



GEM

Environmental Report

2005/06

INTRODUCTION



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

In July 2005 the Council celebrated 3 years of certification to ISO 14001, the international environmental management standard, and upgraded to the 2004 revision. All office administration and land management across the Council has been certified since July 2002 & other Council services have steadily joined the scope. This roll-out is due for completion in July 2006. Standards and performance are checked twice a year by our external certifier, SGS Yarsley.

The Environmental Strategy, agreed in July 2005, reinforces the Council's commitment to the environment & contributes substantially to the principles of sustainable development. It supports members of the public, Council staff & partner organisations in changing their behaviour to make better choices to help protect our local environment.



In the Environmental Strategy the Council recognises "the role that the Authority must play – not only as a leader of the community, but also in moving forward itself and setting an example for others to follow." So when we set out the Council's main external environmental commitments we mirrored them with targets relating our own operations. For instance, this year the public exceeded our target for recycling, achieving a rate of 17.36% of total waste - internally we achieved a 17.45% figure for our own office recycling of paper alone.

This report brings together the results of the Council's internal objectives and targets for 2005/06. It also summarises the results of GEM (Good Environmental Management) audits, ongoing initiatives and other developments throughout the year.

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GEM OBJECTIVES & TARGETS 2005-06

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RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

“To improve resource efficiency across the Council”

This objective links closely with the Gershon imperative to achieve efficiency savings. The Council’s Resource Efficiency Code, agreed on July 2005, states that:

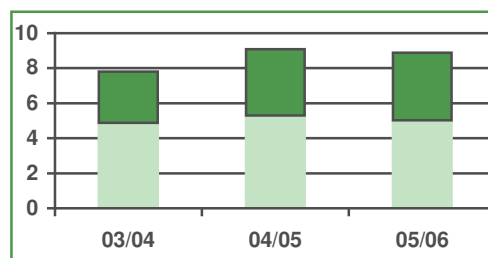
The Council is committed to using resources effectively in order to release funds for front line services, increase efficiency and cut waste & environmental impact.

Paper Use¹

Total Paper Use 2005/06 = 8,879,000; Recycled = 89%
 Total Paper Use 2004/05 = 9,081,000; Recycled = 88%
 Total Paper Use 2003/04¹ = 7,810,000; Recycled = 86%

The total paper use of approaching 9 million sheets equates to around 4000 sheets per employee per year. The proportion of recycled paper used has increased by a further 1% since 2004/05.

Paper use showed a reduction of 2.5% over the year compared to the previous year but is still higher than in 2003/04.



Total paper use in millions of sheets (light green = used in photocopiers; dark green = other)

Photocopiers

Total Copies 2005/06 = 5,022,359; Cost = £31,332.02
 Total Copies 2004/05 = 5,303,736; Cost = £32,939.65
 Total Copies 2003/04 = 4,889,000; Cost = £30,363.87

In line with the total paper use, photocopier use decreased over the year at a saving of £1,600 but is still higher than in 2003/04.

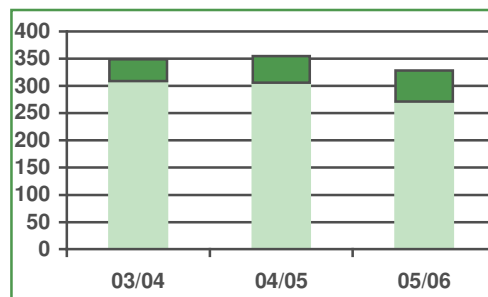
Water

Due to the difficulties in reading meters and the lack of any clear proportionality between the cost of water and its usage, we have no comparative data on water use within the Council. This is an issue that needs attention.

Trade Waste from council premises²

Trade Waste 2005/06 = 271.1 tonnes
 Trade Waste 2004/05 = 305.4 tonnes
 Trade Waste 2003/04 = 308.9 tonnes

The Council has reduced its trade waste volume by an encouraging 11%, saving over £4000 based on 2005/06 prices. However, due to the increasing costs of lifts, the actual savings are less than this. With the strong strategic emphasis on waste minimisation and the additional costs of landfill, there is considerable incentive to continue reducing trade waste.



