



# **Improvement Plan**

**2003/04**



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Foreword & Statement of Responsibility

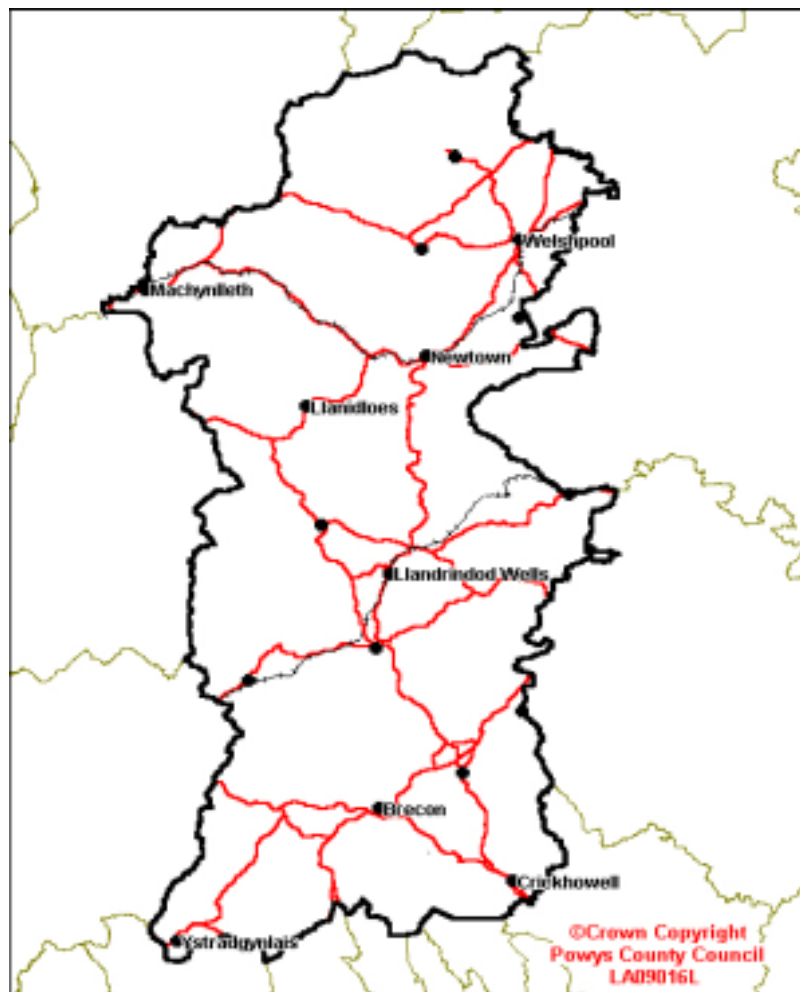
This Performance Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance issued by the National Assembly for Wales.

The County Council is responsible for the preparation of this Improvement Plan, the information and assessments contained therein and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based and is satisfied that the information contained within the plan is in all material respects accurate and complete and that the plan is realistic and achievable.

## 1.2 Powys County Council

Powys is a county covering 5,197 square kilometres of varied topography, with a population of 126,400 (2001 Census), giving a population density per square kilometre of 24.3.

**Figure 1: Plan of Powys showing main centres of population**



The main centres of the County are market towns, of which only one exceeds a population level of 10,000 – Newtown in the Severn Valley. The largest town in the South of the County is Brecon.

Although the Administrative centre is based in Llandrindod Wells, geographically central to the County, the Council operates from a number of other sites located across Powys, including Welshpool, Newtown, Machynlleth, Knighton, Builth Wells, Brecon and Ystradgynlais.

A full listing of the services provided by Powys County Council is contained within the Council's A to Z Directory which details the services provided and who you should contact for the relevant service information. Copies of the Directory can be obtained from local libraries, area offices or Leisure Centres, or by telephoning 01597 826307. Alternatively it may be accessed via our Webpage: [www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk) or by emailing "webmaster@powys.gov.uk"

## 2 The County Council

### 2.1 Local Government Act 2000 - New Political Structures

In 2002, the County Council undertook a political restructuring of its decision making process following full consultation with stakeholders and the County's residents at large. The Council now operates with a Board and Streamlined Committee System.

This structure was considered to be the best decision making process for Powys County Council in that, as an independent Authority with no declared political groups, all Councillors can achieve greater involvement and accountability in the process. Also for a large rural Authority like Powys, the importance of the three Shire Committees; Brecknockshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire will not be lost.

To ensure this structure is operating most effectively an external review is being undertaken by the Audit Commission. This is being undertaken in three phases with the final phase planned for completion in March 2004.

### 2.2 Organisational Restructuring

Following the political restructuring the Council re-aligned its managerial and organisational structures to work across traditional boundaries thereby reducing from nine Departments to five Group Directorates which are:

Children, Families and Lifelong Learning;  
Community Services;  
Economic and Community Regeneration;  
Technical and Local Services;  
Corporate Support Service;

The Group Directorates are complemented by the Chief Executive's Department and the Scrutiny and Democratic Services Directorate.

The County Council has resolved to re-align the Central Services operation by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2004.

### 2.3 Corporate Plan

The County Council's Corporate Plan, adopted in July 2000, set out the priorities for the Council within five key themes. This document is currently being revised in parallel with the development of the Community Strategy, which will be prepared by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

The key themes currently recognise the uniqueness of Powys as the most rural and sparsely populated county in England and Wales and show how the Council will seek to:

- provide leadership within the Community;
- provide a quality of service which is recognised as good value for money and which meets the needs of its citizens;
- promote social inclusion and combat social exclusion;
- promote economic and community regeneration; and
- enhance and protect the environment.

Consultation with staff and directorate management teams has been carried out to investigate their priorities and this information will be presented for consideration by Members when they agree their priorities for future years, recognising that those priorities may be subject to change following the local government election in 2004.

The revised corporate objectives will be published in next year's Improvement Plan - effectively, the Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan will have become one document, bringing together details of the Council's vision for the future and its performance in the previous year.

**Key Area for Improvement:**

Ensure Corporate Plan provides strategic vision and guidance and enhances inter-departmental co-operation

Revise Corporate Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004

## 2.4 Community Strategy

Each Unitary Authority in Wales has been tasked under the Local Government Act 2000 with leading in the production of a Community Strategy that will shape the way all public bodies will deliver their services over the next 10 to 15 years.

At the heart of the 2000 Act is the concept that local services can be provided more efficiently and to a higher quality if public bodies work together with their colleagues in other sectors. It is also acknowledged that there are many issues that cannot be addressed by one agency alone e.g. crime reduction has traditionally been seen to be the preserve of the police force, nonetheless there are many things that the Council can do to reduce crime such as improving street lighting. The Crime and Disorder Act 2000 recognised this and made the responsibility for reducing crime and the fear of crime a joint one between Police and Local Authority.

The Council is producing its Strategy in partnership with other public bodies, the private sector, the voluntary sector and members of the public. A Partnership Forum consisting of 39 members representing each of these sectors has been set up, which is, in turn serviced by a smaller steering group. The County's draft document will be published by April 2004.

The public's input into the plan is through 'lay-members' on the Partnership and through the 15 Local Community Fora (LCF). These 15 fora cover the main towns and surrounding rural areas across the County, as detailed:

- Brecon
- Builth Wells
- Crickhowell
- Hay on Wye/Talgarth
- Knighton
- Llandrindod Wells
- Llanfair Caereinion
- Llanfyllin
- Llanidloes
- Machynlleth
- Newtown
- Presteigne
- Rhayader
- Welshpool
- Ystradgynlais

These LCF - which are open to everyone - are in the process of being established and are currently discussing issues of importance to their communities. Their views on such issues as housing, crime reduction, the environment as well as a host of other areas will then shape a 'manifesto' for the County. These groups are also developing 'Local Plans' for their areas – which should begin to emerge in the autumn. The initial ideas from the fora will be used by the Council in preparation of the countywide strategy.

Every four years the strategy will be reviewed to fine-tune it and take on board changes in circumstances and, perhaps, legislation. It is anticipated that the area fora will also be a major means of interacting with the communities in respect of consultation.

To date the Steering Group have authorised the County Council to undertake an exercise to map and analyse existing partnerships and strategies operating within the County. This will allow a clear understanding to be gained of the existing situation and how current arrangements may be used as a basis for devising new structures that can respond to the Community Strategy process.

In accordance with the Authority's performance management framework there is to be a clear link between the Community, Corporate and Directorate Plans and individual work plans ensuring clarity of purpose and direction across the organisation.

