



GEM

Environmental Report

2004/05



INTRODUCTION

Protecting the environment has always been one of the authority's top priorities and is also central to the Herefordshire Plan. Herefordshire Council has been committed to registering all its activities and services to an environmental management standard since May 1998.



GEM (Good Environmental Management) covers the whole Council. In addition, all office administration and land management across the Council has been certified to ISO 14001, the international environmental management system) since July 2002. Other services are steadily joining the scope. Standards are checked twice a year by our external certifier, SGS Yarsley.

The work of GEM forms an integral part of the Council's commitments to delivering sustainable development. The sustainability agenda received a further boost in 2004/05 with the publication of both the revised national sustainable development strategy "Securing the Future" and the revised West Midlands regional Sustainable Development Framework "The Future Starts Here". Effective environmental management is key to the delivery of sustainable development and through the GEM programme the Council can demonstrate that it is leading by example in this area.

GEM Objectives for 2004/05

- WASTE - Reduce waste generated by Council services by 1% and increase levels of recycling and the use of recycled material**
- PROCUREMENT - Improve environmental performance of the Council by working with partners, suppliers and contractors**
- COMMUNICATION - Promote the Council's environmental initiatives and increase the awareness of Council staff of their environmental impact and role in GEM**
- ENERGY - Achieve a 1% reduction in energy use in operational council property and maintain the use of energy from renewable sources**
- TRANSPORT - Reduce the environmental impact of Council transport use through the Staff Travel Plan and other initiatives**
- PROPERTY RISKS - Reduce environmental risks relating to the Council's property portfolio and tenant management**
- BIODIVERSITY - Build on existing work to protect and enhance biodiversity on Council owned land**
- CORPORATE PLAN - Further integrate GEM into corporate performance management**
- CERTIFICATION - Roll out scope of ISO14001 certification to cover all Council activities and services by Feb 2005.**

WASTE

“Reduce waste generated by Council services by 1% and increase levels of recycling and the use of recycled material”

Waste capacity and cost

The amount of trade waste generated by Council services has reduced from 5940.8kg per week in 2003/04 to 5872.8kg in 2004/05 (based on notional figures for the volume of Sulobins and trade sacks), a decrease of 1.14%. This represents a reduction of over 3.5 tonnes per year and a decrease in the cost of waste removal of around £350 per year.

Council Office Recycling Scheme

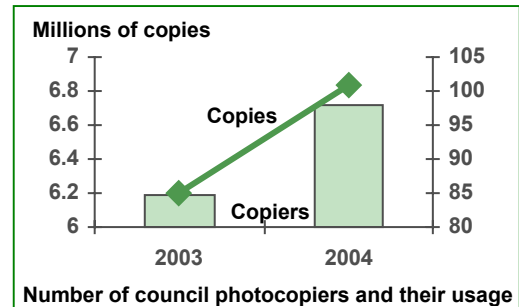
The Council recycling service operated by Dave Baker, covering paper, plastic bottles, cans and cardboard, collects weekly from 26 offices in Hereford, covers all 19 major Council offices (over 20 staff) and monthly from 10 further offices in the county. In addition a further four Council premises have alternative recycling procedures in place.

During 2004/05 collections totalled 49.18 tonnes of paper and 526 bags of plastics, cans and cardboard. This represents roughly 14.35% of the total Council waste output of 364 tonnes per year (based on industry estimates of weights for different sized containers). This figure is therefore just short of the 14.4% target set for household recycling in the County and represents a significant increase on the previous year, although the figures are not complete enough to present a formal comparison.

Resource Efficiency

Paper – recent West Mercia Supplies figures show 93% of paper bought by Council offices was from recycled stock.

Photocopiers – Both the number of photocopiers and their usage has increased substantially over the last year. Figures show that the Council now owns 16 more photocopiers than last year and the number of copies made has increased by over 500,000. This increase reflects both the move to larger premises and the use of networked photocopiers as default printers in the larger offices rather than conventional desktop printers. The rationale behind this is the improved efficiency associated with using networked photocopiers as printers.



Waste Management

Waste Management joined the Council’s ISO 14001 certification in July 2004. The team undertook considerable work over the winter to determine the baseline for households participating in the kerbside recycling schemes as the first stage of work on “Target 75”.

Council printing jobs undertaken by HJS

During the last quarter of the year HJS successfully piloted the use of recycled paper for printing Council agendas. This is now standard practice. In the last quarter 66% of paper bought by In-Print was recycled.

