

Report by Cabinet Member (Environment)

In response to the invitation from the Environment Scrutiny Committee I am pleased to present the following report.

The views of others

The year included the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment – the Assessment Team had only positive comments to make about our approach to managing the environment; these included:

"Performance indicator (PI) results, together with other comparative data, suggest that more robust arrangements are needed to achieve continuous improvement and to ensure that performance management has a significant impact on service outcomes. Most impact to date has been in the environment directorate ..."

"Protecting the environment is a clear priority and the Council has a successful track record in achieving its ambitions for the environment over recent years. It is investing in further developments in these areas ..."

"The Council can demonstrate some significant achievements in the areas of regeneration, waste management, transport and sustainability. It is investing in further developments in these areas ..."

"There is a strong focus on environmental sustainability in economic strategy and the Council is working with partners to encourage business to buy in to sustainability and has positive cutting edge policies around alternative energy (including bio fuel) to tackle climate change. The majority of stakeholders surveyed think that 'the Council works effectively to promote the quality of the local economy and environment'."

"Protecting the environment is a clear priority. The Council has a successful track record in achieving its ambitions for the environment over recent years and it has met stretching targets in areas where it already does well; for example over half the county's schools have Eco-schools status. It has a strong drive in terms of sustainability and is performing very well, for example, on recycling where it has exceeded its DEFRA target and is in the top quartile overall and is also reducing the amount of waste land filled. Environmental considerations are built into future plans - such as the Edgar Street development being 'carbon-neutral'."

There has also been national recognition of our achievements –

In August the Council was awarded a Green Apple Award for its Streetscene branding - which came out of the successful Lay-by Safari anti-litter campaign. The award was presented by The Rt. Hon. Patricia Hewitt MP, Secretary of State for Health at the House of Commons in November.

What has been achieved?

Performance during 2005-06 has been good. Although there are some indicators where analysis of year-end outturn is still being done, most targets have been achieved or exceeded, as illustrated by the following table:

BVPI	Indicator	2004-05 outturn	2004-05 top quartile	2005-06 target	2005-06 outturn
Waste					
82a(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been recycled	15.03	17.92	14.95	17.31%
82a(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been recycled			14,109	16059.3
82b(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been composted	6.69	9.93	6.85	6.58%
82b(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been composted			6,465	6102.11
82a(i) & 82b(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings that has been recycled or composted			21.8	23.89%
82c(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources	0	0	0	0
82c(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources			0	0
82d(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been landfilled	78.28	26.95	78.2	76.11%
82d(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been landfilled			73,801	70599.5
84a	Kg of household waste per head per annum	528.03	488.1 (U)	530	521.72
84b	Percentage change from the previous year of Kg of household waste per head per annum			2.9	-1.42%
86	Cost of waste collection per household	42.59	35.31	42.99	not yet available
87	Cost of waste disposal per tonne for municipal waste	58.51	34.6	65.3	not yet available
90b	The percentage of people satisfied with waste recycling				
91a	Percentage of population resident in the authority's area which area served by a kerbside collection of recyclables	60.28	100		62.28%
91b	Percentage of population resident in the authority's area which area served by a kerbside collection of 2				60.28%

BVPI	Indicator	2004-05 outurn	2004-05 top quartile	2005-06 target	2005-06 outurn
	recyclables				
Cleanliness					
199a	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level	27	11	25	18%
199b	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible				3
199c	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible				2
199d	The year-on-year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with fly-tipping'				Grading 1
	% of days public conveniences facilities closed	2.15		1.1	2.5%
Sustainability					
	CO2 emissions in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per head of population/year	14.5		13.7	14.3%
	Percentage of eco-schools	60		65	72%
	Percentage of Council land without a nature conservation designation but managed for Biodiversity purposes	2.49		2.6	2.49%
Planning					
106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	68.3	94	60	Survey underway, data in June
109a	Percentage of major planning applications determined in under 13 weeks	46	69.01	60	61%
109b	Percentage of minor planning applications determined in under 8 weeks	51	75.4	65	74%
109c	Percentage of other planning	64	88	80	82%