**Key Area for Improvement:**

Ensure effective partnership working

**TARGET:** Review of Existing Partnerships by 30th June 2003

**Key Area for Improvement:**

Improve management of change implementation.

**TARGET:** Provide training in project management techniques to support change management. This is ongoing

## 2.5 Whole Authority Analysis

Like all local Authorities in Wales, Powys County Council has undertaken a Whole Authority Analysis as part of the National Assembly's "Wales Improvement Programme". This analysis focuses on the strategic and operational management of both corporate and service functions, through the examination and identification of current performance and our capacity to improve.

The Council commenced its assessment in April 2002 with the findings and conclusions being reported within this document.

The methodology adopted by the Authority in carrying out this analysis was a combination of two models. The first, a model which was developed by the Audit Commission in Wales was used to assess our Corporate arrangements, the second was based on a risk assessment of our services. We are confident that this combination of approaches has ensured a robust and complete evaluation of the Authority's health, in terms of managing and delivering services.

The views of Members, employees, trade unions, partners and members of the public were included within the assessment through a programme of consultation.

**The key areas for the Authority in terms of improvement fall within the following themes:**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Communications – Internal and External</b>	
Develop an effective communications strategy for internal and external communication channels.	Improved understanding of stakeholder priorities and expectations and ensure consistent application across the Authority. Improve access to services.
<b>Strategic Decision Making</b>	
Develop a Corporate Plan which provides strategic vision and guidance and enhances inter-departmental co-operation.	Identified Corporate vision and strategic objectives supported by SMART Targets.
Develop decision-making in the democratic process.	Improved strategic decision making process.
Develop Risk Management processes.	Improved understanding of risks in service delivery.
Promote effective partnership working.	Improved capacity for service provision across partners.
<b>Human Resource</b>	
Develop Human Resource Planning	Improved recruitment and retention and reduced staff absence (NAWpi 1.10) and ill health retirements (NAWpi 1.12)
<b>Performance Management</b>	
Develop Performance Management techniques.	Facilitate continuous improvement in service delivery.  Improved strategic decision making process.
Enhance the capacity for the Identification, collection, verification and monitoring of performance information.	Facilitate continuous improvement in service delivery.
Develop Corporate prioritisation of resource allocation.	Improved strategic decision making process and funding of improvement initiatives
Develop Strategic Asset Management arrangements.	Improved Access to Services and utilization of building assets.
<b>Procurement and Project Management</b>	
Raise awareness of Procurement practices across the Authority.	Facilitate continuous improvement in service delivery.
Develop Project Management across the Authority to improve management of change implementation.	Facilitate continuous improvement in service delivery.

**Best Value Reviews to be undertaken**

The Learning Environment (2004 – 05);  
Early Years Education;  
Adult Education;  
Housing Tenancy & Housing Estate Management;  
Housing Allocations, Transfers & Voids;  
Care Management – Cross-cutting Reviews  
Meals on Wheels (Social Services).

The Audit Commission in Wales in April confirmed that the Council's findings were broadly reflective of the risk assessment undertaken by the Council's Regulators.

An action plan for implementation has been developed and agreed and can be found at Appendix B.

## 3 Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

### Achieving Success Together, Raising Aspirations

#### 3.1 Introduction

The Directorate is led by Michael R.J. Barker, Group Director with three main service blocks within the directorate: Lifelong Learning and Community Services; Children and Families; and Schools.

#### 3.2 Board Members

The Board Members with specific Portfolio responsibilities for the Directorate's functions are as follows :

Board Member	Portfolio Responsibilities	
<b>Cllr. Robert Bevan</b> Llandrindod North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary schools review organisation / resourcing;</li> <li>• ICT–Policy / Strategy;</li> <li>• Community Learning;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links with Council Strategy;</li> <li>• E-Government;</li> <li>• SEN Policy / Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Mrs Gillian Thomas</b> Yscir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of provision to 3 year olds;</li> <li>• Representative on the EYCP;</li> <li>• Youth Service;</li> <li>• Dialogue with young people;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Rights.</li> <li>• Corporate parent;</li> <li>• Child Protection;</li> <li>• Adoption/fostering;</li> <li>• Youth offending;</li> <li>• Behaviour support.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Louis Williams</b> Newtown East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh Education Scheme and Education Strategic Plan;</li> <li>• Development of Lifelong Learning Strategy;</li> <li>• Wider roles of schools in the community;</li> <li>• Adult learning;</li> <li>• School improvement;</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archives, Libraries, Theatr Powys, Powys Dance;</li> <li>• Post 16 – CCET;</li> <li>• ELWa;</li> <li>• Coleg Powys ;</li> <li>• Transport ;</li> <li>• Awards;</li> <li>• Catering &amp; Cleaning;</li> <li>• Buildings;</li> <li>• Governors.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Aims and Objectives

Corporate Objectives:	Directorate Objectives
Ensure that services are reliable, accessible and provided equitably across Powys.	<p>Address equalities issues in all areas of Directorate in respect of service delivery by implementing and building on actions identified in 'Mainstreaming Equalities'.</p> <p>Developing lifelong learning including the post 14 curriculum, and the community strategy.</p> <p>Focus on resources needs, both human, technological and financial resources, including developing a Human Resources Strategy, combating isolation, staff care, recruitment and retention, continuity of funding, reallocating resources in accordance with need, and developing common platforms and a strategy for information technology needs.</p> <p>Continue the review of management and organisation of primary education.</p>
Set clear standards for service delivery and ensure that monitoring and reporting mechanisms are effective.	<p>Improve communications, both within and external to the Directorate, including performance information and stakeholder satisfaction, reaching and supporting minority groups, community involvement, and developing partnerships. Use the analysis of service profiles and risk analysis to focus on areas where performance monitoring and availability of performance information is weak.</p> <p>Review services in accordance with agreed programme, set additional local PIs where required and monitor.</p> <p>Focus on communications, training and staff development.</p>
Ensure that Powys is served by a motivated and well-trained workforce	<p>Contribute to development of Corporate Human Resources Strategy with a view to improving recruitment of professional staff.</p> <p>Work towards Investors in People.</p>
Early Years and measures to support children and families	<p>Implement Early Years and Childcare Partnership objectives in respect of development of Integrated Early Years Centres and extension of early years education.</p>
Promote social inclusion and combat social exclusion with partnership working	<p>Focus on Social Inclusion, including children's rights, child safety, information for children, behaviour support, family support, work with parents, and early years education and child care. Both the Family Support and Disability Strategies promote social inclusion. The Youth Offending Team has a major role in promoting social inclusion.</p> <p>Ensure Better Opportunities for Learning</p>

<b>Corporate Objectives:</b>	<b>Directorate Objectives</b>
	<p>Implement the findings of the Serious Case Review.</p> <p>Implement the Young People's Partnership (YPP) objectives in respect of supporting children in need.</p> <p>Work with Youth Service, training initiatives, Basic Skills Agency work, Theatre in Education work, Flexible Routes, and Young People's Partnership to address this objective.</p> <p>Ensure young people are consulted on all proposals that may affect them by April 2003.</p> <p>Ensure bid from YPP to WAG for county- wide programme targeting disengaged young people (2003-2006) is submitted.</p> <p>Provide full time education for pupils permanently excluded from school.</p> <p>Introduce Flexible Routes Programme.</p>
<p>Promote economic and community regeneration.</p> <p>Raise skills to match business needs.</p> <p>Strengthen communities.</p>	<p>Ensure that the Lifelong Learning Plan will address needs. Work with CCET and in schools via education business links and workplace opportunities ongoing.</p> <p>Lifelong Learning and schools functions to further develop access to learning via ICT in the Community and through community use of schools.</p>
<p>Minimise waste</p> <p>Through education programmes promote and sustain environmental awareness</p>	<p>Take opportunities to reduce travel.</p> <p>Continue close links with the Health Promotion Unit and the Health Service in delivering services to young people and that schools participate in the Health Promoting Schools initiative.</p> <p>Ensure that the adult continuing education service provides social, recreational and leisure services that have a positive impact on people's health and well-being.</p> <p>Encourage vocational courses both in schools and in adult learning.</p> <p>Ensure that schools provide opportunities for learning and use of Welsh. Welsh for adults and Working Welsh provide opportunities for learning the language, and Menter Brycheiniog encourages the use of Welsh.</p> <p>Catering and Cleaning to continue to use local products where possible and provide employment in rural locations.</p>

Corporate Objectives:	Directorate Objectives
	<p>Continue to take measures to reduce waste and environmental impact.</p> <p>The Directorate to participate in a pilot project to produce heat from wood chippings at Llanwddyn.</p> <p>Continue to encourage schools to become involved with environmentally friendly projects and awards such as the Forest Schools Initiative and the Healthy Eating Initiative.</p>

### 3.4 Key performance measures and targets

In addition to the following tables, other key measures appear in Appendix C.