Computers sent for refurbishment by ICT

Redundant ICT equipment is sent to Worcester Lifestyles for refurbishment & recycling. During 04/05 this included 335 monitors, 270 base units, 107 printers and 28 laptops. Suitable items are reissued within the authority. The Council has around 2050 PCs in its offices & 150 servers.

PROCUREMENT

“Improve environmental performance of the Council by working with partners, suppliers and contractors”

Partners working towards ISO 14001

Several key partners/contractors now have ISO 14001. These include: -

- ◆ Severn Waste Services, our waste disposal contractor (2001)
- ◆ Herefordshire Jarvis Services (April 2004)
- ◆ FOCSA, our waste collection contractor (Summer 2004)
- ◆ Owen Williams, our highways and transportation consultants (April 2005)

HJS Performance Indicators

Performance indicators have been agreed for waste arisings, certified wood, recycled paper usage, recycled highways materials, recycling of paper and energy consumption. Owen Williams are collecting baseline data for 04/05 and it is then expected that targets or ranges of acceptable performance will be set for the indicators for 2005/06.

Certified Timber

During the year the availability of certified timber has greatly improved and it is now stocked by a number of local suppliers. Property Services reiterated the Council's policy on certified timber in December and have sent out guidance to contractors and partners.

West Mercia Supplies

WMS have a 'green list' of products with reduced environmental impact. Environmental officers from the 4 partner authorities met with WMS in February to discuss extending this list.

- ◆ WMS purchase gas and electricity for the Council - they supply 100% renewable electricity for our offices and schools.
- ◆ Refurbished print cartridges – these are proving much more reliable with the new WMS supplier. They save money and cut down waste and have been recommended to managers.

Fairtrade

The Council has been testing the level of community support for Fairtrade. A motion recommending support will go to Full Council in May 2005. Once agreed, the Council will serve Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings and work with community groups to secure Fairtrade status for the County.

Joint Purchasing

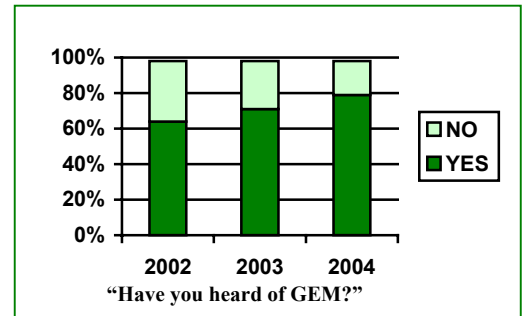
Environment and Policy & Community Directorate staff based at Plough Lane now order and store their stationery jointly. This has led to considerable cost savings, increased efficiency and a reduced requirement for storage space.

COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES

“Promote the Council’s environmental initiatives and increase the awareness of Council staff of their environmental impact and role in GEM”

Staff Opinion Survey Results

The results of the Staff Opinion Survey since 2002 (the year in which GEM was rolled out) shows that the levels of awareness of GEM have consistently increased, as has the understanding amongst Council staff of how their own job impacts upon the environment. Only 1 respondent in 6 thought that enough was being done to reduce the Council’s environmental impacts – giving a mandate to set considerably stronger targets.



GEM Group

The corporate GEM group continued to meet throughout the year. Quarterly meetings include further representatives of key services.

GEM Newsletter

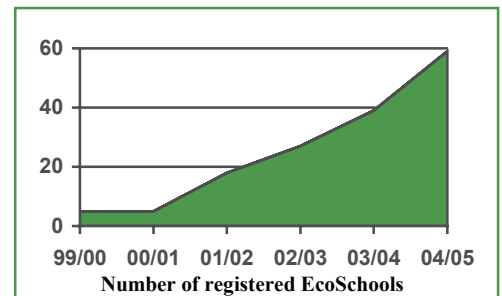
The GEM monthly newsletter aims to provide a succinct and colourful update. It now has a circulation of over 100 and is an invaluable vehicle for disseminating the latest news and information about GEM initiatives and encouraging feedback.

Bridge-It

Economic Development has supported the Bridge-it Programme, which has given advice and training on environmental matters to local small and medium size businesses, since its launch in 2003. So far the programme has run 8 seminars in the county attended by over 100 delegates, trained 18 delegates on 2 Practical Environmental Management Courses and provided initial advice to over 55 companies.