Total Council waste in tonnes (light green = trade waste; dark green = recycled)

¹ Relates to paper supplied by West Mercia Supplies for internal use

² Calculation based on average weights for trade bins and trade sacks

Recycling from Council premises

Recycled Paper 2005/06 = 57.50 tonnes
Recycled Paper 2004/05 = 49.18 tonnes
Recycled Paper 2003/04 = 40.50 tonnes

The Office Recycling Scheme operated by Fast Lane Freight regularly collects from 35 Council Offices in the County. The amount of paper collected through the office-recycling scheme increased significantly over the previous two years, equating to a recycling rate of 17.45%. In addition, the number of bags containing cans and plastics for recycling also increased from 526 in 2004/05 to 680 in 2005/06. Cardboard is also increasingly collected through this scheme although we do not currently possess accurate records for the amounts collected.

Schools Recycling

In Spring 2006, 18 recycling banks were sited at various schools around the County. This programme will be rolled-out further in 2006/07.

The paper collections began in December and by the end of March 18 banks had been installed at 18 schools and a total of 11.73 tonnes had been collected.

Business Mileage

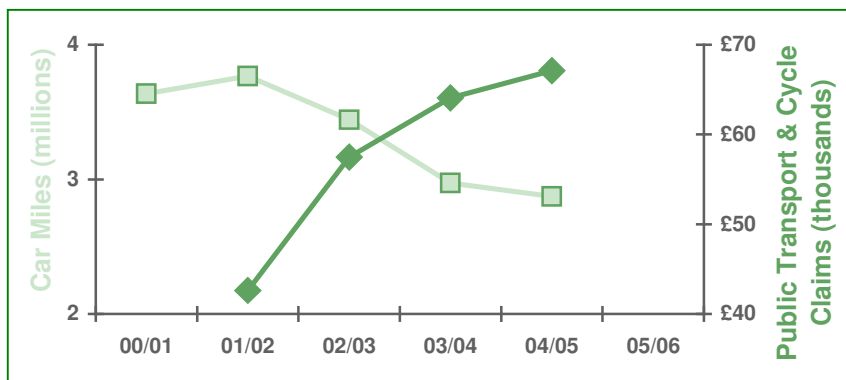
Up to date information to be supplied at the meeting – problems programming report

CAR – Miles claimed

BIKE – Miles claimed

From April 2005 employees receive 20p a miles for cycle business miles (previous rate 6.5p)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – £³ claimed



³ It is impractical to compute the number of separate trips but the cost gives some indication of public transport use.

CARBON MANAGEMENT

“To achieve a 12.5% reduction in Council carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 2012” Council Carbon Management Action Plan (CMAP), agreed March 2005

The CMAP focuses on reducing emissions by rationalising council accommodation & energy monitoring, plus measures to improve the efficiency of Council properties, including schools. The top three sources of emissions for the council are landfill sites, property and transport.

Gas Use

Up to date information to be supplied at the meeting

Taking a sample of 13 Council Offices for which we have reliable data we can see a 1.1% decrease in gas use in 2005 compared with 2004 and a 3.7% decrease since 2003.

In a sample of 25 Schools for which we have reliable data we can see a 0.4% decrease in gas use in 2005 compared with 2004 and a 2.2% decrease since 2003.

Electricity Use

Up to date information to be supplied at the meeting

Energy Costs

Prices are rising at a much faster rate than our energy efficiency initiatives are reducing our usage. Further rises are expected in 2006/07.

Price rises gas: 60% in Sept 2005

Price rise electricity: 25% in Dec 2005

Improvements in data quality

Since September 2005 it has been a contractual condition with N-power that gas meters are read monthly, so the accuracy of data will increase.

Over 80% of our smaller sites are now submitting meter readings to WMS on line, compared to 40% a year earlier.

Renewable Energy

The Council has continued to source 100% renewable electricity (obtained from turbines powered by burning sewage gas) for all Council owned and operated buildings and street lighting. The current contract runs to December 2006.

Climate Change

The Nottingham Declaration on tackling Climate Change was signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader in autumn 2005.

The Sustainability Unit has supported the development of the emerging Herefordshire Climate Change Strategy, helped with public consultation on the issues & given talks on climate change to groups across the County.

HECA Report

The 9th Home Energy Conservation Act report showed a 1.65% increase in householder energy efficiency between 31st March 2004 and 1st April 2005, the biggest in 6 years. This represents a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of around 10,500 tonnes. The work included the 11 solar installations through SEES (Special Energy Efficiency Scheme). This is more than any previous year and, since only 4

areas are targeted per year, it represents a very positive step towards changing the mindset of the public towards renewable energy. The overall progress of the HECA programme since 1996 shows a 14.35% improvement in energy efficiency within the County.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

“To reduce and control environmental risks associated with the Council’s Activities”

Contaminated Land

The design for drainage at Leominster landfill site was approved.