**Table 1: Key Stage 4 - Pupils achieving at least 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE (or vocational equivalent)**

Ref	Education Indicator	Target 01/02	Actual 01/02	Target 02/03	Actual 02/03	Wales 02/03	England 02/03	Target 03/04
NAW PI 2.2	<b>Powys</b> 5+ A* - C or vocational equivalent	58%	59%	60%	60%	50%	52%	67%

The 2002 Powys target for pupils gaining at least 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE was 60% and this was met. This was particularly impressive as it further improved on the biggest increase in performance for some time achieved in 2001. This year's performance was well above the Welsh average figure of 50% and comfortably within the top quartile of LEA's in Wales. Powys maintained 2nd position amongst all Welsh authorities for this indicator in 2002 and for the first time in recent years held 1st position for performance in the three separate core subjects of English, Maths and Science together.

**Table 2: Key Stage 2 - Pupils reaching level 4 or above**

Ref	Subject	Target 01/02	Actual 01/02	Target 02/03	Actual 02/03	Wales 02/03	England 02/03	Target 03/04
NAW PI 2.4a	Maths	78%	79%	81%	73%	73%	73%	82%
NAW PI 2.4b	English	75%	83%	78%	84%	80%	74%	78%
NAW PI 2.4c	Welsh (1st Language)	77%	80%	82%	83%	75%	n/a	86%
NAW PI 2.4d	Science	82%	87%	81%	89%	86%	86%	81%

The relative position of Powys compared to other Welsh LEAs was either 3rd or 4th across the core subjects, with the exception of maths (14th) which suffered a marked drop in performance in the 2002 results. Efforts are now being directed towards investigating and identifying ways to restore performance levels in this area.

**Table 3: Key Stage 3 - Pupils reaching level 5 or above**

Ref	Subject	Target 01/02	Actual 01/02	Target 02/03	Actual 02/03	Wales 02/03	England 02/03	Target 03/04
NAW PI 2.5a	Maths	76%	70%	78%	72%	62%	67%	80%
NAW PI 2.5b	English	77%	71%	81%	71%	62%	66%	83%
NAW PI 2.5c	Welsh (1st Language)	77%	78%	84%	76%	71%	n/a	81%
NAW PI 2.5d	Science	81%	77%	86%	80%	67%	66%	88%

In 2002 Powys maintained the lead performance position in Wales for the fourth year in succession for Maths and Science at the end of Key Stage 3. Performance in English and Welsh slipped back slightly to 2nd and 4th positions respectively. Targets were again not met and they remain highly challenging as part of the approach to tackle the recognised national issue of under attainment at Key Stage 3. The only notable increases in performance of 2% and 3% respectively came in maths and science.

**Table 4 : Key Stage 4 - Pupils leaving full time education without a recognised qualification**

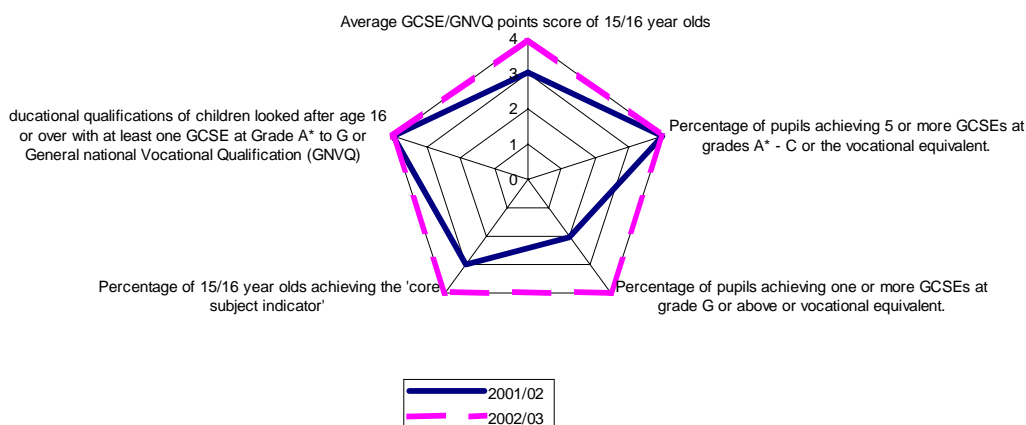
Ref	Education Indicator	Target 01/02	Actual 01/02	Target 02/03	Actual 02/03	Wales 02/03	England 02/03	Target 03/04
Best Target (ESP)	<b>Powys</b> pupils (aged 15) not achieving a recognised qualification	1%	3%	1%	4%	5%	n/a	1%
NAW PI 2.7	<b>Powys</b> pupils (aged 15) leaving <b>full time education</b> without a recognised qualification	3.3%	1.4%	2.8%	2.4%	3.0%	n/a	2.8%

It is the Authority's aim to continue to reduce the proportion of pupils not achieving a recognised qualification to 1%. Some progress was made in 2001 by a reduction from the previous year's figure of 5% to 3% but this year's performance figure of 4% is less encouraging. It is also the aim to reduce the proportion of pupils leaving full time education without a recognised qualification and considerable progress was made in this area in 2001, with performance even surpassing the target for 2002.

However, in 2002 the performance figure has risen to 2.4%, reflecting the increase in pupils not achieving a recognised qualification, but still meeting this year's target.

It also remains a priority to reduce the gender gap in performance across all Key Stages and for the first time in recent years that gap was reduced in the majority of core subjects in 2001. Disappointingly, in 2002 there has been a widening of that gap in a number of core subjects across the different Key Stages reinforcing the need for continuing action to address this issue.

The following chart depicts comparative performance for Powys against Welsh Authorities on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 reflects a level below the lower quartile, 2 equals average performance and a score of 4 indicates performance above the top quartile, i.e. best performing. This chart shows that in five of the key areas for achievement, pupils in Powys have attained a level of performance which exceeds that in other Welsh Authorities, based on the Welsh Average performance data for 2000/01, and shows an improvement, achieved and maintained across the five areas year on year.