EcoSchools

The EcoSchools scheme continues to go from strength to strength in Herefordshire. This international scheme, set up by Encams, promotes environmental awareness and the principles of environmental management within schools through teaching and pupil/staff committees, reaching over 15,000 children. 59 of the 105 schools in the county are now registered EcoSchools and 17 have achieved one of the award levels. This year, grants were awarded to thirteen schools for projects contributing to their EcoSchool programmes.



Staff training on environmental issues

Two Managers’ training sessions took place in the autumn and the Managers Forum in November 2004 was devoted to environmental issues.

Other Initiatives

Plan-it Green: A ground source heat pump has been installed at Marshfield Centre, Leominster, part of Learning Disability Day Opportunities.

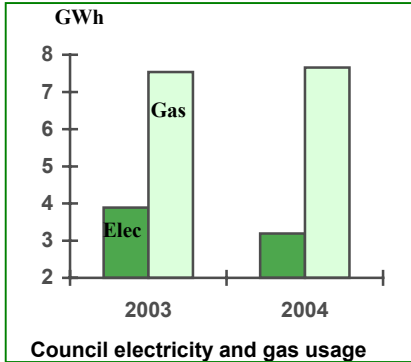
Shopmobility now have an environmental policy

E-Wise - energy software for schools was developed and distributed to 32 EcoSchools in a Home Energy Conservation Act pilot scheme.

ENERGY

“Achieve a 1% reduction in energy use in operational Council property and maintain the use of energy from renewable sources”

Council Energy Usage Data

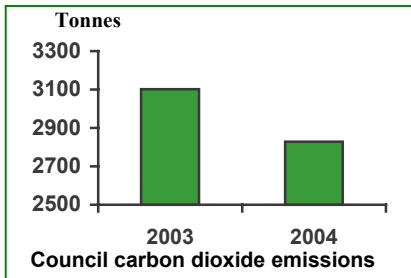


Electricity consumption has reduced dramatically (17.8%) during the year in larger Council buildings. Gas consumption has risen slightly over the last year (1.8%): this is likely to be due to problems reconciling actual and estimated consumption, though there is also scope to strengthen control of local heating settings and timings. Overall the Council's carbon emissions have decreased by almost 300 tonnes over the last year.

NB This data has been taken from offices for which the Council has reliable consumption information and thus does not entirely represent the full extent of the Council's energy use and carbon dioxide emissions.

The decrease is predominantly due to property rationalisation measures that the Council has taken and therefore represents a one-off gain.

More work to improve energy efficiency will be needed in order to continue this trend – see *CMAP below*.



Carbon Management Action Plan

The Council participated in Phase 2 of the Carbon Trust's national Carbon Management Initiative. As a result, the Council formally adopted a Carbon Management Action Plan (CMAP) in March 2005, committing to a reduction of 1.25% carbon dioxide equivalent each year till 2012. The Council has also agreed to sign the Nottingham

Declaration on Climate Change; this requires local authorities to work with the community to develop an action plan to tackle climate change at a local level. Of particular note in the CMAP is the recommendation to establish an Invest-to-Save scheme during the first phase to 2008.

Climate Change

A Climate Change strategy for Herefordshire is in preparation under the auspices of the Herefordshire Partnership. A Herefordshire greenhouse gas inventory has been assembled which establishes baseline emissions for the main sectors of interest in Herefordshire. A separate inventory for Council activities has also been drawn up.

Consultation on the main themes of the Herefordshire Partnership strategy is being undertaken using the DEMOCs climate challenge, developed jointly by the Herefordshire Partnership and the New Economics Foundation.

The greenhouse gas emissions inventory for Herefordshire as a whole has reported a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2.9 million tonnes in 2000 to 2.7 million in 2002, a reduction of 100,000 tonnes per year. This is mainly the result of the reduction in livestock following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth.

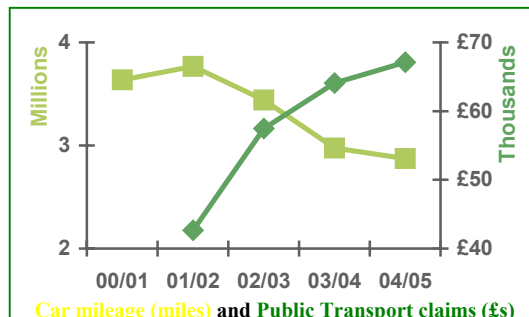
TRANSPORT

“Reduce the environmental impact of Council transport use through the Staff Travel Plan and other initiatives”

Staff Travel

The Chief Executives Management Team passed the Staff Travel Plan in September 2004. This sets out a programme to promote the uptake of more sustainable transport options.

