

Annual Plan 2005/06

Introduction

This Plan sets out the major actions that the County Council intends to take in 2005/06 in order to improve services to the public and the detailed targets that we intend to achieve in order to demonstrate those improvements. As such it meets the current requirements of the Government to produce an annual Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP).

The Plan is in two parts. Part One identifies the major issues which Departments intend to address in 2005/06. Part Two sets out our past performance and future targets against a range of Performance Indicators.

The Plan aims to provide a useful summary of the Councils' Plans for elected Members, council officers and interested members of the public. It is supported by more detailed plans for each service area and these are available on the Council's intranet, on our internet site, or in hard copy from the Department concerned.

If you have any comments or queries on the content of this Annual Plan please contact

The Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy (MTCS)

In 2003 a Medium Term Corporate Strategy was agreed for the life of the Council. Following the May 2005 elections, a new Medium Term Corporate Strategy will be developed in time to inform service planning for 2006 onwards.

This Plan, however, is based on the current Corporate Objectives of the Council which are:-

- Working with Partners to Deliver Quality and Responsive Services
- Achieving Excellence in Education and Learning
- Improving Social Care and Support for Vulnerable People
- Creating a Better Transport System
- Rising to the Challenge on Waste
- Seeking a Safer County

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

In December each year the Audit Commission uses evidence gathered from various sources, such as service inspections and external auditors' reports, to judge the Council's performance overall. In December 2004 Leicestershire achieved the highest possible assessment as an "Excellent" council. This rating required consistently high performance across all services and is a tribute to the efforts of employees across the Council in delivering high quality services.

However we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. Maintaining this standard in future will require hard work to continue improving the services we deliver in the face of constant new challenges. Making significant progress during 2005/06 on the range of issues identified in this Plan will be a big step in the right direction.

Working with Partners to Deliver Quality and Responsive Services

The Council increasingly works with other agencies to deliver services to the community. We are committed to developing these partnerships further in 2005/06. A number of partnerships are referred to in other parts of this Plan and we will develop the overall framework within which these partnerships operate. We will also improve the ways in which we provide services in response to public demands by improving access to, and information about, our services.

Implement the Community Strategy and support the Local Strategic Partnership

During 2004 the Council played a leading role in supporting Leicestershire Together (a partnership of many of the key agencies in the County with an interest in improving life in Leicestershire) to review and up date the Leicestershire Community Strategy and to implement a wide range of partnership projects. During 2005 we will continue to support Leicestershire Together to ensure implementation of the Strategy and to co-ordinate interagency and partnership working.

We also play a leading role in the seven District based Local Strategic Partnerships. We will continue to support their development and to establish more cost effective links with them.

Develop a Local Area Agreement and a new Public Service Agreement

A wide range of government funding streams comes into the County via a number of agencies and with different requirements as to their use. This makes it difficult to focus funds on the service developments that matter to local people. During 2005 the Council will bid for Government approval to work with Leicestershire Together to develop a Local Area Agreement with the Government. This will set out what the priorities are for Leicestershire and how the different funding streams can be pooled to focus on those priorities.

In 2003 the Council signed a Public Service Agreement (PSA) with the Government. This commits the Council to improving performance on a range of services over the three years up to March 2006 in return for potentially significant financial rewards from the Government. These targets involve the Council in stretching its performance beyond existing targets. Some of them involve working closely with other agencies in the County to deliver improvements. All of the PSA target areas have been included as priority issues in the Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy and are referred to individually in the relevant Section of this Plan. Overall, the Council has made good progress in implementing the targets. Work will continue in 2005/06 to ensure we improve performance in line with the targets and achieve a substantial reward grant to invest in further service improvements.

The Council, with Leicestershire Together, will be working with partners during 2005 to identify those services where local people would like to see performance improved or 'stretched' over and above existing targets and funding levels. This will form the basis of the second Public Service Agreement with the Government. The Council, through Leicestershire Together, will be looking to conclude the combined PSA and LAA negotiations early in 2006.

Improve Access to Services

During 2005 we intend to make substantial progress in improving public access to services. In particular we will develop a customer telephone contact centre to be launched in 2006. A further 3 new model service shops will be opened around the County and an additional 10 County Council services will be provided from these service shops. The Council is also working with partners to roll out newly branded help points across the County, improve the way it distributes leaflets and manages information.

Further action will be taken during 2005/06 to ensure that the Council improves its customer focus including a new Customer Charter, a customer service training programme and improvements in complaint handling. Consultation will be undertaken to better understand public experience of interaction with Council services and how we can improve these. We will review our arrangements for publishing information about Council services and improve the signposting of and to Council buildings with public access.

The Council was inspected on its Access to Services Initiative during 2004 and was found to have a fair service with promising prospects for improvement. We will implement our response to the inspection recommendations during 2005/06 to ensure that the Initiative is progressed in the most effective manner.

We have made good progress on facilitating electronic delivery of services with over 85% of transactions electronically enabled by the end of March 2005. A new Council website was launched in 2004 providing significantly enhanced functionality and ease of use. During 2005/06 we will ensure that the remaining potential transactions are e-enabled, implement new security measures to protect Council information, implement new on line business processes and work flow and redesign the Council intranet to provide improved support to staff.

Respond to Joint Public Health Priorities

The County Council and Primary Care Trusts have agreed Joint Public Health Priorities that may be most effectively pursued through work undertaken at a countywide level and through wider partnerships. The priority areas are:

- Tobacco Control
- Physical Activity
- Food and Health

- Accident Prevention
- Sexual Health
- Mental health and well being

Also highlighted are a number of underpinning themes in the priorities with key settings where joint working could be strengthened, identified as Transport, Education, Rural/economic development, and Culture.

