



# Committed to excellence...

*Improvement Plan  
2002-2005*

- ...Putting people first
- ...Preserving our heritage
- ...Promoting our county
- ...Providing for our communities
- ...Protecting our future

*Quality life in a quality county*

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*Ensuring the Council has the energy, ability and ambition to seek improvement, whilst retaining the ability to innovate*

This Improvement Plan is the culmination of a series of external and internal challenges, which Herefordshire Council has faced over the last two years and provides a strategic framework for improvement over the next three years. The improvements outlined cover two broad areas:

- ✓ Outcome based improvements in relation to the Council's cross-cutting priorities, namely, modernisation, human resources, diversity, communication, regeneration/accommodation; and
- ✓ Corporate improvements designed to strengthen the overall capacity of the organisation.

In short, this Improvement Plan is intended to take forward the internal challenges outlined in the Council's recent self-assessment. The external challenges highlighted in that assessment are largely driven by individual service strategies and business plans and a full list of these is included as an appendix to this Plan.

In January 2001, the Council underwent an assessment by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) Peer Review. At the conclusion of that review, it produced an overall Herefordshire Council Improvement Plan identifying a number of key areas for improvement in relation to leadership and vision, communication, key resources, performance management and economic development.

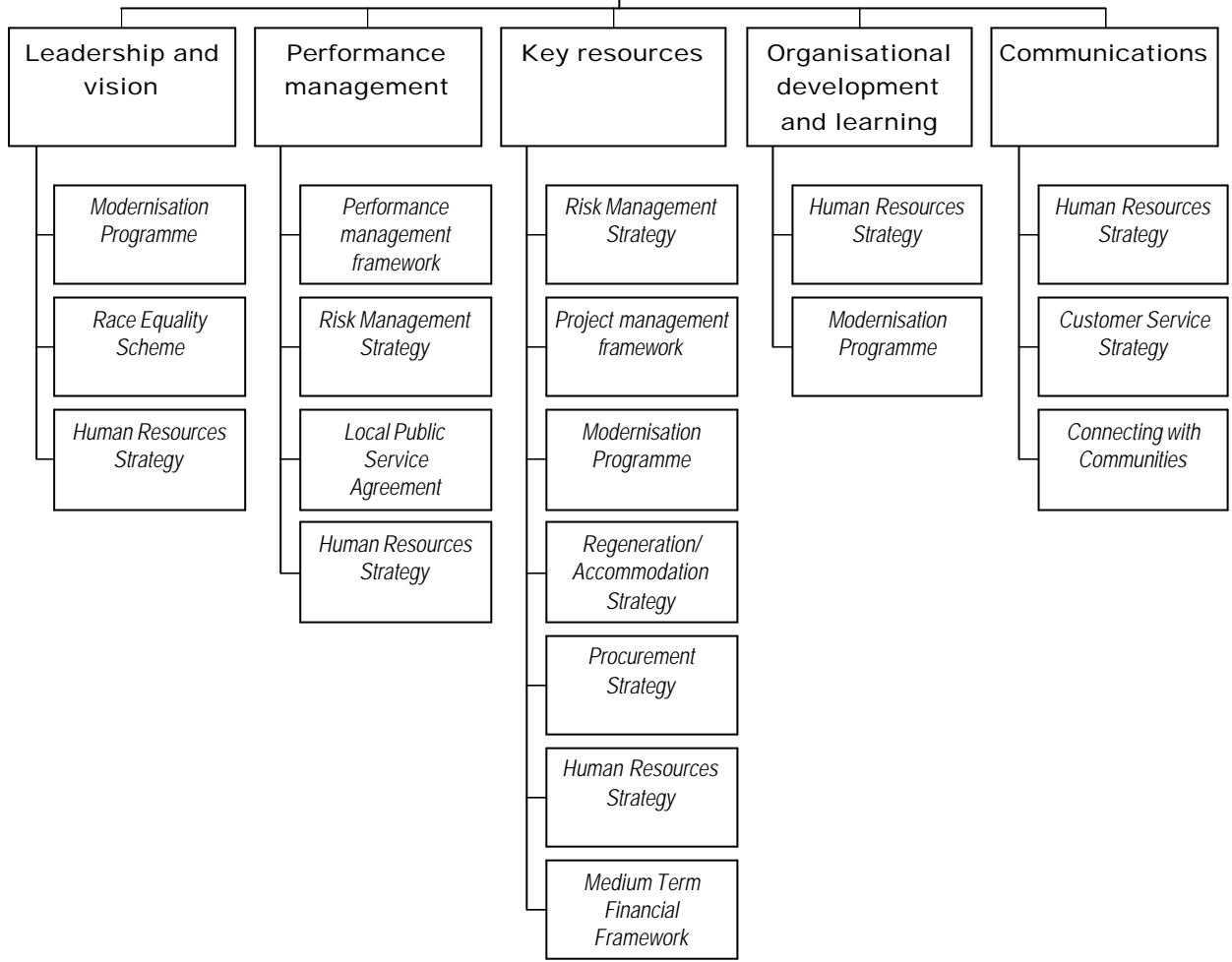
The purpose of this Plan is to develop that focus on improvement. The majority of the actions outlined in the original Improvement Plan have been completed and this Plan restates those that have not been completed and incorporates key findings from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and EFQM Excellence Model assessments. Once again, improvements are focused around five key areas: leadership and vision, performance management, key resources, organisational development and learning and communications. Further information on the issues covered by each key area is set out on page 3 of this Plan.