Business mileage figures continue to show a clear decline in the mileage claims for car journeys, falling from 2.97 million miles in 03/04 to 2.87million, a reduction of around 3%. This period has also seen public transport mileage claims rise from £64k in 03/04 to £67k, a rise of 4.7%.



A total of 19 Pool Bikes are now available at 13 Council offices. Of 14 bikes surveyed (8 of which had incomplete or no data), there were 245 registered bookings totalling an estimated 980 miles (based on an average of 4 miles per trip).

Single status negotiations led to increases in cycle mileage allowance (increased from 6.5p to 20p per mile) and an allowance for taking passengers (5p a mile) from April 2005. Staff received daily updates in Green Transport week in September 2004 and Staff Travel Plan information is now available on the Intranet.

Transportation

As well as joining the ISO14001 scope in July 2004, the Transportation team achieved an “Above Average” rating for their Local Transport Plan and have been selected as a Centre of Excellence for the next 3 years

Local Transport Plan Revision

The Local Transport Plan is currently being revised and, in line with forthcoming EU requirements, the Transportation team is undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Scheduling of contract transport – Education

During 2004/05 10% reductions in the number of contract vehicles at Kington High School and John Kyrle (Ross) were achieved.

School Travel Plans

The aim of the School Travel Plan scheme is to decrease the use of the private car for transporting children to school. 22 School Travel Plans were signed off in March 2005 and sent to the DfES for approval. When these have been approved, it will bring the total number of schools with adopted travel plans to 41, representing 39% of the County’s schools.

Biodiesel

A Rotherwas firm is now reprocessing waste cooking oil as fuel. One of their suppliers is HJS, who collect oil from county schools.

PROPERTY RISKS

“Reduce the environmental risks relating to the Council’s property portfolio and tenant management”

Tenant Questionnaire

A short questionnaire is now sent to all new tenants to assess environmental risk and current levels of environmental management.

Property Rationalisation

The movement of staff out of a number of smaller offices and into larger more modern units, particularly at Plough Lane should help to reduce the environmental impacts of the Council. It is predicted that savings will be made in energy and water usage: transport costs and time spent travelling between offices should also be reduced. Closure of some less modern depots has reduced exposure to risk.

Capital Bids

The process for bidding for Prudential capital projects has been amended and applicants for funds for 2005/06 were required to: -

- ◆ Assess the environmental impacts of their proposal and the controls in place (Chapter 8)
- ◆ Map the wider impacts on sustainability, using the Guiding Principles Appraisal based on the Herefordshire Plan.

These were then factored into the overall score for each bid.

Capital bids for 2005/06 were approved in August 2004 for:

- ◆ Renewal of the Crematorium (new build) to meet incoming standards on mercury emissions
- ◆ Upgrading a rural Sewage Treatment Works to ensure its discharge meets the standards required by the Environment Agency
- ◆ Work on Leominster’s Broad Street Car Park drains to reduce the risk of a spill reaching the main river
- ◆ Treatment of soil contaminated by previous industrial use at the new Aylestone County Park

Salt improvements

The new salt barn is nearing completion at Rotherwas. Current stores at Burcott and Ross will be phased out during 2005/06 when this becomes operational. A number of minor repairs on current stores were also undertaken this year.

Prudential Capital Programme: progress in 2004-05

Energy conservation measures in Council buildings included flush controls in Ross public toilets, cladding and reroofing of primary schools and updating Boiler Management System software

Hereford crematorium rebuild: feasibility study in progress

Hereford cemetery: extension for further burials completed

Castle Green Pool: preparatory boreholes drilled & analysed prior to desilting (now scheduled for autumn 2005).

BIODIVERSITY

“Build on existing work to protect and enhance biodiversity on Council owned land”

Indicators

New local biodiversity indicator is included in the new Corporate Plan: Land owned or managed by the Council without a Nature Conservation designation, managed for biodiversity. The baseline figure for this is 2.5%. Other indicators will cover the status of land designated as SSSI and the issuing of appropriate guidance for planning and other purposes.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Biodiversity and Landscape Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was adopted as Interim Planning Guidance. An SPG on “Trees and Development” was drafted.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Review

The review of the Herefordshire BAP, started in 2004, is nearing completion.