Salt Barns

The new Thorn salt barn at Rotherwas is now fully operational. This allows gritters to be stored and loaded inside, thus reducing spills. All salt has now been removed from the Burcott road depot and this is now non-operational although still in use by the Council for temporary storage during the High Town refurbishment.

Heatwave Plan

In recognition of a significant number of deaths throughout Europe in 2003 due to high temperatures, the Department of Health issued a Heatwave Strategy for local authorities to implement. Herefordshire Adult Social Care has issued procedures to its social care locality teams to follow in the event of official Met Office warnings of certain temperatures being predicted and the strategy has been highlighted to our independent sector providers, so that they are aware of its requirements.

Air Quality

In July 2005 the Council produced its annual Air Quality Progress Report. The ongoing monitoring work in the County indicates that although air quality in the county is generally very good the UK standards for NO₂ levels are likely to be breached at Hereford (A49) and Leominster (Bargates). The county’s second Air Quality Management Area was declared at Bargates in March 2006.

Monitoring work has revealed a rising trend in NO₂ countywide, a falling trend for particulates in Hereford and a rising trend in rural ozone.

Incident Reporting

A computerised Accident and Environmental Incident Report Form is now available for internal use by staff. No environmental incidents were recorded during the year on these forms.

Non-conformances

The GEM group track non-conformances with the ISO14001 system and corrective action needed.

16 non-conformances were logged internally during the year, 8 of which are now closed out. These include matters raised by the public, system failures and pollution risks (crematorium and Hillcrest Sewage Treatment Works). See table on page 12 for more information.

PARTNERSHIP & PROCUREMENT

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

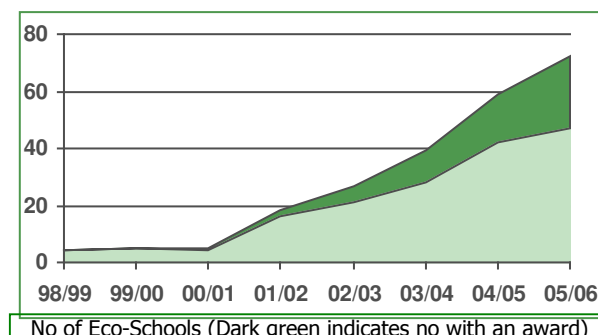
Fairtrade

The Council passed a resolution to support Fairtrade in May 2005 & now serves Fairtrade tea, and coffee at all Council meetings. In a bid to become a registered Fairtrade County it has also been working with the Community Fairtrade Steering Group to publicise and promote Fairtrade throughout Herefordshire.

For more information see the community website www.herefordshirefairtrade.org.uk

Eco-Schools

A total of 72 of Herefordshire's 105 Schools are registered with this national scheme, 30 of these have reached one of the award levels and 8 have the top award – the prestigious Green Flag. An Eco-Schools day was held at Lugwardine Court in June and included a variety of activities based around the themes covered by the Eco-School scheme. Over 25 schools and 150 children attended and the feedback received was extremely positive.



A total of 12 grants were given to award-level Eco-Schools to support environmental initiatives. These included recycling bins, gardening tools, seeds, composters, ponds, wildlife areas and a willow structure.

The new Herefordshire Eco-Schools Directory was also produced and distributed to all schools within the County. This contains information and contact details for a wide range of organisations locally, regionally and nationally that work on environmental initiatives. A newsletter is also now being sent to all schools each term informing them about EcoSchools and other environmental initiatives going on in the County.



L to R: pond at Ashfield, paper bank, allotment at Almeley, sensory garden at Westfield, activity at Eco-Schools day.

Sustainable Procurement

- The Council's revised Procurement Strategy states "The Council's requirements will include social, environmental, sustainability and other strategic objectives defined at the earliest stages of the procurement cycle" and that directorate procurement should pay attention to the Resource Efficiency Code of Practice.
- The newly formed Resources Directorate now has responsibility for the corporate cohesion of all non-ICT procurement.
- Our term consultations, Owen Williams, achieved certification to ISO 14001 in April 2005.
- West Mercia Supplies has now agreed an environmental statement. During the year it has worked with the Council to increase its range of green items and now stocks Fairtrade beverages.