It is worth emphasising that this Improvement Plan is essentially a framework – it provides a signpost to specific strategies, which contain the detailed actions and milestones, and does not attempt to restate those details. The hierarchy is illustrated on the following page.

The most recent and far-reaching external challenge in 2002 has been the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The process requires the Council to identify six improvement priorities to be delivered over the next 12 months. However, for the Council, the focus on improvement is more long term. So, whilst the "CPA priorities" are incorporated into the overall Improvement Plan, for the sake of clarity, a brief summary is set out on page 4 of this Plan.

The Plan overall will be subject to further consultation with Members and staff over the coming months and will remain flexible to take account of changing needs and priorities. That consultation is an essential ingredient of success because, to be effective, the Plan will have to command the wholehearted commitment of both Members of the Council and Council staff.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN



## Improvement priorities

### Leadership and vision (page 5)

*The focus of this section is the corporate planning process, diversity issues and organisational change management.*

### Performance management (page 6)

*Performance management is a key area for the Council and this section focuses on embedding a performance management framework, actions to improve management competency in this area and delivering the Local Public Service Agreement*

### Key resources (page 7-8)

*This section covers a number of key corporate areas including risk management, project management, procurement, asset management and ICT development.*

### Organisational development and learning (page 9)

*Focusing on the Council's workforce, this section covers the recruitment, retention and development of staff as well as systems for sharing learning across the organisation.*

### Communications (page 10-11)

*This section covers issues around internal and external communication, customer care and consultation. It recognises, in "Connecting with Communities", the role Members of the Council can play in communicating with local communities.*

## Monitoring arrangements

The Cabinet, through the Chief Executive's Management Team, is responsible for delivering the Council's Improvement Plan. The Management Team, Cabinet and Strategic Monitoring Committee will monitor progress, by exception, at six months and 12 months. More frequent monitoring intervals may be introduced if problems are identified in relation to specific elements of the Plan.

Using a traffic light system (red/amber/green), the progress report will include:

- The status of all the projects;
- The overall Improvement Plan status.

An explanation and corrective action plan will be provided for any reported category that has a "red" or "amber" status – "red" meaning that there are significant issues that could affect the timing or performance of the Plan and "amber" meaning that issues have arisen but which are not expected to impact on the overall Plan.

Each responsible officer, designated in the Plan, will monitor progress of those areas for which s/he is responsible using the milestones set out in the individual strategies/plans. The monitoring should include, as a minimum:

- The overall project status;
- A brief summary of the project's status;
- The activities completed and achievements during the reporting period; and
- The activities planned for the next reporting period.



## Looking ahead to 31 December 2003...

In line with the outcome of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Council has identified those improvements it intends to make over the coming 12 months. These will be subject to further discussion with the relevant auditors and inspectors in early 2003.

<i>In this area...</i>	<i>We will have in place...</i>
Leadership and vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A three-year Corporate Plan linked to the medium term financial framework and key priorities</li> </ul>
Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council-wide performance management framework</li> <li>• Systems to validate key performance indicators</li> </ul>
Key resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A corporate approach to project management</li> <li>• Risk management systems incorporating operational and insurance risk</li> </ul>
Organisational development and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of actions in the Human Resources Strategy completed</li> <li>• Staff Review and Development process incorporating feedback and target setting linked to business planning</li> <li>• Systems for sharing learning across the Council</li> </ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of team briefings consistently and systematically deployed throughout the organisation</li> <li>• Opportunities for upward feedback</li> </ul>