For each priority, a lead person at a senior level in the County Council and in the Primary Care Trusts has been identified to ensure that a programme of action is formulated and taken forward.

Work with the Voluntary and Community Sector

The role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Leicestershire is widely recognised and valued. This was confirmed through the 2003 Compact between the Council and the VCS. We have developed our relationship through a Joint VCS/County Council Implementation Group. This year we will finalise local Compact codes of good practice on funding and consultation and policy appraisal, and develop a code for black and minority ethnic groups.

In 2005/06 the Council will work closely with the VCS and other partners on two key initiatives. ChangeUp is the Government's programme to strengthen the infrastructure of the VCS and enable the sector to play a more prominent role in public service delivery. A local Funders' Panel of organisations that provide funding to the sector has been formed to develop a more co-ordinated, strategic approach to funding. In addition the VCS will play a leading role in the preparation of the Local Area Agreement for Leicestershire referred to above.

Achieve the Equalities Standard

The Council plans to achieve level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by 2007. As a first step towards this a Corporate Equality Plan has been agreed in order to reduce disadvantage, discrimination, and inequalities of opportunity. It will promote diversity in terms of the people we serve, our workforce, the partners we work with and the services we deliver.

In 2005/06 we will take actions to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard. We will ensure service areas carry out equality impact assessments for race, gender and disability. We will implement equality training for Members and staff and further improve our employee monitoring and recruitment arrangements. We will also review other key employment policies and procedures.

We will hold a Citizen's Jury for People from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities to develop ideas and an action plan on areas where the County Council, and its partners, can improve the responsiveness of their services. We will continue to implement the action plan in response to last year's Citizen's Jury for Disabled People. The Council will also develop the Racist

Incident Monitoring Project in partnership with Rutland County Council, the Leicestershire Constabulary and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships across Leicestershire.

Improve Access to and Quality of Libraries

We want to provide a better environment for library users and improve visitor numbers and issues. The ongoing programme of investment in new and refurbished libraries aimed at achieving this will continue with new libraries at Ratby, Markfield and Broughton Astley and refurbishment work at Cosby, Wigston and Birstall as well as at three other smaller libraries. Opening hours will also be increased to match public requirements.

Promote Economic Well Being

The Council will continue to work with the LeicesterShire Economic Partnership, (LSEP), to promote improvement to the economic well-being of local people. It is leading projects with LSEP funding of nearly £ 10m. in 2005/06 and plans to identify and develop further areas of joint working through planning for the economic development block of the Local Area Agreement.

Achieving Excellence in Education and Learning

Children Act 2004

The Children Act has significant implications for the future organisation of all Council services, but particularly Education and Social Services provided for children in Leicestershire. A Children's Services Programme Manager has been appointed to ensure the Children Act agenda moves forward. A Children's Services Board is in place to ensure better levels of integration and collaboration amongst all partners contributing to "Change for Children" programmes. It is chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Directors of Education and Social Services. These arrangements will ensure that a Children and Young People's Plan will be in place by April 2006.

Continue to support schools in improving academic achievement and challenge those schools underachieving.

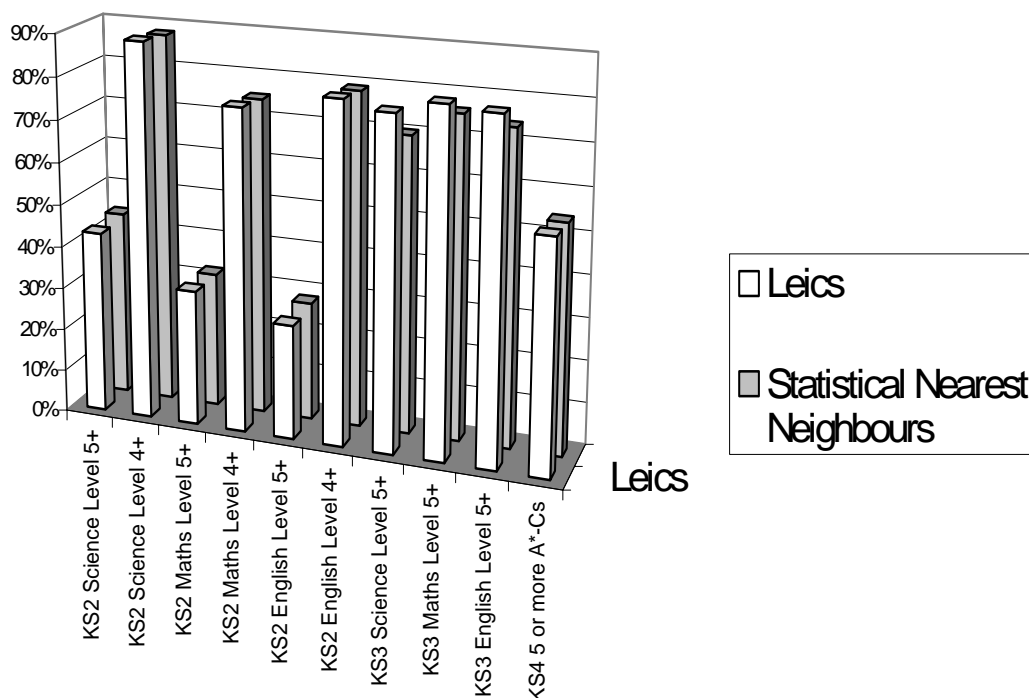
We have a good foundation for further improving academic achievement of all pupils in Leicestershire schools. Attainment results at all four key stages place Leicestershire in the top 30% of all authorities, and in the top 5% at Key Stage 3. The added value for pupils attaining between key stages is in line with the national average.