Commons Research

Parks & Countryside have undertaken habitat surveys on 81 commons owned by the Council and Section 9 commons. This includes entries on land use/habitat type, conservation value and whether or not a Management Plan is in place.

Survey work

Information from the Phase 1 Habitat survey of the county undertaken by Herefordshire Nature Trust is being entered onto the Council’s GIS. A comparison of Council-owned land against land with Nature Conservation designations using GIS software has identified Council sites that either include or are next to land with formal nature conservation designations, identified on the UDP constraints layer. These are: -

- Establishments (mainly Highways & Transportation land plus Household Waste Sites) - 36 matches totalling 10 hectares
- Schools - 34 matches totalling 50 hectares
- Smallholdings - 20 matches totalling 536 hectares
- Policy & Community, including Parks - 100 matches totalling 643 hectares

The managers of the matched land will be asked to consider any changes needed to management in 2005/6.

Biodiversity Training

Three training sessions took place in March, one for Highways and Owen Williams, one for HJS and another for Public Rights of Way. These provided a general introduction to biodiversity as well as dealing with various more specific ways in which these groups have an impact upon biodiversity in the course of their work.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

“Further integrate GEM into corporate performance management”

Corporate Plan

The recently agreed Corporate Plan for 2005-8 clearly reiterates the Council's commitment to the environment

“1.5 Everything in the Plan is intended to help deliver the Council's commitment to...(bullet 4 of 5) a sustainable environment”

“5.1 The Council's top priorities for the period of this Plan are...(bullet 5 of 8) to protect the environment, including by recycling much more waste and significantly reducing carbon emissions”

The Corporate Plan sets out explicit targets that the Council is committed to achieve as its contribution to meeting the ambitions of the Herefordshire Plan. The sections on Environment and Transport are relevant to this report.

Audits

A full programme of GEM audits monitors the standards in place for services and sites certified to ISO 14001. The focus of the audits is to drive improvements to the system.

During the year 9 new auditors were trained and 9 auditors left.

At the end of year 35 auditors were available.

Summary of GEM audit programme

Audits scheduled	72	Completed	64	In progress	4
Non conformances	39	Signed off	34	Overdue	3
		NCs still within date	2		

Internal Corrective Action

Ten internal corrective actions were raised during the year. Three of them have not been closed out. These relate to the new salt barn (completion due June 05), the Stretton Sugwas landfill gas flare (now included in the CMAP) and a noise complaint (due for a further visit in the summer before close out).

Reporting

Progress against the GEM objectives (9) and targets due in 04/05 (61) has been regularly reported to Environment Management Team and the GEM group. Corrective Actions are recorded for all targets delayed or changed.

Targets completed on schedule	39	56%
Targets completed (delayed)	16	23%
Total targets delayed or changed	36	

West Midlands Environmental Index

Herefordshire Council participates in the West Midlands Environmental Index, a survey co-ordinated by Business in the Community designed to provide public and private organisations with a benchmark of best practice. In the last round 2003 (published at the end of April 2004), Herefordshire Council scored very highly and was placed within the top quintile of the 22 West Midlands Councils that took part.

CERTIFICATION

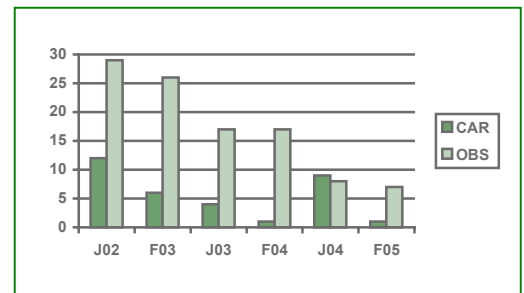
“Roll out scope of ISO 14001 certification to cover all Council activities and services”

Current scope of ISO 14001 certification

Office administration, land and property management across the council, the crematorium, LEA Pool, highways maintenance and management, ICT Services, learning disability day opportunities, transportation and waste management.

External Inspections

Our certifiers, SGS Yarsley, carried out two external inspections during the year. The first, in July 04, returned a total of nine non-conformances and eight observations. As a result of this, a decision was taken by the GEM group to focus on strengthening the existing system and to delay further extension of the certification for one year. At the second visit in Feb 2005 only one non-conformance and eight observations were raised, so a timetable was put in place for rolling out certification to cover all remaining activities and services.