BVPI	Indicator	2004-05 outurn	2004-05 top quartile	2005-06 target	2005-06 outurn
	applications determined in under 8 weeks				
200a	Plan Making – Have a development plan	no			yes
200b	Plan Making – Milestones	yes			yes
200c	Plan making – monitoring report				yes
204	Percentage of appeals allowed against authority's decision to refuse planning application	21	25	25	28
205	Quality of service checklist	89	88.9	90	94
219a	Total number of conservation areas in local authority area				64
219b	Percentage of conservation areas with an up-to-date character appraisal				1.6%
219c	Percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals				0%
Environmental Health and Trading Standards					
166a	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health	90	97	90	45
166b	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for trading standards	86.6	100	90	78.75
216a	Number of 'sites of potential concern' [within the local authority area], with respect to land contamination				5,910
216b	Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'				0.15
217	Percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time				95.29%
218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24hrs of notification				83%
218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the				90%

BVPI	Indicator	2004-05 outurn	2004-05 top quartile	2005-06 target	2005-06 outurn
	vehicle				
	Consumer satisfaction with trading standards service				73%
	Business satisfaction with trading standards service				91%
	Trading standards visits to high risk premises				79%
	Trading standards, levels of business compliance of businesses visited - high risk premises				90%
	Trading standards, levels of business compliance of businesses visited - medium risk premises				85%
	Trading standards, levels of business compliance of businesses visited - low risk premises				86%
	Customer Satisfaction levels – overall satisfaction with EH service	81		82	80%

But, there is more than just improved performance. That improvement has been underpinned by many of successes during the year, which have included:

- In June 2005 the Council adopted an Environment Strategy to 2011
- The certification of Council services to ISO 14001 through the GEM programme has been extended to six further Council services
- In May 2005 Herefordshire Council backed the community bid to make Herefordshire a Fairtrade county (the County's bid has just been successful – the first County in the West Midlands to achieve this status and the third in the UK). The Council's own contribution has included serving Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings. In addition to this the Council has helped to attract popular support for the campaign across Herefordshire
- The Council has supported Bridge-It, an environmental advice and development scheme delivered by Groundwork; to date 50 companies have received advice, 8 seminars, 3 accredited Practical Environmental Management Courses and 1 Waste Minimisation Programme have been run
- In Trading Standards over 2,600 consumer and business complaints were received and dealt with, over £120,000 saved or recovered for consumers, there were four successful prosecutions and action was taken against 3 "rogue traders"
- Conclusion of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Public Inquiry in June 2005
- Adoption of further parish plans as supplementary planning guidance to the UDP (bringing the total to 11)

- ❑ Participation of the Conservation Service in a number of high profile archaeology projects including the ongoing Croft Castle excavations and the Credenhill Wood project
- ❑ The Lifescapes project, which ended in September 2005 has played a key role in identifying environmental enhancement opportunities in the 5 main river valleys of Herefordshire. This work will be further developed through the Mapping Opportunities for Habitats and Landscape (MOHL) resource as the basis for steering programmes of community led habitat improvement and restoration in the future.

Challenges for 2006-07

Targets for improvement have been set. In 2006-07 those for the environment are:

BVPI	Indicator	2005-06 outturn	2006-07 target
Waste			
82a(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been recycled	17.31%	15.5%
82a(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been recycled	16059.3	14,688
82b(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been composted	6.58%	7.1%
82b(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been composted	6102.11	6,728
82a(i) & 82b(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings that has been recycled or composted	23.89%	22.6%
82c(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources	0	0
82c(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources	0	0
82d(i)	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which has been landfilled	76.11%	77.4%
82d(ii)	Tonnage of household waste arisings which has been landfilled	70599.5	73,348
84a	Kg of household waste per head per annum	521.72	530
84b	Percentage change from the previous year of Kg of household waste per head per annum	-1.42%	0%
86	Cost of waste collection per household	not yet available	45.19
87	Cost of waste disposal per tonne for municipal waste	not yet available	68.57
90a	The percentage of people satisfied with		89%