At Key Stage 2, grades in English, maths and science continue an upward trend which places Leicestershire 14th out of 150 LEA's.

Our Key Stage 4 results are also above the national average, and targeted support has helped some schools to achieve a 5% increase over last year's performance.

Our ambition to improve educational standards is shown in our PSA targets, by improving educational attainment beyond the anticipated levels through "stretch" targets. We are on course to achieve our improved levels of achievement for children in special schools but our results for Level 5 at KS2 and 5 A-C's at GCSE will probably not meet the target levels this year. We are likely to only partially achieve our targets to improve attendance and attainment of Looked After Children.

Key Stage Results 2004



We have 7 schools in special measures at present out of a total of 287. Preventing schools going into special measures and challenging their underachievement is a high priority. We will take steps to identify the earliest indicators of school failure, through rigorous monitoring and cross-referencing of data. Where weaknesses emerge, schools will receive support through specialist work on improving teaching and learning and management skills. We will support Headteachers through induction and training to develop their leadership and stay focussed on raising standards.

Improve the educational attainment of underachieving groups.

A key feature of our inclusion policy is to improve the attainment of those groups who achieve least. These include pupils in Special Schools, those who are in care, boys, and students at KS4. Our monitoring and evaluation procedures identify and track these groups, to give help to those who need it most and measure the success it brings.

The Looked After Children Steering Group oversees a range of strategies, including the Step-Up Project for year 5 and 6 children, and the LACES team co-ordinates support for better educational outcomes for looked after children.

Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder will be supported through an outreach service and helped to integrate into mainstream schools.

A range of teaching strategies are developed with schools to address boys' learning, and mentoring strategies are closely monitored for effectiveness.

Improve attendance and behaviour and prevent bullying in schools

Children and Young People can only learn effectively and achieve their best if they are regular attenders, work in a calm learning environment and are free from bullying and harassment. Our strategies with schools help to create these conditions by agreeing school action plans to improve attendance, ensuring that vulnerable pupils are given suitable school places, where they can be effectively supported, and promoting rigorous anti-bullying measures.

Continue to implement the SEN Inclusion Strategy

We want to improve the achievement of all pupils with special educational needs. We will also reduce the numbers of pupils with special educational in expensive out of county placements and reduce the need for statutory assessment.

We will do this by improving our services with the programme of re-building special schools as area special schools and by developing multi-agency support in the five SEN areas. We will also pilot the network of provision for pupils with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties.

Implement the 10 year Childcare Strategy

There are currently three Children Centres at Shelthorpe Community Primary School; Warren Hills Community Primary School, Coalville; and Cobden Primary School, Loughborough. These offer early education integrated with childcare, family support and parental outreach and child and family health services.

Our aim is to establish a further twenty-four Children's Centres in the County's 30% most disadvantaged wards by 2008 with a target of a Children's Service in every community by 2010. In order to meet that target we will develop a Children's Centre Strategy in 2005 through an Integrating Services Subgroup with representation from all interested agencies.

We want to support extended school initiatives by offering funding through the Standards Fund to allow schools to run pilot projects to deliver elements of the initiative. These will help in the development of extended schools across the County and encourage schools to increase the time they are open and offer, or signpost to, additional facilities such as Childcare, Study Support, Health and Social Care and Parenting Support.

Deliver improved school accommodation in partnership with Governing Bodies

The Council has identified five schools with structural problems and has made provision to replace these by September 2007. Work is already underway to replace the schools at Bushloe, Wigston and Castle Rock, Coalville by 2006.

These will be followed by new buildings at Gartree High, Oadby; Shepshed High, Shepshed; and Brockington High School, Enderby completed by September 2007. This will give pupils the benefits of learning in modern facilities designed to support their needs.

The first area special school was opened as Birchwood Special School, Melton Mowbray in September 2004 and this programme will be continued in 2005 with a new area special school at Dorothy Goodman in Hinckley.

Respond to the Youth Work Green Paper

A Green Paper on Youth is shortly expected from the Government and we will respond to this accordingly.

We will continue to provide a “new, integrated youth offer” and to support young people to achieve the 5 outcomes described in Every Child Matters. We will do this by ensuring Youth Work is planned and delivered through a series of partnerships at strategic and operational level, giving access to activities and advice that enhance young people's personal, social and educational development.

Develop a Knowledge Management Group

We are organising a Knowledge Management Group, supported by new software systems, to improve our collection and cross referencing of information on schools. In this way we can understand better the complex issues of provision and attainment in schools. This will help us to establish clear and consistent targets, linked to planning arrangements and costs of activities undertaken to achieve them. This is particularly important in the light of more integrated services following the Children Act.

Achieve efficiency savings in schools and the LEA

We will assist schools in achieving their targets for efficiency gains for the next three years in both the LEA and in schools. In particular we will work with schools to support the Workforce Reform Programme, to realise the benefits from ICT and to improve value for money from capital spending. We will also identify efficiencies in central support services that contribute to these targets.

