strategic public consultation in June 07;**

**by April 2007, construct and communicate a high-level model that clearly identifies how the Council intends to assess and measure its level of performance and rate of improvement;**

**from April 2007, develop and begin to implement a more consistent, strategic approach to embedding a performance management culture across the Council;**

**ensure the fullest possible integration between the Council's planning and performance management arrangements and those of the Herefordshire Partnership; with a detailed implementation plan to be in place by December 2007 and the new arrangements operating from April 2008**

**ensure that members are integrated into the Council's performance management arrangements, measured by an annual review of the operation of the performance management framework in October**

**produce regular, high-level strategic assessments of performance trends for senior management, Cabinet and scrutiny, identifying barriers and levers to raising performance and delivering the Council's priorities. A format for this will be agreed by CMB and Cabinet in April, and operational by June 2007.**

**improve the quality of the staff review and development (SRD) process to ensure that all individuals' targets are linked to corporate and service targets**

**Starting in 2007-08, we will begin the performance improvement cycle in April, so as to provide a sound basis for systematically achieving value for money across all services**

We will **embed the performance management improvements being developed for Children's Services and for adult social care** *[add SMART targets, agreed with C&YPS and ASC, e.g. dates for full operation]*; we will also consider their potential value for the Council more generally

We will put in place, as part of the *Herefordshire Connects* programme, **a corporate ICT-based system to make much easier and faster the collection and analysis of all performance information for the Council and its strategic partners** *[add target date]*

**Directors and Heads of Service will continue to be required to ensure that the Council's cross-cutting priorities** (see paragraph x above) **are delivered successfully in their areas**

By means of our action plan to ensure robust auditable data, we aim to **retain the unqualified status of our Best Value Performance Plan and ensure that none of our individual performance indicators is qualified**

The operation of **the whole Performance Management Framework will be audited as part of Internal Audit's annual review of the Council's key processes**, providing a sound basis for continuous improvement



**Appendix 1 – Net revenue budget in 2007-08 by directorate**

*[to be added once the budgets are approved]*

## Appendix 2 – Capital programme 2007-08

*[to be added when the programme is approved]*

## Glossary

## Appendix 3

### ***The Herefordshire Community Strategy***

The Community Strategy for Herefordshire. It sets out the vision, agreed by the Council and its partners following consultation with the public, for what the county should aspire to be by 2020, together with the objectives and targets to achieve it.

### ***Local Area Agreement (LAA)***

A three-year agreement with the Government to deliver, with the Council's partners, higher levels of performance than would otherwise have been achieved. This is facilitated by greater freedom and flexibility in the operation of Government rules, including the use of Government grants. It is the core of the action plan for the next three years of *The Herefordshire Community Strategy*.

### ***Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA)***

A three-year agreement with the Government to deliver higher levels of performance than would otherwise have achieved, in return for pump-priming additional finance to help achieve the enhanced targets and some relaxation in regulation. Achievement of the targets attracts substantial reward payments.

It has been subsumed within the LAA (see above).

### ***Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)***

The assessment of a Council's current performance and its capacity to improve. It comprises four main components: self-assessment, corporate assessment by an external team, use of resources assessment by external auditors, and service assessment based on an analysis of recent service inspections, reviews and performance indicator results. It is overseen and managed by the independent Audit Commission.

### ***Corporate Management Board (CMB)***

The strategic management board of the Council, comprising the Chief Executive, Directors and the Head of Human Resources.

### ***The Senior Management Team (SMT)***

The operational management board of the Council, comprising Heads of Services.

### ***Local Transport Plan (LTP)***

A long-term strategy to develop an integrated and sustainable transport system for Herefordshire

### ***Difference between / and – i.e. financial and academic years***