

Report by Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation)

In response to the invitation from the Environment Scrutiny Committee I am pleased to present the following report on our achievements in 2005-06 and the approach to the challenges of 2006-07.

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 highways and transportation; these included:

"The strategic delivery partnership contract including road maintenance which has clear aims, objectives and required outcomes, is delivering annual savings of some £750,000 thus providing better value for money and improvements in terms of service delivered that the public can see."

"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 ..."

"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 ..."

"The Council has a good Local Transport Plan (LTP) which it is successfully delivering. It has grasped the nettle regarding rural transport and has invested in local bus services. The Council has attracted national attention for its rural transport initiatives and rural bus programme. It is introducing national fare concessions for older people and see this as an opportunity to further promote public transport. It works to encourage cycling and car-sharing and has increased cycling levels counter to national trends. The Council has invested £2.3 million in the low floor bus project which provide over 80 per cent of the Council's contracts for subsidised bus services."

"The Council has successfully limited traffic growth and it is hitting its target of 1 per cent maximum increase in traffic in the Hereford area, although it has not been so successful in rural areas. The Council recognises it needs to do more to integrate transport and economic development; for instance it has a longer term vision for integrated public transport hub as part of Edgar Street redevelopment. It has taken the steps it can to improve its roads within limited resources. It has improved the quality of its principal roads although there is a backlog of maintenance work required on the large network of rural roads, the PIs for which do not compare favourably with others. It is increasing joint work with the Highways Agency (HA) to tackle problems of congestion in Hereford city centre where congestion is having an impact on tourism. It is also working with the HA to reduce accidents on the A49 trunk, although it has met its road safety target."

"The Council is successfully recognising the links between the different shared priorities and is, for instance, taking action to achieve its ambitions for older

people through improved transport. The low-floor bus project has 80 per cent of the fleet as low-floor buses on rural routes. This will help the Council address a range of issues that affect older people as in Herefordshire almost half of over 65s live in the most rural parts of the county."

There has also been national recognition of our achievements –

Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire MIND have received national recognition after a transport scheme aimed at helping people in isolated communities was short listed and honoured at an award ceremony in London in June 2005.

The 'Out and About Transport Project' has provided buses, cars, advice and support to people with mental illnesses across the county. Under the scheme: which has received funding from Advantage West Midlands, Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and Lloyds TSB Foundation, people with mental illness can access mini-buses, cars, travel tokens and support services. Around 180 people from Hereford, Leominster, Ledbury and Bromyard regularly benefit from more than 600 passenger journeys a month.

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 |
|-------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Progress with local transport plan | | | | Above average |
| | Intervention by the Secretary of State under Traffic Management Act powers | | | | No intervention |
| 223 | Percentage of the local authority principal road network where structural maintenance should be considered | | | | Awaiting data |
| 224a | Percentage of the non-principal classified road network where structural maintenance should be considered | | | | Awaiting data |
| 224b | Percentage of the unclassified road network where structural maintenance should be considered | | | | Awaiting data |
| 99a(i) | Number of Casualties All KSI | 146 | 92 | 197 | 141 |
| 99a(ii) | Percentage Change over previous year - All KSI | -3% | -13.4% | -6% (137) | -3% |
| 99a(iii) | Percentage Change over 1994-8 average All KSI | -41% | -32.49% | -21% (137) | -43% |
| 99b(i) | Number of Casualties Children KSI | 6 | 12 | 18 | 8 |
| 99b(ii) | Percentage Change over previous | -25% | -28.1% | -6% | 33% |

| BVPI | Indicator | 2004-05 outturn | 2004-05 top quartile | 2005-06 target | 2005-06 outturn |
|-------------|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | year Children KSI | | | (5.64) | |
| 99b(iii) | Percentage Change over 1994-8 average Children KSI | -73% | -53.13% | -20% (5.64) | -64% |
| 99c(i) | Number of Casualties All Slight Injuries | 719 | 721 | 744 | 783 |
| 99c(ii) | Percentage Change over previous year All Slight Injuries | -15% | -8.03% | 1% (726) | 9% |
| 99c(iii) | Percentage Change over 1994-8 average All Slight Injuries | 0% | -14.41% | 3% (726) | 9% |
| 100 | Local authority road works per kilometre of traffic sensitive road | 3.18 | 0.1 | 1.1 | 0 |
| 102 | Local bus services (passenger journeys per year) | 3,447,528 | | 3,928,000 | Data end-May - awaiting bus operator returns |
| 165 | The percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people (change of definition for 2005-06) | 93.1% | 100% | 65% | 80% |
| 187 | Percentage of the category 1, 1a and 2 footway network where structural maintenance should be considered | 32.35% | 16% | 34% | 30.68% |
| 215a | The average number of days taken to repair a street lighting fault, which is under the control of the local authority | | | | 6.43 |
| 215b | The average time taken to repair a street lighting fault, where response time is under the control of a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) | | | | 34.15 |
| | Change in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes <1% growth p.a. | 102.3 | | 104 | Currently being analysed |
| | No. of cycling trips (index) | 113 | | 118 | Currently being analysed |
| | Percentage of subsidised bus services operated with disabled accessible vehicles | 79% | | 80% | 80% |