Improving Social Care and Support for Vulnerable People

During 2005/06 we will need to respond to the significant change agenda deriving from the Children Act 2004 and the Government's vision for adult social care set out in the Green Paper 'Independence, Well-being and Choice'. There will be a need to address this at strategic, service planning and operational levels, and in terms of performance management and infrastructure support.

Independence, Well-being and Choice

The Government Green Paper 'Independence, Well-being and Choice' was published in March 2005. It is a consultation document on proposals for the future direction of social care for adults in England and sets out the Government's 'vision' for adult social care. The 'vision' focuses strongly on giving people choice and control in respect of the services they require. It emphasises the importance of prevention and promoting independence and highlights the need to enable people with social care needs to access a range of co-ordinated services in more flexible and imaginative ways.

These proposals mean that the Council would have a key strategic leadership role to work with a range of partners, including the NHS and independent and voluntary sectors, to provide better planned and integrated services and ensure the effective use of resources.

We will take the direction set out in the Green Paper fully into consideration in planning for adult social care over the coming years. Specifically the consultation period ends in July 2005 and the Council's response to the consultation will be made within that timescale.

Supporting People

For 2005/06 the Supporting People Grant has been reduced by 5.04% (£341,067) for the main Grant used to pay contracted providers and by 20% (£88,934) for the Administration Grant used to pay for staffing and associated costs of administering the programme. This means that a key priority for 2005/06 will be a programme to review the costs of some providers with the aim of reducing them to achieve a balanced budget by the end of 2005/06. We also aim to complete the 3 year review programme of all services by March 2006 and identify opportunities for reconfiguring services to secure higher quality outcomes for users in line with the priorities in the Five Year Strategy for Supporting People.

Increase Employment of Disabled People

Steady progress has been made in achieving the Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for employment and we will continue to focus on achieving the PSA targets by 2006. To date 70 people have found open paid jobs of 16 hours or more, 58 permitted work of less than 16 hours per week and 90

voluntary placements. We will introduce the Catalyst Scheme to set up a new project enabling disabled people to start businesses, and develop employment schemes related specifically to the modernisation of learning disability day services.

Learning Disabilities

In December 2004 the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board produced its first Annual Plan which sets out progress to date in meeting Valuing People objectives and priorities for 2005/6. These include the development of Day Service modernisation proposals for Market Harborough, Hinckley and North West Leicestershire and the continued implementation of the Melton, Oadby, Wigston, Blaby and Charnwood Day Service schemes. We will also review and implement revised plans for supported living accommodation within the Oadby, Wigston and Melton areas and bring forward proposals for Hamilton Court and accommodation within North West Leicestershire.

We will develop full lead commissioning arrangements with the NHS for implementation from April 2006. We will also develop with the NHS, in consultation with staff, the Partnership Board and all stakeholders, a new service model for a Leicestershire and Rutland integrated health and social care service for implementation from the same date.

Mental Health

We will develop and implement, in conjunction with Primary Care Trusts, an action plan to respond to the Government report on Mental Health and Social Exclusion. We aim to complete the current Day Services Review and improve the take-up of direct payments by people with mental ill-health. We intend to develop improved services for Black and Minority Ethnic communities through active engagement in the Local Implementation Team's Race Equality Group.

Increase Direct Payments

A detailed review of the Direct Payments Scheme took place in 2004-05, led by the Social Care Scrutiny Committee. A new structure capable of responding to increased demand and addressing issues identified by the review will be implemented from April 2005. We will increase the numbers of people using Direct Payments in 2005/06 and involve participants more closely in the planning for Direct Payments services.

Support Carers

Significant progress has been made on the objectives for 2004/05. A revised information booklet on carers' services and staff procedures to improve assessments of carers has been launched. Existing schemes funded through the Carers Grant have been reviewed and the take up of Direct Payments has increased through the Take-a-Break Schemes. During 2005/06 the priorities will be to review the Council's Carers' strategy for the next three years; to develop an action plan for increased support to carers including increased

take-up of Direct payments and to address the requirements of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004. In particular carers' wishes to work or access training or leisure will be considered. Agreements with other local councils that would help joint approaches to the planning and provision of services to support carers will be developed.

Older People

Our overall aim continues to be to support older people to live at home and avoid admission to long-term care. We will do this through a range of activities. We will review and develop services out of hours and establish new contracts with domiciliary care providers to provide more efficient, high quality services across the County. We will continue to improve our response times for undertaking community care assessments and adopt the Single Assessment Process across all teams. We will do further work on the development of Day Services for Older People across Leicestershire. Together with the NHS we will continue to develop integrated services for Older People focussing on closer joint working of intermediate care services and services to people with long-term conditions. Through Local Strategic Partnerships we aim to establish awareness of the support needs of older people to help them to live more independently and increase the take-up of direct payments for older people and people from ethnic minorities. We will set up a project with District and Borough Councils to develop the range of housing options in each area including extra care schemes and specialist services for people from ethnic minorities.

Disabled People

We intend to review how community care assessments for disabled adults are undertaken in light of feedback from the Citizen's Jury for Disabled People and the consultation with disabled people and to pilot self-assessment options.

In conjunction with the Primary Care Trusts and the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust we will develop local respite services for disabled people with neurological conditions and work with NHS to implement the requirements of National Service Framework on long-term neurological conditions.

Children Act 2004

The Children Act (see Achieving Excellence in Education), requires us to take action on a number of specific issues, including reviewing the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP). We will also need to develop the Common Assessment Framework and implement an integrated database this year through the Bridges Project.