- The Council agreed a new School Meals policy in February 2006 that states that the amount of fresh, unprocessed and locally produced food used in school meals will be increased.

HJS Key & Environmental Performance Indicators

During the year the % of recycled paper used and certified timber bought for Council jobs has increased. Committee papers (white) have been printed on recycled paper since January 2005.

Work to investigate increased use of recycled material in roads & reductions in overall waste are ongoing.

Herefordshire Community Strategy

Environment and Sustainability are included in the vision and as guiding principles within the Local Area Agreement and the draft revised Community Strategy and also feature in the performance indicators.

Bridge-It

Economic Regeneration & the Sustainability Unit support this environmental advice & development scheme for local businesses, delivered by Groundwork through Bridge-it. Since the start of the partnership in 2004 they have advised over 50 Herefordshire based companies, run 8 free seminars, provided three accredited Practical Environmental Management Courses and 1 Waste Minimisation Programme.

Sharing Best Practice

The Sustainability Unit hosted visits from regional colleagues considering ISO 14001 from Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Government Office West Midlands and Sandwell during the year.

Guidance for Contractors

A guidance document was produced and circulated to contractors working on behalf of Strategic Housing stating the Council's desire to improve the environmental soundness of work undertaken. It included information on sustainable timber, PVC windows, non-toxic alternatives, low energy fittings and reduced water consumption.

BIODIVERSITY

“To build on existing work to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Council owned land”

Biodiversity targets

The county's Biodiversity Action Plan was extensively revised in Dec 2005. A new Biodiversity Partnership Officer is now in post and will be progressing the corporate target of increasing the % of Council owned land without a nature conservation designation managed for biodiversity. This was not achieved in 2005/06.

Biological Records Centre

The Herefordshire Biological Records Centre in Town Hall basement is a successful partnership initiative hosted by the Council. It involves nine volunteers who contribute the equivalent of five person days per week.

Over the past year the BRC has undertaken a wide range of work including:

- Assisting local wildlife recording projects e.g. dormice on the Malverns, ponds & newts project, community commons.
- Integration of species records produced as a result of development control surveys - over 3,000 new species records.
- Provision of data to support Environmental Stewardship applications
- Publication of 'Dragonflies of Herefordshire'.
- Organised two sell-out meetings for the county's 100+ natural history recorders
- Working with the botanical recorders in the county to produce and review a Rare Plants Register for publication in 5+ years time

Roadside Verge Nature Reserves

Herefordshire Nature Trust resurveyed all the Roadside Verge Nature Reserves (RVNR) during 2005/06 and produced a detailed report. A total of 31 sites were assessed and many boundaries have been revised. The report found that many RVNR s were deteriorating due to inappropriate management and suggested that short-term monitoring is continued, a complete review of RVNR is undertaken and that the Council work with Herefordshire Nature Trust to formalise a service level agreement on RVNRs.

Eco-Schools

Biodiversity became a new theme for the Eco-School programme from September 2005 (see also Partnerships section on page 8).

Access to the countryside

Successful summer and winter Walking Festivals were held, with numerous guided walks suitable for all abilities.

The CROW Act has now opened up access on foot to common land across the county and some of the Black Mountains. Access maps are available on the Countryside Agency website and also held by Public Rights of Way.

See the website for more details: <http://www.openaccess.gov.uk/wps/portal>

West Midlands Annual Monitoring Report for 2005

38% of all SSSIs in the county are in favourable/recovering condition against a regional average of 68% (Policy QE7). This is a red listed indicator for the county. The low figures is due to the presence of several large complex cross-border sites in

unfavourable condition, such as the Black Mountains and the river network affected by diffuse pollution from a range of sources, such as septic tanks, sewage treatment plants, land management and conifer plantations. Findings reported in Herefordshire's own Annual Monitoring Report fed into the regional report.

Unitary Development Plan

Although there are no specific targets set out in the UDP, the more specific objectives of biodiversity policies include:-

- Safeguard internationally, nationally and locally protected areas of nature conservation and geological importance, and species listed in the UK and local BAP from inappropriate and unnecessary development
- Ensure no net loss of either the quality nor quantity of biodiversity in the county
- Help meet the aims of the BAP for Herefordshire
- Encourage the provision of features of value to wildlife in all development schemes

CERTIFICATION

“To maintain ISO14001 certification and roll out the scope to cover all services by July 2006”

Internal Audits

A total of 32 GEM Internal Audits were carried out during 2005/06 covering properties, operational controls, whole services, contracts and partnerships.