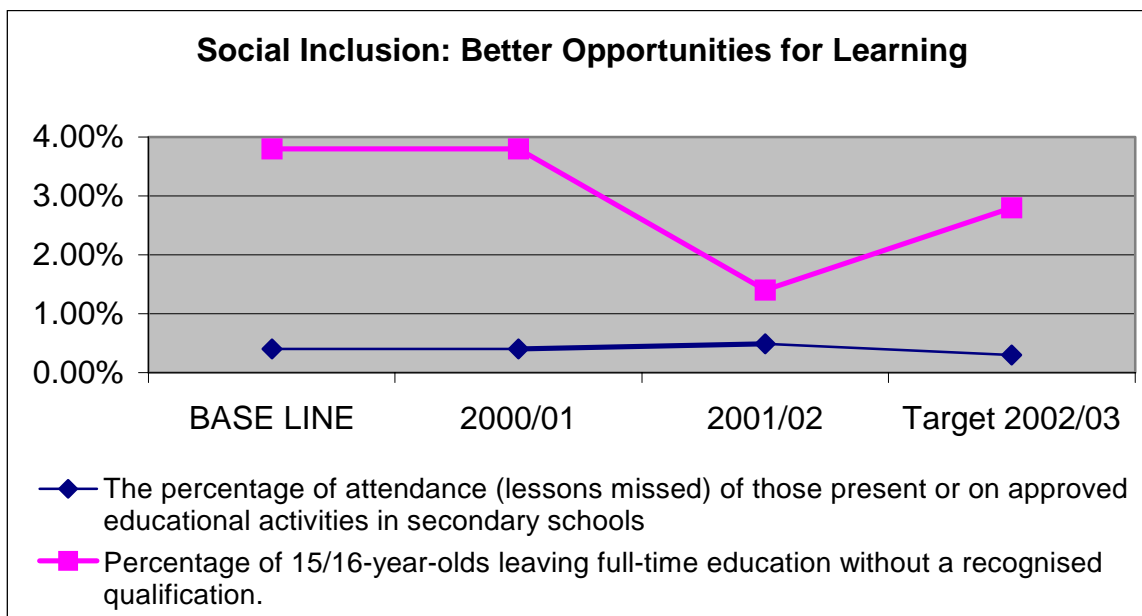
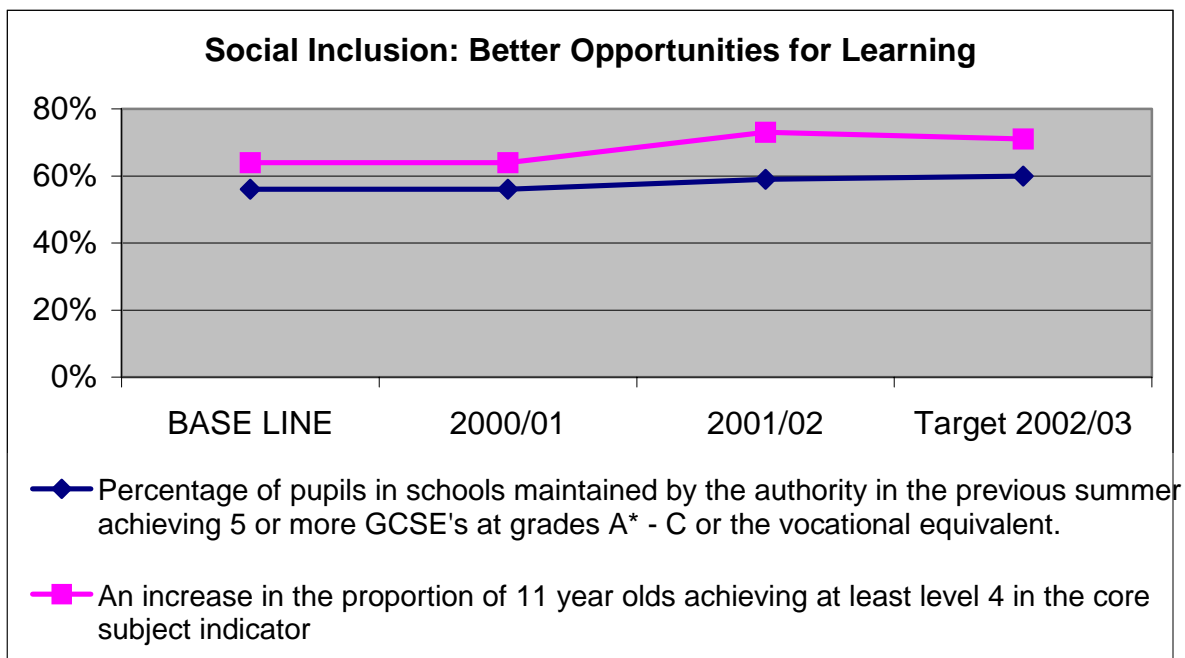


**Table 5: Stability of Placements for looked after children**

Indicator Description	2000/01	2001/02	Wales Average 01/02	England Ave 01/02	Target 2002/2003	Best Estimate 2002/2003	Target 2003/2004
3.4 The percentage of first placements (for looked after children) beginning with a care plan in place		79.73%			95%	70.75%	95%

The children's service underwent restructuring in February 2003. Initial assessment and long term teams have been created that will allow us to meet the requirements of the framework. Additional staff have been employed and performance in this area has improved. The current position is 94.3% of first placements beginning with a care plan in place and we are confident that this position will be maintained and that a target of 95% for 03/04 is achievable.

## Policy Agreement Indicators



**N.B.** The targets set for pupils leaving full time education without a qualification have been set for cohorts. The variability in performance is attributed to the small numbers involved.

### 3.5 Directorate Analysis

The Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Directorate is responsible for a wide range of services. Whilst acknowledging the many strengths of the Directorate, the various reviews carried out as part of the current business planning process, and earlier service plans have identified a number of areas which require to be addressed at Directorate level and require development and further improvement in 2003-04:

The Whole Authority Analysis highlighted the following aspects for attention by the Directorate.

#### 3.5.1 Communication and consultation:

- with other Directorates;
- with service users;
- within the Directorate;
- about service availability and about performance.

The Directorate needs to ensure that all its staff have ownership of its key aims and objectives and that the Directorate works in a cohesive manner.

**Key Areas for Improvement :**

Improve internal and external communications.

**TARGET:**

Draft a communications strategy for the Directorate covering internal and external communications and including communications with staff, other Directorates, partners, other agencies, and parents, by January 2004.

#### 3.5.2 Performance Management:

In some areas performance information is not readily available. Further development of local performance indicators and routine monitoring of performance across the Directorate requires attention. Some services require to improve information on stakeholder satisfaction and this is programmed as a result of the risk assessment process.

**TARGET:**

Obtain performance data and stakeholder satisfaction information as informed by the Service Profile/Risk Analysis exercise and as set out in the Directorate outline work programme in order to determine and contribute to future improvement targets. To be undertaken by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

### 3.5.3 Resources:

Both the Directorate and the Council need to explore early intervention measures either by redirection of existing resources or by the allocation of new resources.

The Directorate is over reliant on temporary funding streams to fund its core services and therefore the allocation of resources against needs require urgent attention at both Directorate and Corporate level.

**TARGET:**

Co-operate with Corporate Services in a fundamental review of budgets, in accordance with Corporate Services timetable.

### 3.5.4 External Environment:

In general the Directorate is good at responding to external challenge. Many of the challenges arise from new government requirements and national legislation which are not always easy to anticipate. Ideally planning ahead for these challenges would include ensuring that sufficient staff resources are available on a timely basis and that where initiatives are grant funded there is a forward plan to sustain the initiative after the end of the funding.

School organisation plans as required by the School Standards and Framework Act will provide the basis for assessing the need for school places within the LEA and by individual schools.

Additional capital funding from the Welsh Assembly Government has been identified and will be available annually until 2010. The funding is intended to be focused on schemes which will improve the property stock and reduce maintenance needs. A programme of work towards this end will need to be devised.

A full review of primary school organisation will require attention in the short term.

**TARGET:**

Establish a policy for the organisation and management of primary schools for consultation, following initial discussions with headteachers and Members during late 2002. Proposals approved by Members in May 2003; consultation to commence in June 2003. Policy to be established, following consultation and member decision by January 2004.

### 3.5.5 ICT

Analysis indicated the following:

- There is a need to set a Directorate standard for equipment (within corporate standard) having regard to health and safety, and ensure all staff have equipment required.
- There is a need to continue with current good work on e-communications, intranet and internet, keeping a focus on services.

- The Directorate needs to further develop Community access to ICT equipment and training both in schools and in other community venues.

**TARGET**

Review existing provision in order to determine a Directorate approach to common IT platforms and use of ICT, and requirements to replace existing platforms by 31 December 2003

### 3.5.6 Relationship with Members/other Directorates

- Continue to develop existing good relationships and develop joint working with regard to resource planning

**TARGET:**

Co-operate with Personnel Department in developing a Human Resources Strategy in order to improve recruitment and retention of key professional staff across the Directorate and to address sickness issues, and co-operate with Corporate Services in a fundamental review of budgets

### 3.5.7 Children and Families

The Social Services Inspectorate Wales (SSIW) Joint Review confirmed that there is extensive voluntary sector involvement in provision of children's social services, and stated that,

***“there are some high quality services and evidence of effective partnerships, although provision is not evenly distributed throughout the county”.***

The Authority plans to develop a family support strategy, matched to needs to address this. The Authority has also commissioned a study of Children's Services' staffing levels and resources necessary to provide the most efficient and effective service.

The Authority through the Family Placement Team, part of the newly-established Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Directorate, is also trying to recruit more Foster Carers to boost placement options for children in the care of the Local Authority by 20% over the next two years. Since 2001, the number of children looked after in Powys has grown by about 15%, reflecting a national trend that is expected to continue for some time.

**Key Areas for Improvement:**

Ensure family support services are provided equitably across the County.

**TARGET:**

Develop a Family Support strategy to ensure that services reflect and meet need and to promote more equitable access to services across the County, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003.  
Commission Independent study of Children's Services during 2003/04.

Audit current provision and evaluate the Childcare Strategy, by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

The Children's Services Plan identifies the need to include the views of children and families in the planning, delivery and review of services. A children's rights officer has been appointed, and part of the role is to consult routinely with children and families and develop a Children's Rights Strategy.