Safeguarding Children

This is a key objective and core task for Children's Services and underpins much of what we do. To maintain high standards in this area we intend to establish a Local Children's Safeguarding Board to cover Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland and continue development of the audit of departmental and inter-agency safeguarding work. In order to keep professional knowledge up to date there will be continued study of sensitive and difficult issues, which require the attention of managers, legal advisers and other agencies, including serious head injuries and Fabricated and Induced Illness.

Develop an Integrated Children's System (ICS)

The Integrated Children's System comprises a framework for assessment, planning, intervention and reviewing based on the Common Assessment Framework and the Looking After Children materials, now developed into exemplars by the Department for Education and Skills. The records in ICS are e forms and will be the core of the Electronic Social Care Record for children's services. During 2005/06 our priorities will be to achieve a prototype ICS system by May 2005, resulting from the development work already underway, and then to refine the system and address integration issues with our client database and the Bridges Project.

Promote Life Chances of Children Looked After

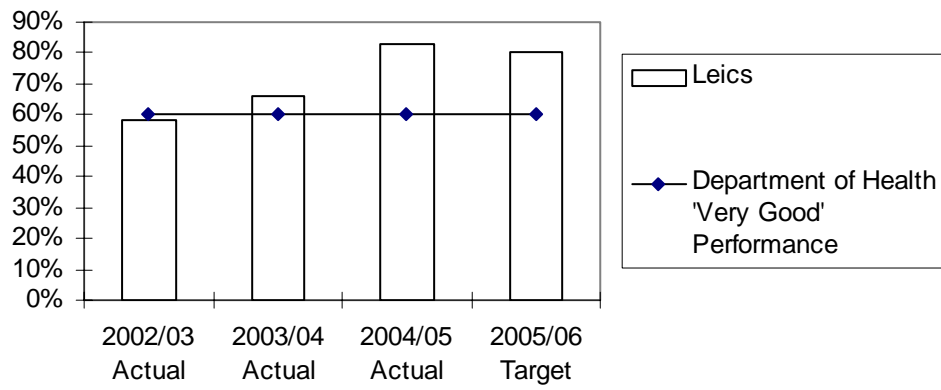
Raising the quality of life for looked after children and care leavers is a fundamental principle of the County Council's Corporate Parenting Policy. The key priorities for 2005/06 are to;

Improve the stability and permanence of placements by revising the range of fees for carers who look after children with increasingly challenging behaviour and by introducing an out of hours telephone support line for foster carers.

Maintain our improved performance, at around 80%, for the percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training and continue to seek solutions to improving school attendance of secondary school age children.

Achieve a revised health assessment process for looked after children. This will be developed using the funding agreed by the Primary Care Trusts in 2004/05. The delivery of this will be planned jointly with our local health partners, Leicester City and Rutland Social Services Departments

Percentage of Care Leavers in Employment, Education or Training at the Age of 19



Creating a Better Transport System

Improve Communications

We want to improve access and communication with our customers in response to the Better Access to Better Services initiative and our Best Value Review of Highway Services concluded in 2002. Building upon work already undertaken, such as our new telephone contact number "Roadline", we will finish a number of initiatives this year. These include the development of on-line roadworks information and the introduction of highway patrols to provide a quick response to highway defects. In this way we aim to increase customer satisfaction levels.

Focus the Road Repair Programme

Funding restrictions over many years have caused a backlog of road repairs and, as a result, we have a long term programme to make sustainable improvements, improve the condition of our main roads and remove the backlog of worn out carriageway by 2010. As part of this we will develop an Asset Management Plan to ensure that funds are directed to the areas most in need of improvement.

Develop a New Highway Works Procurement Strategy

Following our Best Value Review we are introducing a new procurement strategy for highway works which may involve increased use of private sector partnerships. We plan to have new arrangements in place for the start of 2006/07 for improved cost and quality.

Develop a new Local Transport Plan

We are moving into a new 5 year Local Transport Plan period and are working towards submitting a provisional plan to Government in July 2005 with a final version in place by March 2006. We want to produce a Plan with a well integrated programme of significant improvements during the five year period and secure a high rating from the Department of Transport.

Introduce Decriminalised Parking Enforcement

The police are withdrawing their traffic warden service which could result in increased illegal parking and disruption to traffic. We will therefore move as quickly as possible to introduce countywide decriminalised parking enforcement in partnership with the District Councils. The next steps are to develop a project plan, review existing traffic regulation orders and put future administrative arrangements in place.