These audits raised a total of 31 Non-Conformities (NC) & 19 Observations (OBS), see table 6 for details. Of these, 6 were overdue for close out at year-end.

Eight new GEM auditors were trained in June 2005 to undertake site audits. Training on auditing contracts was also provided to the existing team of 37 auditors in June.

In February eight existing auditors were trained in advanced environmental auditor skills to enable them to complete systems and whole service audits

Audit Types	No
Systems	2
Operational Controls	6
Services	5
Properties	16
Contracts	3

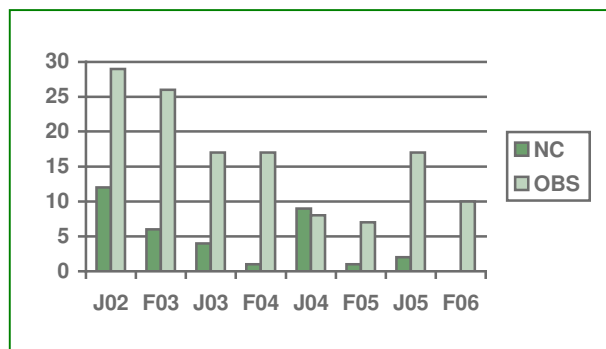
Internal Audit Summary	NC	OBS
Asbestos	5	
Waste Documentation	3	2
Monitoring & Reporting	3	
Emergency Procedures	2	2
Fire Equipment & Procedures	2	1
Officers in Charge	2	1
Electrical Installation	2	1
Portable Appliance Testing	2	1
Health & Safety	2	1
Document Control	2	
Store Cupboards	2	
Building Condition	1	1
Contractor Management	1	
Training Records	1	
Procedures	1	
Environmental Policy		4
PMF Maintenance		2
Control Of Waste		1
Cardboard Recycling		1
Fairtrade		1
TOTAL	31	19

External Audits

The Council was audited twice during 2005/06 by its external certifiers, SGS Yarsley with the following results (see also graph below):

July: 2 Non-Conformities
17 Observations

February: 0 Non-Conformities
10 Observations



Further internal Non-Conformities were also raised throughout the year in response to arising issues. These, together with the issues raised by SGS are shown in the adjacent table.

Non-conformance Summary	NC	OBS
Compliance	7	3
Interested parties	4	
Procedures	3	4
Communication	2	1
Reporting	2	1
Document Control	1	3
Objectives and Targets	1	3
Internal Audit		3
Monitoring		2
Records		2
Management Review		1
Aspects		1

Extension to ISO 14001 Scope

Two extensions to scope were also carried out during the year:

July: Strategic Housing, County Treasurers, Environmental Health & Trading Standards

February: Development Control, Building Control, Legal & Democratic Services and Adult Social Care

GEM Training

- Both GEM Co-ordinators successfully completed an IEMA approved 5-day advanced environmental auditor training course
- Eight GEM Auditors successfully completed a 2-day EMS Auditor course.
- Three members of the Environment Directorate achieved the new Chartered Environmentalist status.
- The new GEM Group, greatly altered as a result of retirements and reorganisation, undertook a full day of training on environmental management and ISO14001.
- A new corporate environmental management training session was produced and run for the first time in March.

Performance against 2005/06 targets

Some targets were delayed or only partially completed.

A total of 21 Non-Conformances relating to targets were raised during the year and referred to the GEM group.

Objective	Targets Completed	Partially Complete	Awaiting Information	Targets delayed	Due after April 06
Resource Efficiency	4		2	2	-
Carbon Management	3		2	-	-
Environmental Risks	3		-	3	2
Partnership & Procurement	5	2	-	1	-
Biodiversity	1	1	-	3	2
Certification	2	-	-	-	1
Corporate	1	-	-	1	-
TOTALS	19	3	4	10	5

CORPORATE

“To complete the environment strategy and disseminate its requirements across the authority”

Environment Strategy 2005 - 2011

This strategy, agreed in July 2005, covers the key existing internal and external targets within the Environment Directorate and GEM. It has been designed as a simple document listing the Council's broad objectives and targets, accompanied by an action plan providing the details and links to the specific targets.

The other major innovation is to mirror external and internal targets, thus demonstrating that the Council's own internal environmental objectives match its external objectives.