Additions to scope

Waste Management and Transportation achieved the standards required for ISO 14001 certification and were added to the scope in July 2004.

Before this extension, the GEM programme focused almost entirely on the Council's direct impacts on the environment, e.g. amount of energy used by Council offices.

This extension of scope starts the important move to including services that are outwardly focused and reach into the public sphere.

Timetable for achieving full ISO 14001 certification

(Some adjustments may need to be made to this timetable in the light of reorganisation)

July 2005: Strategic Housing, County Treasurers, Environmental Health & Trading Standards (areas not already covered)

February 2006: Planning (Development Control & Building Control), Adult Services, County Secretary & Solicitors

July 2006: Planning (Forward Planning & Conservation), Children's Services, Community Services (areas not already covered)

In order to enter the ISO 14001 scope services go through the following stages: -

- Identify the environmental impacts of their operations with their managers then record the controls and /or improvement targets in place, plus identify any gaps in controls
- Undertake GEM audits to test that the controls in place are robust in practice
- Respond to any weaknesses identified in the Audits (3 months)

The external certifiers then undertake a desktop study & visits to check the impacts and controls before agreeing extensions to the scope.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE YEAR

Gershon

Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency was published in June 2004. This sets out a comprehensive plan for efficiency savings throughout the public services in order to release more funds to front-line services. The subsequent Spending Review builds on existing best practice and proposes efficiency savings in local government of 2.5% per annum to deliver £6.45 billion of efficiencies and productivity improvements by 2007-08. The links with the GEM objectives and targets are numerous and GEM will be one of the mechanisms through which Herefordshire addresses its efficiency requirements.

Environmental Information Regulations

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations Act 2004 (EIR) came into force on 1 January 2005, making much more information held by the Council available to the public. To date, Environment Support Service has received 17 FOIA requests and 43 EIR requests. The requests have been varied and from all over the UK and abroad. Many employees and some Members have received training in FOIA / EIR and a training programme is being developed to ensure all new employees are aware of this important legislation.

ISO 14001 revision

The ISO 14001:2004 revisions were published in November 2004 with the aim of increasing the ease of use, providing clearer requirements, further emphasising the importance of compliance and making the standard more compatible with ISO 9000 (Quality Management System). Formal auditing of Council Services against the new standard will take place in July 2005.

Other New Legislation

Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 - Part 3 s39 of the Act states that regional & local plans have to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001 - Came into force July 2004. The objective of the SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of various plans, with a view to promoting sustainable development.

PLANS FOR 2005-06

Triennial Review of Certification to ISO 14001

The triennial review is scheduled for 13th and 15th July 2005.

Rollout Scope of Certification

See timetable given earlier (p10)

New GEM Objectives and Targets for 2005/06

See Appendix IV.

Formal Environmental Reporting

When the scope of the ISO 14001 certification has been extended to cover all of the Councils services, it has been proposed that the Council move on to certification to EMAS (the European Eco-Management & Audit Scheme). As a prelude to the formal annual reporting system required by EMAS, the Council has produced this Environmental Report, which it plans to extend next year. It is also looking into the possibility of producing a Triple Bottom Line report in the style of that required for FTSE 100 companies.

Events

EcoSchool Day – June 9th 2005 – This event will celebrate and support the success of the EcoSchool scheme in Herefordshire and allow children to take part in exciting themed activities, learn more about EcoSchools and network with other schools from around the county.

Carbon Management Action Plan Implementation

The following projects are scheduled for 2005/06, as part of the CMAP Action Plan: a consumption monitoring trial linked to billing of schools and other Council buildings, completion of the landfill gas design, addition of contracted transport emissions, completion of the fuel poverty strategy, continued property rationalisation, identification and implementation of “no and low cost” measures and the identification of medium cost measures (3-5 years payback).

Environment Policy & Strategy

The Herefordshire Council Environmental Policy and Corporate Environment Strategy will be formally adopted in 2005.

Resource Efficiency Code of Practice

Subsequent to its approval by Cabinet, a resource efficiency code of practice will be published and circulated to all Council Staff. This document will provide clear guidance for staff to help the Council meet both its environmental and efficiency targets.

Appendices

- I. **Performance against each 2004/05 GEM target**
- II. **Corrective actions on GEM targets**
- III. **Corrective actions raised by external certifiers and internally (since half year)**
- IV. **Objectives & targets for 2005/06**