# Leadership and vision

What we want to achieve...	What we will do...	Who is responsible...	With these resources...	When we will achieve it...
A clear understanding of the impact of Council activity on achieving the Herefordshire Plan ambitions	Produce a <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a>	Chief Executive	Chief Executive's Management Team Policy Team	January 2003
	Adopt a corporate planning template	Director of Policy and Community	Policy Team	January 2003
	Implement corporate planning template	Chief Executive's Management Team	Policy Team	March 2003
	Review corporate planning template	Chief Executive's Management Team	Policy Team	March 2004
Elimination of prejudice within the council and in its dealings with others	Implement, in full, the Council's <a href="#">Race Equality Scheme</a>	Head of Policy and Communication	Race Equality Steering Group	March 2005
	Prepare a Disability Scheme to ensure the Council meets its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and other related legislation	Director of Housing and Social Care Director of Education Director of Policy and Community	Policy Team	June 2003
	Implement the Disability Scheme	Chief Executive's Management Team	Managers' Forum	December 2003
	Implement, in full, the <i>Promoting Equal Opportunities</i> section of the <a href="#">Human Resources Strategy</a>	Director of Environment	HR Strategy Group	December 2005
Management of organisational change/ development across the Council	Implement, in full, the <i>Change Management Programme</i> in the <a href="#">Modernisation Programme</a>	Director of Environment	Programme Board	March 2005

# Performance management

What we want to achieve...	What we will do...	Who is responsible...	With these resources...	When we will achieve it...
Focus on performance to drive corporate and service improvement	Implement a <a href="#">corporate performance management framework</a>	Chief Executive	(Head of Performance Management) <sup>1</sup> Policy Team	March 2003
	Implement performance monitoring in line with agreed intervals at all levels in the organisation	(Head of Performance Management)	Directorate resources	March 2005
	Implement performance validation system	(Head of Performance Management)	Principal Internal Auditor	March 2003
	Review corporate performance management framework in light of full outturns	Chief Executive	Chief Executive's Management Team (Head of Performance Management)	May 2004
	Revise Staff Review and Development process to incorporate target setting in line with business planning	Strategic Head of HR <sup>2</sup> (Head of Performance Management)	HR Services	March 2003
	Implement, in full, the <i>Achieving management excellence</i> section of the <a href="#">Human Resources Strategy</a>	Strategic Head of HR	HR Strategy Group	December 2004
Improved services for the community	Deliver, in full, the Council's <a href="#">Local Public Service Agreement</a>	Policy Officer Assistant Treasurer (Financial Policy and Audit)	Lead Officers	March 2005

<sup>1</sup> New post, subject to budget process

<sup>2</sup> Indicative job title, subject to review of HR function

# Key resources

What we want to achieve...	What we will do...	Who is responsible...	With these resources...	When we will achieve it...
Corporate project management arrangements	Review current models for project management	Director of Environment	Policy Team	January 2003
	Implement agreed model for <a href="#">project management</a>	Director of Environment	Managers' Forum	March 2003
	Develop and run bespoke training to support the agreed model for project management	Strategic Head of HR	HR Services	September 2003
	Review and revise as required all current service and cross cutting strategies to incorporate agreed model	Lead officers		September 2003
	Review approach to project management	Chief Executive's Management Team	Policy Team	March 2005
Comprehensive risk management arrangements	Revise current <a href="#">Risk Management Strategy</a> to incorporate operational risk and links with performance management	County Treasurer	Risk Management Strategy Working Group	March 2003
	Implement revised strategy	Chief Executive's Management Team	Risk Management Strategy Working Group	June 2003
	Develop and run bespoke training to support the Risk Management Strategy	HR Services	Risk Management Strategy Working Group	June 2003
	Review approach to risk management	Chief Executive's Management Team	Risk Management Strategy Working Group	March 2005
Improved Council-wide procurement	Implement, in full, the Council's <a href="#">Procurement Strategy</a>	County Secretary and Solicitor	Contract Officers' Group Procurement Officer	March 2005

## Key resources

What we want to achieve...	What we will do...	Who is responsible...	With these resources...	When we will achieve it...
Improved asset management	Undertake in-depth scrutiny review of property in line with <a href="#">scoping statement</a>	Chief Executive	Environment Directorate Committee Manager (Scrutiny)	December 2003
	Develop and implement <a href="#">Regeneration/ Accommodation Strategy</a>	Director of Environment	Accommodation Project Board Regeneration Project Board	March 2007
	Implement, in full, the <i>Promoting Flexible Working</i> section of the <a href="#">Human Resources Strategy</a>	Strategic Head of HR	HR Strategy Group	December 2005
Deliver a single broadband telecommunications infrastructure	Implement, in full, the <i>Herefordshire in Touch programme</i> in the <a href="#">Modernisation Programme</a>	Commercial Services Manager	Programme Board	December 2005