Improve the availability and quality of bus services

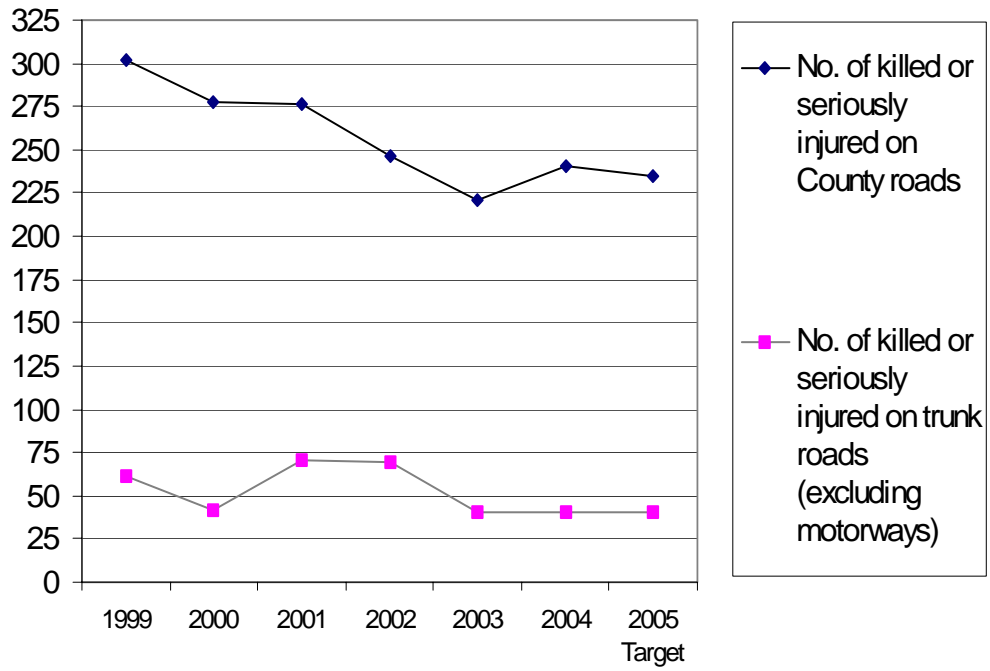
We have already achieved our target of 95% of Leicestershire people having an hourly or better bus service. We now need to improve service quality and usage so that the network has maximum benefit and is affordable over the long term. We aim to increase bus usage through better public awareness and improved service quality and as part of this we will implement a marketing programme and integrated ticketing. We need to continue our investment programmes with bus company partners, implement our bus information strategy and carry out improvements to bus stops to improve usage and user satisfaction.

Government guidance on social deprivation underlines the need to continue our good progress in improving access for people who do not live on the hourly bus services network. We must develop the work we have carried out so far using partnerships with other agencies, for example the Health Service and Job Centre Plus.

Reduce road casualties

Our overall objective is to meet the PSA target of reducing the numbers of killed or seriously injured on county roads and trunk roads by 27% in 2005 compared with the 1994/98 average. We are currently on track to meet this target (see table below) but must take any remaining steps to ensure we achieve it. We will continue working across a range of road safety activities, for example new investigation techniques, and the installation of vehicle activated signs, to ensure we meet casualty reduction targets in the new Local Transport Plan.

PSA Target: killed and seriously injured on the roads



Rising to the Challenge on Waste

Provide a countywide integrated waste management service

Since responsibility for waste collection and waste disposal is split between the District and County Councils, it is important that we work together to provide an efficient and cost-effective service. The County and seven District Councils have been working in partnership for several years to develop the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy (LMWMS). A major review of the Strategy will be carried out in 2005, coinciding with the review of the national "Waste Strategy 2000" and the publication of the East Midlands Regional Waste Strategy. The review will assess our progress towards challenging long term targets set by the Government for diversion of biodegradable waste from landfill. For example an extra 30,000 tonnes of waste will have to be diverted away from landfill by 2010 otherwise the County Council will face large fines from the Government.

In order to progress in implementing the LMWMS in the short-term, we need to identify and seek agreement to a preferred funding mechanism to underpin the strategy and implement the Partnership Business Plan. These actions should improve integration of the Waste Management Services in Leicestershire.

Plan for new Waste Disposal facilities

New waste disposal facilities will be required to meet the long term targets. The type and size of these facilities has to be identified and a decision made on the possible use of thermal treatment. Whatever method of disposal is eventually agreed it will involve major expenditure. If we are to meet the targets it is crucial that these initial decisions are made in 2005 to allow sufficient time for the procurement and construction of future waste management facilities.

Encourage Waste Minimisation

It is important to reduce the amount of waste generated by local people as much as possible and we will work in partnership with the District Councils to implement the Waste Minimisation Action Plan which was agreed in 2004. A number of initiatives will be implemented this year, including the distribution of home composters to 20,000 householders by March 2006 and the provision of re-usable shopping bags. The partnership will also be involved in a number of publicity campaigns including "The Big Recycle" in June and "Real Nappy Week", as part of the Waste Awareness Strategy. The purpose is to raise people's awareness of waste issues so that more re-use, recycling and composting can be achieved in Leicestershire.

Achieve Landfill Directive targets

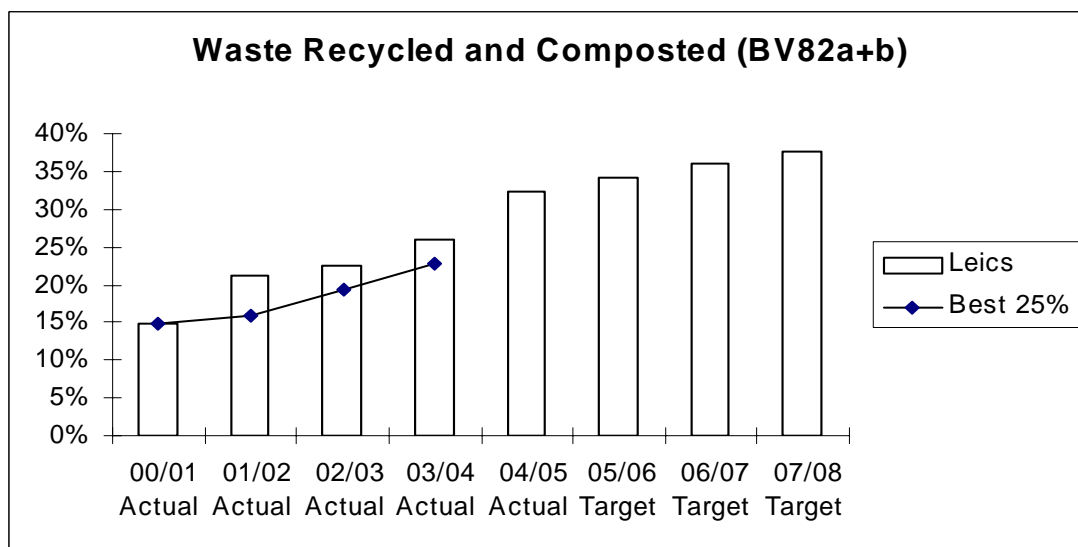
The Government introduced the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) from April 2005. This is a way for all Waste Disposal Authorities to meet the Landfill Directive targets nationally by selling or buying unwanted allowances from each other. New procedures and data management systems must be introduced this year to ensure that we comply with the new legislative requirements and are able to monitor our progress towards achieving the Landfill Directive Targets.