**Key Areas for Improvement :**

Ensure the views of children and families are sought and used in the planning, delivery and review of services.

**TARGET:**

Develop a Children's Rights Strategy, by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 and a Children's Information Strategy by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2004.

### 3.5.8 Lifelong Learning and Community Services

In support of the lifelong learning theme of the Community Strategy there is a need to clarify the Council's contribution to lifelong learning, ensuring that services are provided reliably and equitably across the County.

**Key Area for Improvement**

To support the development of the lifelong learning theme of the Community Strategy.

**TARGET**

To produce a Lifelong Learning Plan by April 2004

Developing lifelong learning includes consideration of the post 14 curriculum, the community strategy and the introduction of ELW<sup>a</sup> which has had a significant impact on post 16 provision.

**TARGET:**

Adopt a proactive role in relation to changes to the post 14 curriculum and post 16 arrangements, by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004

### Early Years Education

The provision of Early Years Education is currently undergoing a significant expansion with the extension of part-time non-statutory early years education to three year olds.

**Key Areas for Improvement**

To extend the provision of early years education places for 3 year olds.

**TARGET**

Bid for funding for Phase 1 was successful, places on line.  
Bid for Phase 2 submitted January 2003, places due to come on line in September 2003.

## Libraries

Half a million visits are made to libraries within Powys each year. The Library Service provides access to its own extensive stock of books, maps, newspapers, CD's and other material. The service acts as a gateway to the network of library and information provision in the UK through its Inter-Library lending scheme.

The Authority is currently implementing the Peoples Network Programme across the County, which provides free public access to computers and internet services in all its libraries.

**Key Areas for improvement :**

Improve access to Library Services.

**TARGET :**

Complete the provision of new library and learning centre in Llanfyllin, by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

## 3.6 Best Value Reviews

### Schools

#### 3.6.1 Raising Standards in Numeracy (2001)

*"A good service that will probably improve further with Powys schools consistently among the five highest performing schools at all key stages"*

Key improvements include:

- challenging under-performing secondary mathematics departments to raise standards,
- the further development of the use of performance data, and
- encouraging schools to use targeted funding in ways that leads to sustainable improvements.

Performance at Key Stage 2 has fallen by 6.3 percentage points from 2001/02 to 2002/03, contradicting the steady improvement of the previous three years. This is of concern and is being investigated. Although the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 in Mathematics at Key Stage 3 did not meet the target for 2002/03 of 78%, performance has improved from 70.1% in 2001/02 to 71.6% 2002/03.

### 3.6.2 Welsh and Welsh-medium Education

*"The service for Welsh and Welsh-medium education was fair and will probably improve."*

The review considered the arrangements for achieving the standards in Welsh as first and second language.

Key improvements include:

- the significant growth in Welsh-medium provision over recent years;
- results in Welsh first language over the period 1997-2002 have been consistently above the average for Wales; and
- the Authority provides effective support for the teaching of Welsh second language in primary schools through the Athrawon Bro peripatetic teams.

Actions yet to be met include the consideration of Welsh-medium primary designated schools in Severn Valley and Mid Powys. Further consideration is to be given to this as part of the Welsh Education Scheme 2002-2007.

SEN, and ICT across the curriculum were subject to Best Value reviews and inspection in 2002. Initial action plans are in place and are being implemented. Action Plans are currently being reviewed following recent receipt of the formal inspection report.

### 3.6.3 Special Educational Needs (2002)

*'A fair service with promising prospects for improvement'.*

Key improvements to result from the Best Value Action Plan are:-

The reduction of the number of statements of SEN through enhancing support for pupils prior to receipt of a statement and revised funding arrangements; and the development of an efficient, cost effective SEN Service with enhanced local provision which demonstrates effective working with other agencies to the benefit of all pupils with SEN and appropriate communication with all stake holders.

This will be achieved through improvements in:- inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools, administration; recording of SEN data; Welsh medium provision; joint working with other agencies; a review of communication processes and documentation, arrangements for the annual review of statements of SEN, monitoring arrangements, employment conditions for learning support assistants, transport for pupils with SEN, training and outreach provision.

### 3.6.4 ICT Support Services to Schools (2002)

*"An excellent service with good prospects for improvement".*

Key improvements resulting from the Best Value Review include:

- A more rigorous monitoring framework with better feedback of monitoring outcomes to schools;
- Enhanced training for all LEA advisory staff in the area of ICT; and
- A raised awareness in schools of Best Value procedures themselves.

## **Children and Families**

### **3.6.5 Duty and Emergency Service**

The review of the Social Service Duty Officer and Out of Hours service was completed in 2001. Inspectors visited in 2002 and a desktop inspection was carried out. No evaluation was made but SSIW was satisfied that the recommendations had been carried out and fully implemented.

As a result of the Best Value Review the Duty Officer Service had divided into Children and Social services so that referrers receive a specialist response. The draft Child Protection Inspectors (SSIW) 2003 commend the changes in the service.

### **3.6.6 Lifelong learning**

No Best Value reviews have yet taken place but Estyn are due to inspect Early Years, and Attendance, Behaviour and Exclusion in Autumn 2003

## **3.7 Risk Assessment – Services**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Work Programme</b>
<b>School/ Office Cleaning</b>	Satisfaction survey over next 18 months (by end June 2004). Set local PIs during 2003. Identify any national comparative data available with a view to undertaking a full review in 2005/06.
<b>Catering (Including School Meals &amp; Civic)</b>	Satisfaction survey over next 18 months (by end June 2004). Set local PIs during 2003. Identify any national or local comparative or review data available, with a view to undertaking a full review in 2004/05.
<b>Adult Learning</b>	Full Review commencing Autumn 2003 with Estyn inspection programmed for 2004.
<b>The Learning Environment</b>	Self-assessment review commencing Autumn 2003. Linked to Education Strategic Plan and Asset Management Strategy. Possible Estyn Inspection in 2005.
<b>Youth Justice</b>	Set up satisfaction monitoring measures using data already available from Youth Justice Board by Autumn 2003.
<b>Public Library Services</b>	Obtain Performance data and stakeholder satisfaction information. Possible inspection during 2005.
<b>Student Awards</b>	Undertake Satisfaction Survey. Prepare Action Plan.

Service	Work Programme
<b>Young People Services</b>	Obtain performance data and stakeholder satisfaction information. Consider full review in 2004-05.
<b>Children With Disabilities</b>	Mini review by external body.
<b>Care Leavers</b>	SSIW undertaking thematic review on disabilities in 2003. Full Review 2004.
<b>Adoption Services</b>	Full Review 2005. Previously reviewed in Looked After Children Report.
<b>Family Support &amp; Child Protection</b>	Will prepare full action plan re Child Protection. Action Plan arising from Serious Case Review being prepared. Mini review of Family Support in progress which will result in a Family Support Strategy
<b>Resource Management</b>	Undertake Satisfaction survey and improve performance information by gathering benchmarking information already available from other Authorities. Monitor Action Plan linked to ESP. Set local PI's for Directorate support during 2004/05.
<b>Services for Looked After Children (LAC)</b>	WAG due to inspect 2003 - Action plan in preparation.
<b>Early Years Education</b>	Estyn inspection during 2003/4.
<b>Welsh Medium Education</b>	Monitor implement Best Value Review Action Plan
<b>Literacy</b>	Action Plan in place following Estyn Inspection, linked to ESP. Monitor implementation of action plan.
<b>School Library Service</b>	Ensure performance data and stakeholder satisfaction information is updated. Prepare action plan.
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>	Awaiting Estyn report following full Best Value review and inspection during 2002-03. Prepare and implement Best Value Review Action Plan
<b>Social Inclusion</b>	Estyn inspection during 2003/4 in respect of attendance, behaviour and exclusion.
<b>Archives</b>	Prepare action plan.
<b>New Technologies</b>	Awaiting Estyn report following full Best Value review and inspection during 2002-03. Prepare and implement Best Value Review Action Plan.
<b>Numeracy</b>	BV Action Plan following inspection in 2001- 2002, linked to ESP. Monitor implementation of Action Plan.
<b>School Improvement</b>	Continue implementing Education Strategic Plan
<b>School Transport</b>	Undertake a review of agreed areas of the School Transport Policy, and participate in Best Value Review of Passenger Transport.

## 4 Technical and Local Services

### Providing the County's Infrastructure

#### 4.1 Introduction :

The Directorate is led by John Owen and provides the Council's "On-Street" services that support and interact with the community of Powys, as well as providing the infrastructure for the delivery of many other Council services.