BVPI	Indicator	2005-06 outturn	2006-07 target
	household waste collection		
90b	The percentage of people satisfied with waste recycling		67%
90c	The percentage of people satisfied with waste disposal		82%
91a	Percentage of population resident in the authority's area which area served by a kerbside collection of recyclables	62.28%	To be determined
91b	Percentage of population resident in the authority's area which area served by a kerbside collection of 2 recyclables	60.28%	To be determined
Cleanliness			
89	The percentage of people satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area		65%
199a	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level	18%	18%
199b	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible	3	2%
199c	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible	2	2%
199d	The year-on-year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with fly-tipping'	Grading 1	Grading 1
Sustainability			
	Total emission per annum of CO2-e from Council Influenced activities (new indicator)		To be determined
	Percentage of all schools in Herefordshire registered on the eco-schools programme	14.3%	72%
	Percentage of all schools in Herefordshire registered on the eco-schools programme achieving award levels	72%	50%
	Percentage of Council land without a nature conservation designation but managed for Biodiversity purposes	2.49%	2.8%
Planning			
106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	Survey underway, data in June	60%
109a	Percentage of major planning applications determined in under 13 weeks	61%	60%
109b	Percentage of minor planning applications	74%	65%

BVPI	Indicator	2005-06 outturn	2006-07 target
	determined in under 8 weeks		
109c	Percentage of other planning applications determined in under 8 weeks	82%	80%
111	The percentage of applicants and those commenting on planning applications satisfied with the service received		78%
200a	Plan Making – Have a development plan	yes	yes
200b	Plan Making – Milestones	yes	yes
200c	Plan making – monitoring report	yes	yes
204	Percentage of appeals allowed against authority's decision to refuse planning application	28	25
205	Quality of service checklist	94	94
219a	Total number of conservation areas in local authority area	64	64
219b	Percentage of conservation areas with an up-to-date character appraisal	1.6%	14%
219c	Percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals	0%	5%
Environmental Health and Trading Standards			
166a	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health	45	90
166b	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for trading standards	78.75	90
216a	Number of 'sites of potential concern' [within the local authority area], with respect to land contamination	5,910	5,901
216b	Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'	0.15	1
217	Percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time	95.29%	To be determined
218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24hrs of notification	83%	95%
218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle	90%	95%
	Consumer satisfaction with trading standards service	73%	80%
	Business satisfaction with trading standards service	91%	91%
	Trading standards visits to high risk premises	79%	85%
	Trading standards, levels of business compliance of businesses visited - high risk premises	90%	To be determined
	Trading standards, levels of business compliance of businesses visited - medium risk premises	85%	To be determined

BVPI	Indicator	2005-06 outturn	2006-07 target
	Trading standards, levels of business compliance of businesses visited - low risk premises	86%	To be determined
	Customer Satisfaction levels – overall satisfaction with EH service	80%	80

Some specific challenges include:

- Planning – to maintain and improve development control performance
- Waste –to encourage more home composting and other waste minimisation initiatives to reduce the amount of waste landfilled
- Waste Management – More biodegradable waste should be diverted from landfill. Detailed targets have been drawn up as part of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy with Worcestershire County Council
- Streetscene – to maintain the current rate of improvement for the cleanliness indicators to achieve the LPSA2G target
- Sustainability – to ensure every effort is made both within the Council and across Herefordshire to reduce consumption of materials, reduce carbon emissions and maintain bio-diversity
- Consequences arising from implementation of the “Hampton Review” of national regulatory services
- The impact of the Cleaner Neighbourhood and Environment Act. The new duties it imposes on the Council will impact more specifically across the Environment Directorate, particularly around Streetscene activities
- The impact of the inspection and registration requirements of the new Food Hygiene Regulations
- The proposed movement of staff to the Plough Lane offices at intervals throughout the year will create short-term challenges for service delivery for individual services.

Key projects to be delivered include:

- The recently agreed Statement of Community Involvement will be submitted for approval
- Completing the GEM programme to obtain accreditation for all Council services
- Environmental Health and Trading Standards and Planning Services will be involved in the initial implementation of the Council’s Customer Services Strategy, particularly through the development of a new ‘Info by Phone’ initiative
- Introduction of Fixed Penalty Notices for littering offences
- A review of the Public Toilet Improvement Plan to enable it to be completed within existing funding constraints.

Work will also be undertaken on:

- Reviewing arrangements for access to and location of planning surgeries
- Reviewing the Council's land management arrangements to improve bio-diversity
- The three-year follow-up to the staff travel plan survey.