Increase recycling and composting of waste

Progress has already been made to secure contracts to provide new recycling and composting infrastructure within Leicestershire and it is intended that this will be completed in 2005/06. This will help to reduce the transportation of these materials in future, which is expensive and environmentally unfriendly.

To improve service delivery and customer satisfaction, we must develop and award new contracts for the operation of our Recycling and Household Waste Sites which take account of issues identified by public surveys carried out as part of the Best Value Review. Capital investment of £800,000 will help to improve the facilities at a number of existing sites in 2005/06.

This is the final year of the Public Service Agreement (PSA) and, whilst we are currently on target, performance monitoring will be crucial to ensure that the commitments made by all the partner authorities to increase levels of recycling and composting above the existing statutory targets are achieved by March 2006.



Seeking a Safer County

Deliver National Targets through Partnership

Reducing overall levels of crime across the County continues to be a high priority for the County Council and partner agencies involved in making Leicestershire a safer place in which to live.

We will continue to contribute to a range of crime reduction partnership arrangements to deliver on key community safety outcomes for people in Leicestershire. The key national community safety outcomes are:

- To reduce crime by 15% by 2007/08 using the British Crime Survey baseline year of 2002/03
- To reassure the public, reducing fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs

We will contribute to these outcomes through the following:

Achieve Local PSA Targets

In our own local PSA there are four crime related targets; reducing vehicle crime; working with problematic drug users; reducing domestic violence and improving the basic skills of young offenders. We have already made good progress towards our targets on these and, although achieving all of the domestic violence target is proving difficult, we are optimistic that the other targets can be achieved by the end of 2005/06. This will help make Leicestershire safer and bring in additional performance reward grants.

Implement a Prolific and Other Priority Offenders (PPO) Strategy

Led by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Community Safety Programme Board and its PPO Strategy Steering Group, local implementation of this national strategy will focus on the relatively small number of prolific offenders who are responsible for a high proportion of crimes, most of which are drug related acquisitive crimes.

The Youth Offending Service will ensure that improved supervision is provided to those young people who are categorised as PPOs, as well as those who are at risk of becoming PPOs without extra intervention.

The roll out of Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISP) to each District Council area will help to identify children and young people not yet in the formal youth justice system but who are in need of early intervention if they are to be prevented from becoming PPOs in the future. These Panels will also have an important role, working with young people to reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour.

Fund Community Support Officers

The County Council has allocated over £300,000 a year to enable the recruitment of more Police Community Support Officers. These officers will help provide community re-assurance through a visible police presence and will increase the capacity of the Police to respond to low level crime and anti-social behaviour.

Address the problem of Drug Use

Through the work of the Leicestershire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), we aim to increase the number of problematic drug users accessing drug treatment services from 926 in 2004/05 to 1126 in 2005/06. The DAAT will continue to oversee the implementation of the Drug Intervention Programme, targeted at problematic drugs users who are involved in the criminal justice system. In Leicestershire this work focuses on through-care and after-care.

We will work to reduce waiting times for residential drugs treatment and specialist prescription services as well as helping providers increase the capacity of drug treatment services from 1159 treatment places in 2004/05 to 1877 in 2005/06.

Prevent youth offending

As well as contributing to the PPO Strategy above, the Youth Offending Service will work to prevent offending by children and young people overall and towards the achievement of national performance measures set by the Youth Justice Board and as set out in the Youth Justice Plan. Following a positive inspection in 2004, the Service will also implement its Inspection Action Plan.

Underpinned by the Basic Skills PSA project, we will continue to increase the proportion of young people in full time education, training and employment (up from 61% in 2003 to 73% in 2004) and aim to achieve 80% in 2005/06. Other key areas the Service will focus on in 2005/06 include improved remand management, increased work with victims, additional parenting interventions and work to tackle drugs misuse.

Protect Consumers through Trading Standards Initiatives

Through work to stamp out illegal under age sales of alcohol, fireworks and butane gas lighter refills, trading standards will work with partners to help reduce anti social behaviour. The service will do likewise as regards doorstep

sales to protect the vulnerable, particularly the elderly, from distraction burglary and the fear of crime. As regards safety in the home, work will continue to ensure the safety of consumer goods including electric blankets. In partnership with social services and the fire and rescue service, guidance and information will be provided to the elderly and their carers to promote home safety.

Access the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund

The Government is bringing together the funding that comes into the County enabling partnerships to work together to reduce crime through new Local Area Agreement (LAA) arrangements. We will work with Leicestershire Together, the Community Safety Programme Board and local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships during 2005/06 to agree priorities for the use of the new Safer and Stronger Communities Fund element of the LAA when it is introduced in 2006/07.