The Directorate aspires to provide a quality service that can be valued by the community and service users of Powys.

**'Our aim is to deliver the services you want'**

#### 4.2 Board Members

The Board Members with the specific Portfolio responsibilities for the Directorate's functions are as follows :

Board Member	<i>Portfolio Responsibilities</i>	
<b>Cllr. Brian Davies</b> Cwm-twrch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trunk Road Agency;</li> <li>• Highway &amp; Bridge Maintenance;</li> <li>• Land Drainage &amp; Flooding;</li> <li>• Public Utilities;</li> <li>• Service User Support;</li> <li>• Laboratory Services;</li> <li>• Technical Support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities Management;</li> <li>• Building Repair &amp; Renewal;</li> <li>• New Build (Design, Construction &amp; Supervision);</li> <li>• Energy Conservation (Mechanical, Electrical &amp; Structural).</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Joy Shearer</b> Rhiewcynon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Farms &amp; Estates Service;</li> <li>• Valuation Services;</li> <li>• Estate Agency;</li> <li>• Livestock Markets;</li> <li>• Produce Markets &amp; Fairs;</li> <li>• Communications (E-Government);</li> <li>• Procurement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Forms of Contract;</li> <li>• Sustainability in Construction &amp; Transport;</li> <li>• Conservation of Energy Use;</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety;</li> <li>• Asset Management.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Barry Thomas</b> Llanfihangel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Policy;</li> <li>• Public Transport Support;</li> <li>• Traffic Management;</li> <li>• Road Safety;</li> <li>• Development Control;</li> <li>• Waste Management Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling &amp; Minimisation;</li> <li>• Refuse Collection;</li> <li>• Grounds Maintenance;</li> <li>• Waste Disposal (Closed Landfill);</li> <li>• Street Cleansing;</li> <li>• Public Conveniences;</li> <li>• Amenity Services;</li> <li>• Car Parks.</li> </ul>

### 4.3 Aims and Objectives

<b>Corporate Objectives:</b>	<b>Directorate Objectives:</b>
To ensure that the Council provides leadership within the Community.	<p>To provide a service that meets the needs and expectations of all members of the community.</p> <p>To work with communities and Elected Members, assisting them realise their aspirations and objectives.</p>
To provide a quality of service which is recognised as good value for money and which meets the needs of its citizens.	<p>To review services at regular intervals and, through the use of formal consultation, ensure that they meet the requirements of the service user.</p> <p>To compare services with other Welsh Authorities and aim to provide services in the top quartile of performance.</p> <p>To regularly monitor service performance data to ensure services meet targets.</p> <p>To use the skills of the Directorate's staff to develop services that are examples of best practice.</p>
To promote Social Inclusion and Combat Social Exclusion.	<p>To provide a safe, well-maintained Highway network throughout the year.</p> <p>To enhance accessibility to all modes of transport and improve mobility for all members of the Community.</p> <p>To address need in public transport through support for essential services, including community transport schemes.</p> <p>To ensure equality of access to amenity services and, through works undertaken all other public buildings.</p> <p>The Equitable provision of services for all the citizens of the County, ensuring contact with the Directorate is easy and responsive.</p>
To achieve a buoyant economy and thriving communities which provide prosperity and quality of life for the County's inhabitants.	<p>To provide a safe, well-maintained Highway network throughout the year.</p> <p>To support the local economy through sourcing materials and works from local suppliers and contractors where appropriate.</p> <p>To work in partnership with Town and Community Councils and other fora, delivering regeneration programmes and improving "On-Street" services.</p>

<b>Corporate Objectives:</b>	<b>Service Objectives:</b>
	<p>To consider the needs of town centres and trading areas when planning improvement works.</p> <p>To maintain a healthy local job market through recruitment practices and use of local contractors.</p> <p>To support a better, stronger economy.</p>
<p>To enhance and protect the environment and ensure quality and sustainability in new development.</p>	<p>To implement and maintain the Authority's aspirations in respect of environmental stewardship.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with statutory and legal duties.</p> <p>Through the adoption and development of sustainable practices such as waste recycling, the reuse of materials, composting and the use of solar power where appropriate.</p> <p>To support waste minimisation initiatives through working with community groups and the private and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>To support sustainable transport initiatives through the public transport service, the development of cycle paths and through the introduction of travel plans.</p> <p>To support a better quality of life.</p>

#### 4.4 Key Performance Measures and Targets

Indicator Ref	Indicator Description	Actual 2000/01	Actual 2001/02	Target 2002/03	Best Estimate 2002/03	Target 2003/04	Comments
A 07	When inspected at any other time - % of public conveniences that are of a satisfactory standard	New Indicator	97.6%	90%	95.45%	95.00%	
A 14	The % of stalls occupied ( produce markets)	New Indicator	82.5%	85%	77.80%	80%	Average for year showing a general downward trend in popularity of produce market shopping.

Indicator Ref	Indicator Description	Actual 2000/01	Actual 2001/02	Target 2002/03	Best Estimate 2002/03	Target 2003/04	Comments
<b>H 02</b>	The percentage of highways and relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness in zones 6 and 7 (County and Trunk roads).	n/a	n/a	95%	99.80%	95%	New indicator - annual return is calculated from the 2nd, 3rd & 4th quarters.  Budget increased during the year enabling increased spending.
<b>J 02</b>	Average number of days taken to remove a fly-tip.	8.3		2.5	4.74	2.5	Average of 4 quarters returns: taken from 'Communicate' database reports. Improvement to be seen throughout the year due to Refuse section efforts, 4th quarter almost to target..
<b>TPT 06</b>	Annual net income from car parks as a percentage of total income.	45%	48%	45%	53.93%	45%	
<b>WM 14</b>	Percentage of bulky waste collected within 14 working days.	n/a	New Indicator	New indicator	96.90%	7 days - 60% 14 days - 90% 21 days - 100%	All reported through 'Communicate'.

Following the restructure of Council services in April 2002, which enabled the creation of a single operational grouping, the opportunity is now being taken to develop work programmes in a more holistic manner, ensuring that when work is carried out an area's roads are left safe, toilets and car parks clean and that household waste and street cleansing leaves them tidy.

The aims of the Directorate also require that improvements are made in the management of the Highways and Property assets. This will be delivered through development of 'service blueprints,' which explore service aims and review the current property and highway assets used to deliver the technical service. This examination will lead to an assessment of the suitability of existing assets and the development of upgrade, disposal and investment programmes. The Directorate will also be introducing a Highway Asset Management Plan utilising whole-life costing and risk management to improve work programming and ensure value for money.

**TARGET:**

To establish the Inventory for the Highways Asset; 5-year plan to deliver Asset Management on Trunk and Class I highways by 2006.

Consideration is being given to establishing a more flexible procurement arrangement to ensure that the Directorate is able to meet the demands of an increasing workload. Workload currently outstrips capacity, however, with the establishment of Framework Agreements for Highways and Buildings, the “in-house” team can be supplemented with preferred external providers when required.

#### 4.5 Directorate Analysis

The Service Analysis for the Directorate highlighted several issues linked to the delivery of improvements. Many of these are also reflected in the findings of the Whole Authority Assessment (WAA).

The strengths of expert staff committed to service delivery is one that has been noted in the WAA, although the difficulty the Directorate faces in recruiting and retaining staff, particularly in some professional disciplines highlights an area for improvement which was also noted in the Service Analysis. The Corporate analysis similarly highlighted the issue of recruitment and retention of staff as a high priority area, and suggested a revision of the Authority’s Human Resource strategy.

One of the areas highlighted as a particular risk in the Corporate analysis was the lack of performance information. Nevertheless, although it was concluded in the Corporate WAA compilation that this is a factor that is hindering improvement, the T&LS assessment of these aspects indicated that the Directorate has a firm foundation of Performance Management systems, and the Areas for Improvement highlighted in the relevant Service Unit business plans will combine with the actual business planning process to continue to address this risk for the T&LS Directorate.

The strong grounding of performance information will also help tackle one of the main themes arising from the overview of the Service Specific Risk Assessments. The areas of concern in many instances are related to a lack of information on the performance of the service. Whilst anecdotal evidence often suggests a good service, lack of firm comparative evidence makes it difficult to make a judgement on targeting of future improvement, hence the higher risk factors for some service areas.