# Organisational development and learning

What we want to achieve...	What we will do...	Who is responsible...	With these resources...	When we will achieve it...
A competent and effective workforce	Implement, in full, the <i>Improving recruitment, retention, making best use of skills and potential</i> section in the <a href="#">Human Resources Strategy</a>	Strategic Head of HR	HR Strategy Group	December 2005
	Implement, in full, the <i>Ensuring a safe and supportive working environment</i> section of the <a href="#">Human Resources Strategy</a>	Strategic Head of HR	HR Strategy Group	December 2005
Better passporting of learning throughout the Council	Develop systems for sharing learning across the Council through the use of existing mechanisms such as use of case studies, Managers' Forum and the Intranet	Director of Policy and Community	Policy Team HR Services Managers' Forum	June 2003
	Implement systems for sharing learning	Director of Policy and Community	Policy Team HR Services	September 2003
	Review systems	Director of Policy and Community	Policy Team HR Services	December 2004
Management of organisational change/ development across the Council	Implement, in full, the <i>Change Management Programme</i> in the <a href="#">Modernisation Programme</a>	Director of Environment	Programme Board HR Services	March 2005

# Communications

What we want to achieve...	What we will do...	Who is responsible...	With these resources...	When we will achieve it...
Timely communication of significant information to all staff	Ensure 100% penetration of Team Briefings	Chief Executive's Management Team	Managers' Forum	January 2003
	Carry out random spot checks of Team Briefings to ensure compliance every three months	Public Relations Officer	Public Relations Team	From March 2003
	Implement, in full, the <i>Improving communications</i> section in the <a href="#">Human Resources Strategy</a>	Strategic Head of HR	HR Strategy Group Public Relations Team	December 2005
Opportunities for all staff to "have their say"	Run two staff roadshows per year	Chief Executive	Chief Executive's Management Team	December 2004
	Hold two open meetings annually for all staff within each Directorate/Department	Chief Executive's Management Team	Directorate/Departmental resources	December 2003
	Review success of open meetings	Chief Executive's Management Team	Public Relations Team	March 2004
	Consider and implement other opportunities for all staff to feed back ideas	Chief Executive's Management Team	HR Services Directorate/Departmental resources	June 2003
	Directors and Heads of Service to undertake half-day work shadowing four times a year	Chief Executive's Management Team Heads of Service	Managers' Forum	March 2005
Effective communications outside the Council	Implement, in full, the recommendations of the <a href="#">Connecting with Communities project</a>	Director of Policy and Community	Communications Network Public Relations Team	March 2005

# Communications

What we want to achieve...	What we will do...	Who is responsible...	With these resources...	When we will achieve it...
	Implement, in full, the <i>Access to services programme</i> in the <a href="#">Modernisation Programme</a>	Director of Policy and Community	Programme Board Top 10 customer services group Info in Herefordshire	March 2006
	Implement, in full, the Council's <a href="#">Customer Service Strategy</a>	Customer Services and Development Manager	Top 10 customer services group	March 2004
	Consistent use of corporate stationery across the Council	Director of Policy and Community	ICT Services	March 2003
Improved consultation arrangements	Implement, in full, agreed proposals to develop of <a href="#">Local Area Forums</a>	Director of Policy and Community	LAF Lead Officers Policy Assistant	December 2003
	Implement, in full, the Council's <a href="#">Consultation Strategy</a>	Director of Policy and Community	Community Involvement Co-ordinator	March 2004

### Supporting Strategies (already in place)

- Modernisation Programme
- Human Resources Strategy
- Connecting with Communities
- Procurement Strategy
- Local Public Service Agreement
- Customer Service Strategy
- Race Equality Scheme

### Supporting Strategies (to be developed)

- Corporate Plan
- Corporate planning template
- Performance management framework
- Project management framework
- Risk Management Strategy
- Regeneration/Accommodation Strategy
- Disability Scheme
- Consultation Strategy

### Service strategies/business plans

- Education Development Plan
- Older People's Strategy
- Highways Maintenance Plan
- Local Transport Plan
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Info in Herefordshire Strategy
- Unitary Development Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Early Years and Childcare Development Plan
- All Directorate and service business plans