Making the Priorities Work

Review the Medium Term Corporate Strategy and Improve Corporate Management

Elections to the County Council took place on 5 May 2005. During 2005 the Council will review and update its Corporate Strategy to ensure delivery of the newly elected administration's priorities for service improvements.

In order to improve the delivery of these priorities the Council intends to improve its management arrangements. Some of the ways this will be done are by:-

- Developing a clear picture of how we want the Council to change and improve its services over the medium term.
- Communicating the Council's priorities in moving in this direction to all employees effectively.
- Providing clear leadership through the Council's Corporate Management Team that focuses on delivery of the Council's priorities.
- Developing a culture that enables employees to play their part in achieving objectives by making full use of their skills and enthusiasm.
- Clarifying the roles and contributions of existing and new corporate working groups to the Council's priorities in order to make the most effective use of scarce resources.

Achieve Efficiency Gains

The Gershon report, published in 2004, highlighted four areas where efficiency gains could be made in public services. These are: Procurement; Support Services; Productive Time and Transactions. Based on these findings the Government now requires all Councils to contribute to national efficiency targets. Each Council must achieve efficiency gains of 2.5% p.a. compared with its 2004/05 levels of expenditure. In the County Council's case this means £6.8m. each year for the next three years.

The Council has already, as part of its normal budgeting process, identified efficiency savings in 2005/06 in order to assist in funding service developments in priority areas. These will help to meet the Government's requirements. However, further action will be necessary, both to achieve Government targets and provide the resources to address local priorities. This will be particularly important since there is every indication that levels of future funding from Government will be far short of what is required to meet increasing demands on services.

The actions described later in this Section will contribute to producing efficiency gains, and we will also establish a network of officers across Departments in order to identify other potential areas for gains and to learn from what other authorities are doing.

Improve Procurement Practices

During 2004/5 we successfully completed an assessment of our purchasing activity and established a new corporate procurement function to lead a programme of improvements.

During 2005/06 we will achieve efficiency gains by promoting good practice in purchasing across the Authority and supporting staff to improve their procurement skills. We will work with the East Midlands Centre of Excellence to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and support arrangements are in place across the region to help all authorities develop innovative purchasing solutions and to share best practice.

Efficiency gains will also be achieved by automating the processing of transactions, from ordering through to payment. This work will be piloted in the Community Services Department and in Social Services (domiciliary care), where staff will be helped to change the way they currently work. At the same time we will evaluate existing systems within Highways, Transportation & Waste and within Property Services. Additional future benefits will include better management information by having a clearer picture of what we buy and identifying suppliers which could be consolidated.

Implement the Human Resource Strategy

The Council has made good progress in implementing its 3 year Human Resources Strategy. A new combined payroll and human resource system called Trent has been introduced which will improve our ability to manage information about our workforce. During 2005 we will be launching the new recruitment module of the Trent Human Resources System and introducing more cost effective arrangements for job advertising including increased use of web based applications. We will also be implementing a new Leadership and Management Strategy including launching a Leicestershire Manager Development Programme and a Workforce Development Plan.

Departments will continue working towards the achievement of Investors in People status across the Council by the end of 2005.

Our performance on staff sickness absence is only average in comparison with other County Councils and well below the best 25%. (In 2003/04 we lost 9.1 days per fte employee compared with 7.5 days for the top quartile of authorities). During 2005 we will be developing and implementing a new attendance management policy and procedure in order to improve the position.

We have taken full account of staff matters in contracts that have been placed with external providers and we comply, where applicable, with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

Extend Risk Management

The Council needs to ensure that all major risks facing Council services are identified, assessed and appropriate action taken to reduce or avoid risks where necessary. Risk assessments are now carried out as part of normal service planning and project management and we will continue to develop our approach to risk management so that it becomes a routine element of good service management. We will also respond to the Government requirement to prepare contingency plans as required by the Civil Contingencies Act.

Consult with the Community

The Council continues to put consultation at the heart of decision-making and the development of its services. In April 2005 the Council approved seven new Consultation Standards to guide its approach to consulting and involving the public and its service users. To support their implementation further investment is being made in our Consultation Toolkit to improve the quality and range of consultations undertaken, and the Consultation Database, to enable the better recording and co-ordination of consultation.

In addition further improvements will be made to enhance local e-consultation through the Council's newly created "Have Your Say" web-pages, and through electronic survey devices and interactive voting handsets to develop participation, particularly with groups traditionally excluded from other forms of consultation.

The Citizens' Panel, Leicestershire's Voice, continues to provide important resident perception and satisfaction information on issues of local concern. Most recently these have included crime and policing, transport, quality of life and customer care. A review of the Panel will take place later in 2005 to assess its overall effectiveness as a tool for consulting the public.

Improve Information Handling (Electronic Document Records Management)

The Council holds large amounts of information and is keen to improve the organisation of and access to this so that it can be used efficiently and effectively. An audit of Council records was completed during 2004. An electronic records management system has been procured and will be applied to three parts of the organisation in 2005, i.e. Social Services; Highways Development Control and Chief Executive's. A new Geographic Information System has also been procured which will improve the way we use and present location based information.

The Council's intranet has the potential to be a more effective tool for making information and advice widely available. It already contains a large amount of

information and in 2005 it is intended to redevelop the intranet to organise and make this information more accessible than it is at present.