The variation in risk factors is also noted in the stakeholder satisfaction assessment component of the Risk Analysis. This corresponds with the findings of the Directorate WAA, where it was noted that whilst there was some good practice, such as consultation on the Local Transport Plan, this is not always the case throughout the Directorate. Given the service ethos of delivering the services users want, and the decreasing budget allocations, prioritisation and targeting limited resources to best effect requires involvement of stakeholders in an open decision-making process. It is also anticipated that better stakeholder understanding of user priorities will assist in the difficult choices to be addressed in the Corporate budget-setting process.

**TARGET:**

Develop Draft Directorate Communications Strategy (internal and external stakeholders) by Aug 2003, linking in with Corporate timescales.

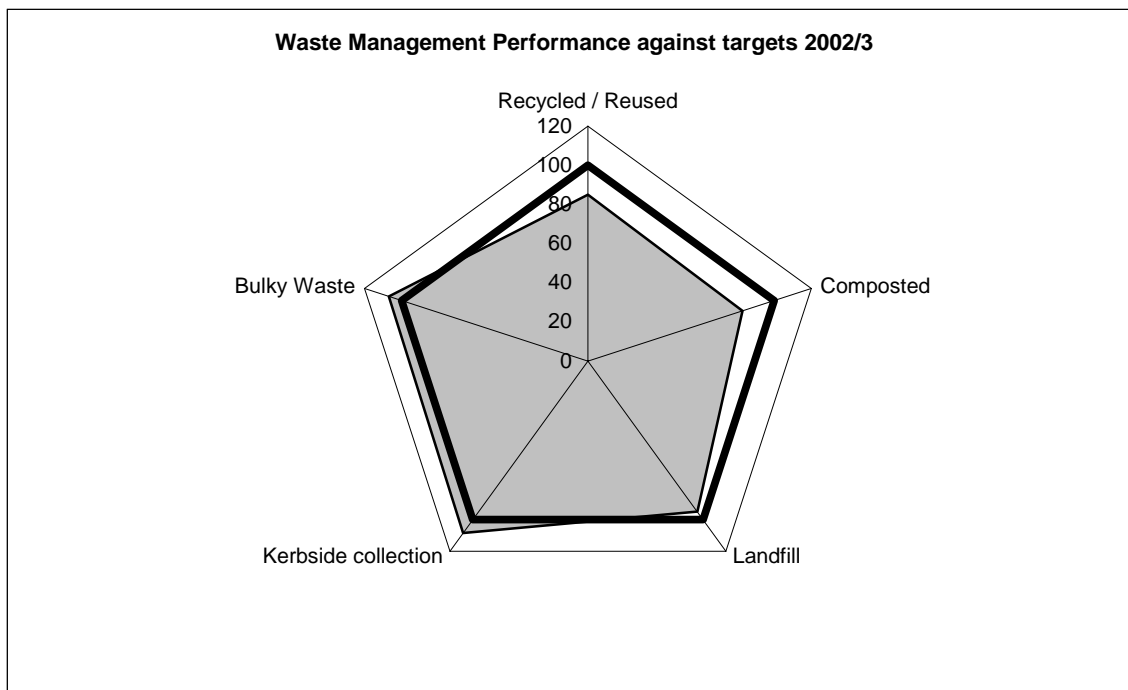
Management of public expectation is a strong theme in the Service Analysis, and the Directorate again faces reductions in resources; hence service improvements will have to focus on targeting and efficient working practices. The opportunity offered by the Helpdesk to “close the loop” and feedback progress information to users is a critical part of this process, along with the “Safe, Clean and Tidy” approach.

This proactive development of ICT to deliver improvement is again reflected in both the Corporate and Directorate WAA conclusions, and is highlighted both as a strength and opportunity in the Service Analysis. Recent developments to ROCC, Communicate and related systems thus offer the means to continue to support improvement through ICT.

Overall, the findings from both the Whole Authority Analysis and the Service analysis highlight the proactive approach the Directorate is taking to further develop Performance Management and ICT systems to continue to improve the delivery of the services that users want, in the context of rising expectations and falling budgets.

#### 4.5.1 Waste Management

The following diagram identifies the Directorate’s performance in relation to National Assembly indicators monitoring the percentage of municipal waste managed in differing ways. The diagram also identifies the percentage of the population receiving a kerbside collection of recyclables service against the target for the year and the performance of the bulky waste collection service.

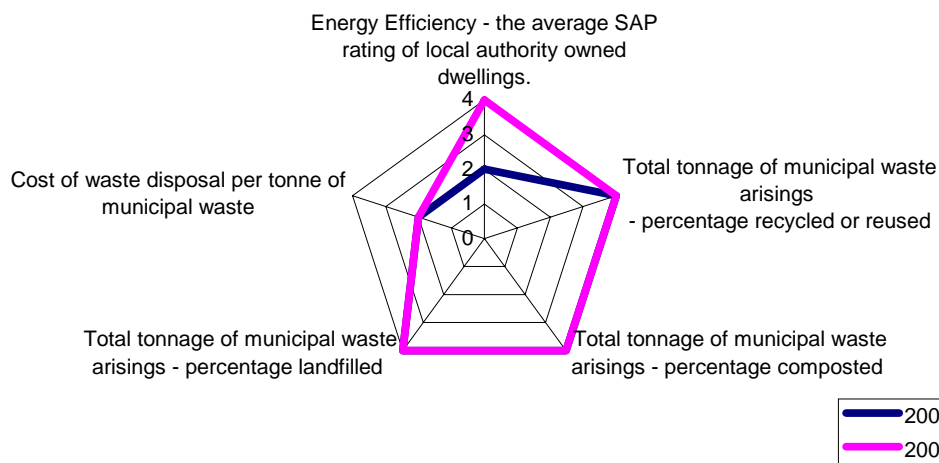


The composting and recycling of waste is slightly below target at around 84% which accounts for the higher than targeted percentage of waste being landfilled. This failure to meet the targets for recycling was due to a delay in the trade waste recycling programme, since started, and lack of reporting procedure for composting of rural road sweepings, now in place.

However, the extension of the kerbside collection service exceeded service targets and should contribute to lower landfill volumes as the exercise is extended further in the new year. The introduction of targets for the bulky waste collection service has helped to improve this service to the point where it is exceeding service standards by 8%.

The following chart shows that when comparing performance with authorities in Wales over the period 2001/02 and 2002/03, improvement has been achieved and sustained in support of environmental sustainability.

**Figure 5: Environmental Sustainability**



The introduction of a new IT system in the refuse collection service will increase the quality of service to the service clients as the helpdesk function is connected to a works programming and automated service financial and financial monitoring systems. A major review of collection rounds funded through the Sustainable Waste Management Grant will also be undertaken with the intention of identifying further efficiency improvements in relation to the transfer of collected waste to its eventual destination, either landfill or recycling. This study will place an increasing emphasis on recycling and this service area will be further enhanced through the piloting of a collection scheme for trade waste recyclable materials and a green waste recycling pilot in the Brecon area.