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

- The Council has been named as one of just 17 centres of excellence for local transport delivery, including public transport and road safety.
- The Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2006-07 to 2010-11 was approved and assessed as "Promising"; although it was disappointing to receive an LTP settlement that was less than anticipated.
- Pedestrianisation of Widemarsh Street and High Street from 10 30am to 4 30pm daily, following extensive consultation and a six month experimental period.
- Completion of major improvements to Roman Road, Hereford.
- The first phase of a major enhancement project to revitalise Hereford city centre, in Eign Gate, was completed and officially opened in November. This was followed by the completion of re-paving of High Street at the beginning of 2006.
- Free concessionary bus travel for the over-60s (with effect from 1st April 2006) going beyond the Government's minimum requirements.
- Submitting a bid for the Rotherwas Access Relief Road, which was graded a Priority 1 scheme by the region's government Agencies.
- In Ross-on-Wye parking restrictions were reviewed and Wilton Road Car Park was made free-of-charge (in line with the parking strategy).
- Working with the Highways Agency to improve safety on the A49 at Ashton.

Our intentions for 2006-07

Improvement targets have been set for 2006-07 – for highways and transportation these are:

| BVPI | Indicator | 2005-06 outturn | 2006-07 target |
|-------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Progress with local transport plan | Above average | Well above average |
| | Intervention by the Secretary of State under Traffic Management Act powers | No intervention | No intervention |
| 223 | Condition of principal roads - % worse than condition threshold | Awaiting data | 5 |
| 224a | Condition of non-principal roads - % worse than condition threshold - classified | Awaiting data | To be determined |
| 224b | Condition of non-principal roads - % worse than condition threshold – unclassified | Awaiting data | 20 |
| 99a(i) | Number of Casualties All KSI | 141 | 129 |
| 99a(ii) | Percentage Change over previous year - All KSI | -3% | -5% |
| 99a(iii) | Percentage Change over 1994-8 average All KSI | -43% | -25% |
| 99b(i) | Number of Casualties Children KSI | 8 | 17 |
| 99b(ii) | Percentage Change over previous year Children KSI | 33% | -6% |
| 99b(iii) | Percentage Change over 1994-8 average Children KSI | -64% | -25% |
| 99c(i) | Number of Casualties All Slight Injuries | 783 | 750 |

| BVPI | Indicator | 2005-06 outturn | 2006-07 target |
|-------------|---|--|---------------------------|
| 99c(ii) | Percentage Change over previous year All Slight Injuries | 9% | 1% |
| 99c(iii) | Percentage Change over 1994-8 average All Slight Injuries | 9% | 4% |
| 100 | Local authority road works per kilometre of traffic sensitive road | 0 | 0 |
| 102 | Local bus services (passenger journeys per year) | Data end-May - awaiting bus operator returns | 3,817,000 |
| 103 | The percentage of users satisfied with the local provision of public transport information | | 63% |
| 104 | The percentage of users satisfied with local bus services | | 62% |
| 165 | The percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people | 80% | 90% |
| 187 | Percentage of the category 1, 1a and 2 footway network where structural maintenance should be considered | 30.68% | 30% |
| 215a | The average number of days taken to repair a street lighting fault, which is under the control of the local authority | 6.43 | 5 |
| 215b | The average time taken to repair a street lighting fault, where response time is under the control of a DNO | 34.15 | 33 |
| | Change in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes - 1% growth p.a. | Currently being analysed | 105 |
| | No. of cycling trips (index) | Currently being analysed | 107 |
| | Percentage of subsidised bus services operated with disabled accessible vehicles | 80% | 80% |
| | Number of Penalty Charge Notices issued | 19,184 | 20,000 |
| | Number of Penalty Charge Notice appeals cases lost at appeal as a percentage of those taken appeal | 50% | <50% |

Some specific challenges include:

- Overcoming the downturn in bus usage and optimising accessibility where possible
- Meeting the LPSA2G casualty reduction target
- The Traffic Management Act 2004 has imposed new duties for highway network management and will extend the powers of the Council to enforce some moving traffic offences

- ❑ The movement of staff to the Plough Lane offices and Rotherwas at intervals throughout the year may create short-term challenges for service delivery for individual services
- ❑ Implementing the Council's updated Green Travel Plan
- ❑ Addressing the flood defence needs of Ross-on-Wye.

Key projects to be delivered include:

- ❑ Completing the refurbishment of High Town (work started on 8th May 2006)
- ❑ Traffic calming schemes for Marlbrook School and the new Whitecross School
- ❑ Revision of parking restrictions in Ledbury
- ❑ Continued work with the Highways Agency on improving safety on the A49
- ❑ Adoption of new Herefordshire Highway Design Guidance, following extensive consultation.

Work will also start on:

- ❑ Rotherwas Access Road (subject to the receipt of Government approval in the summer)
- ❑ Design and planning for park and ride facilities for Hereford
- ❑ Improvements to the cycle network and cycle parking.