The 2004/05 baseline figures for the Environment Strategy were produced in September 2005. This will be updated in September 2006 and presented to the Cabinet Member and Environment Scrutiny.

The GEM Action Plan for 2006/07 (See Appendix 2) will track the internal targets from the Environment Strategy. Local targets will be integrated into the Service Plans.

Corporate Plan 2005 - 2008

The environment continues to be firmly embedded in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Extracts from the Council's Corporate Plan 2005-08

- 1.5 Everything in the Plan is intended to help deliver the Council's commitment to... a **sustainable environment** (1 of 4 bullet points)
- 5.1 The Council's **top priorities** for the period of this Plan are... to **protect the environment**, including by **recycling much more waste** and significantly **reducing carbon emissions** (1 of 8 bullet points)
- 5.2 To make these things possible, **the Council's organisational priorities** are... to **embed corporate planning, performance management ... systems** so as to continue to drive up service standards & efficiency (1 of 5 bullet points)

Making a reality of Council-wide policies, strategies and programmes

Agreement is now in place (December 2006) that all Council policies, strategies, programmes and procedures put forward for approval or scrutiny should show how they enable the Council to achieve its cross-cutting objectives including protecting the environment & sustainability. Over time this will help to achieve the Environment Strategy objectives.

DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE YEAR

New Legislation & Policy

- **Clean Neighborhoods and Environment Act:** contains a range of measures to improve the quality of the local environment by giving Local Authorities and the Environment Agency additional powers to deal with Fly-tipped waste, Litter, Fly posting & Graffiti, Abandoned vehicles, Dogs and Noise
- **High Hedges Act:** gives local authorities the power to deal with complaints about high hedges which are having an adverse effect on a neighbour's enjoyment of his or her domestic property
- **'Securing The Future':** updated national Strategy for Sustainable Development makes specific reference to living within environmental limits and puts forward four priority areas: energy & climate change, production & consumption, resource protection and sustainable communities.
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive:** 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 plans, with a view to preventing environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development. Transportation undertook an SEA for the new Local Transport Plan.
- **Hazardous Waste Regulations:** these apply controls on movements of substances, such as interceptor waste, on the revised and expanded Hazardous Waste List.
- **Local Development Framework:** the incoming Forward Planning system requires all the documents within the Framework to undergo sustainability appraisal. These appraisals will then be public documents. Forward Planning started development of their appraisal process during the year.

Other regional and national developments

- The Director of Environment has become a Board member of Sustainability West Midlands and was a speaker at an SWM meeting at Bulmers.
- Advantage West Midlands passed a comprehensive and ambitious sustainable development policy.

Developments within the Council

- Update of Environmental Policy (June 2005)
- Publication of Corporate Environment Strategy (July 2005)
- Publication of Resource Efficiency Code of Practice (July 2005)
- Formation of corporate sustainability group with director level representation

PLANS & DEVELOPMENTS FOR 2006-07

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

Vision proposed for the revised
Herefordshire Community Strategy
& Herefordshire Council.

Local Strategic Partnership

Once the Herefordshire Community Strategy is launched mechanisms will be developed to embed its guiding principles, which include strong environmental & sustainability commitments, in the Action Plan.

Staff Travel Plan

The three-year follow-up to the Staff Travel Plan survey is due in the autumn. This should provide a detailed insight into the changes in staff travel modes and the effects of the initiatives undertaken through the Travel Plan process.

Carbon Management

A total of £50,000 has been secured to conduct energy audits of all high schools and larger primary schools over the current year. These surveys will identify areas for improvement in the energy efficiency of these buildings.

Legislation

- **WEEE Directive:** This Directive aims to reduce waste electrical and electronic equipment by allowing householder to return WEEE to collection facilities free of charge and force producers to take back and achieve demanding recycling and recovery rates. There have been several delays to implementation: the timetable for the implementation of the WEE Directive is now due in Spring 2006.
- **Environmental Liability Directive:** This directive says that operators carrying out hazardous activities will be held strictly liable (i.e. no need to show fault or negligence) for preventing or restoring damage caused by those activities to land, water and protected habitats or species. To be incorporated into UK law by April 2007.
- **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive:** This promotes energy efficiency in buildings and will require all public buildings over 1000sqm to display energy performance certificates within 3 years of the implementation date (January 2006)

See also GEM targets for 2006/07 in Appendix 2.