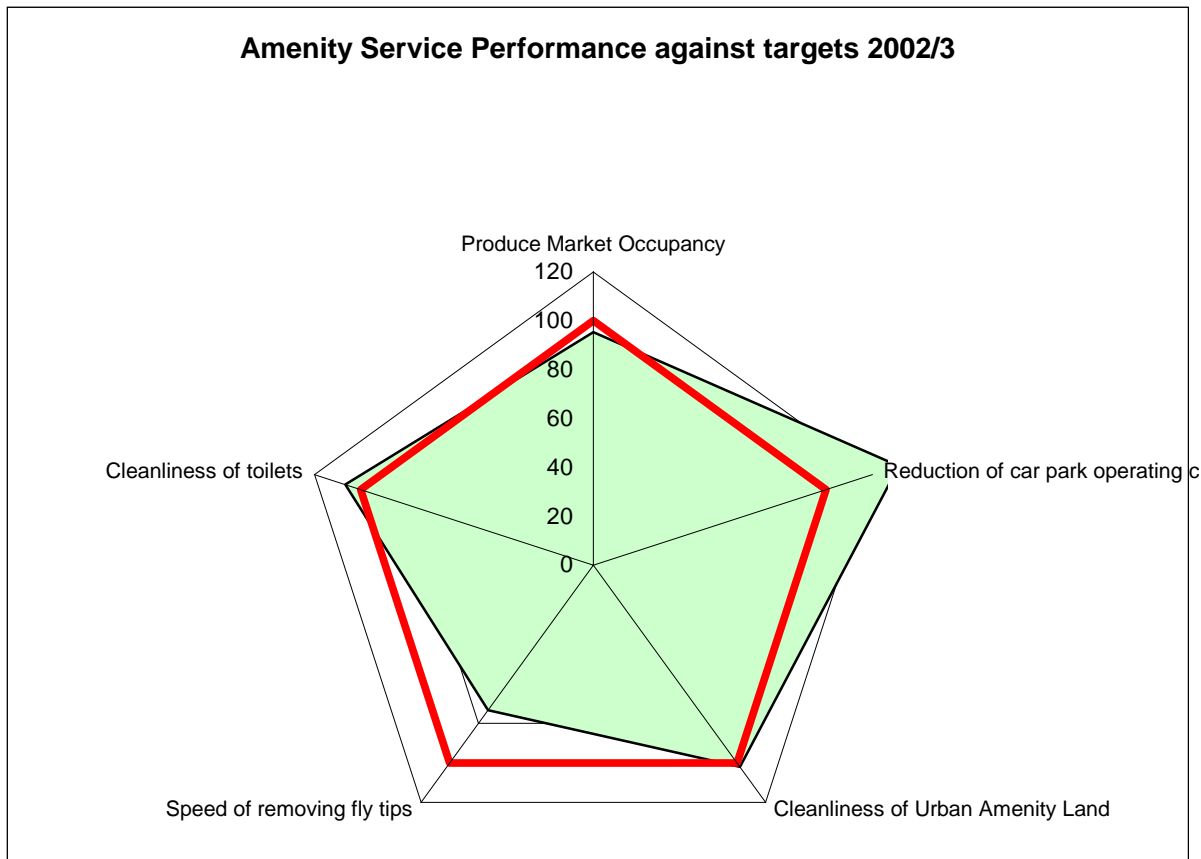
Two Waste Management Educational Officers will be appointed to extend the waste minimisation/recycling awareness campaign and a new Civic Amenity site will be opened in Machynlleth towards the end of the 2003/04 financial year. Consideration is being given to establishing a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to serve Brecon. This will reduce the transport cost currently being incurred in sending all recyclables to the MRF at Trewern, North Powys.

A pilot scheme for the kerbside collection of glass is also being trialled within the Llandrindod Wells area at a cost of £14,289 which will allow the measurement of participation rates and offer financial rewards to the community along the lines of the Authority's "Adopt a Bank" recycling scheme.

**TARGET:**

Improve systems for financial information through the extension of ROCC IT system to refuse service by November 2003.

**4.5.2 Amenity Services**



The suite of indicators selected to identify the performance of the Directorate's amenity services are all drawn from reported local and national performance indicators. The number of stalls occupied in produce markets is below target but this reflects a general downturn in the use of such markets and it is likely that the target will be revised downwards for the coming year.

The indicator relating to cleanliness of toilets reports the percentage of public conveniences of an acceptable standard of cleanliness when inspected at any time. This is a new indicator and as such has no target but the actual performance of 97.7% demonstrates a high quality service.

The indicator relating to the clearance of fly tips shows that the Directorate only achieved 73.3% of its target of removing tips within two and a half days. This does not recognise that the target was reduced from 14 days to 2.5 days in the space of one year and third quarter performance had reached less than 3.5 days.

The Directorate exceeded its targets in relation to the percentage of urban amenity land of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness by 2% and analysis of net car parking income in relation to gross income levels shows a reduction of operating costs.

The Directorate has placed emphasis on the improvement in quality of street cleansing over the next twelve months. The standards for different areas will be revised to increase the frequency of cleaning, where required, and additional mechanical sweepers will be brought into service to ensure that programmes can be delivered in a timely manner. The full implementation of the Safe, Clean and Tidy philosophy will ensure that communities see the maximum benefit of all works in their area with the minimum level of disruption, whilst improving efficiency of gully-emptying and sweeping.

The Grounds Maintenance team will be expanding their area of operations to include safety inspections of trees near highways or on authority property. This will reduce the insurance risk to the Council while providing the group with a broader financial footing. A scheme will be piloted to farm compost leaf mould from rural road sweeping rather than in lay-bys.

It is anticipated that this project will prove cost effective and may be expanded to include composting of shredded hedge trimmings. The service will develop the outline PIs from the business plan: undertake satisfaction surveys, and set up performance measures, and use results to inform future improvements.

The Directorate will be purchasing a thermo-plastic white lining vehicle which will enable the in house team to deliver a white lining service. This is currently delivered by external contractors outside the area and can be problematic in terms of programming works and the costs of bringing the equipment into the area.

The recent member/officer working party report into the provision of public conveniences through Powys is currently in the process of consulting on its findings with Town & Community Councils and it is intended to rationalise provision in order to reinvest funds in the improvement of the highly used facilities. Of equal importance has been the review of car parking charges, aimed at harmonising the charging structure throughout the county.

Strategic review of Produce market services; improved financial and performance information; closing loop with public queries; more information about services to public (leaflets, website etc.); partnership approach to contracts.

### **4.5.3 Highways Maintenance**

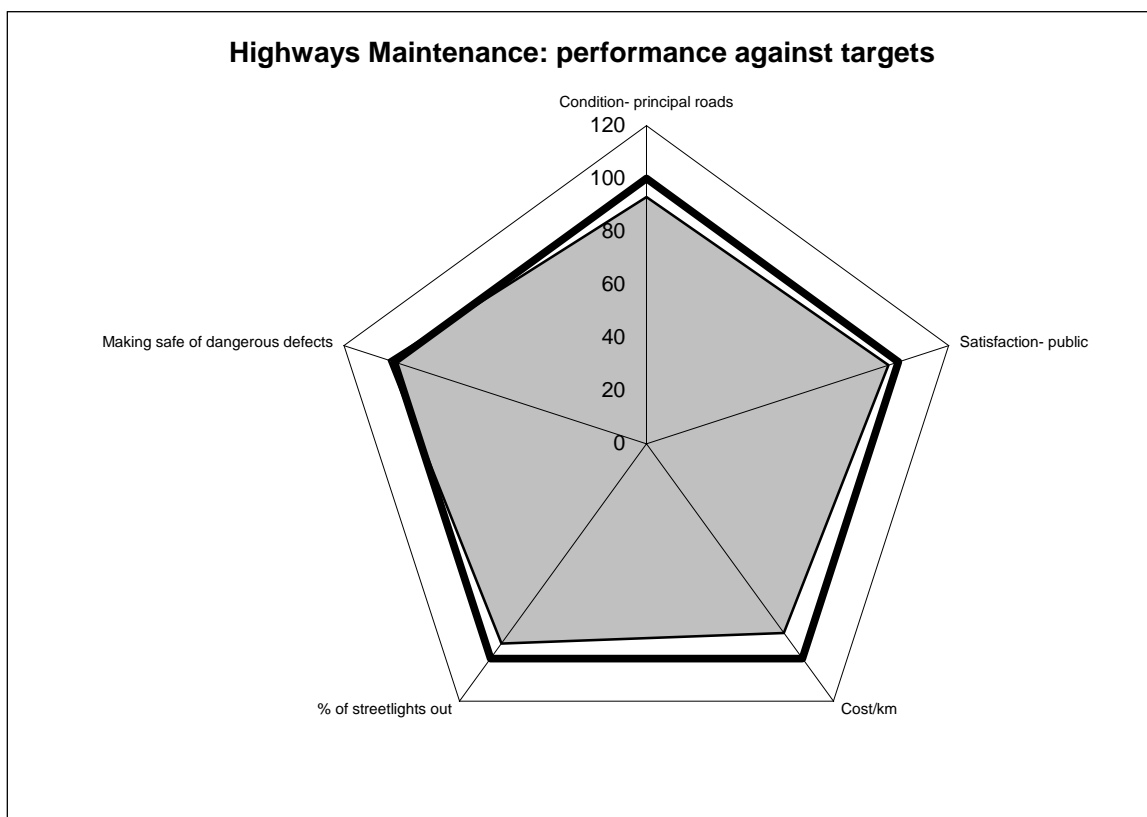
The following diagram identifies the Directorate's performance in relation to National Assembly indicators that consider different aspects of Highways Maintenance performance. The diagram also considers the public's level of satisfaction of the service, measured during a comprehensive consultation exercise for the Highways Maintenance Best Value Review.

The making safe of dangerous defects is expected to be slightly above target, this performance is, if anything, an underestimate, as there were issues earlier in the year concerning the audit trails for works (now resolved). This indicator does highlight an important aspect of the service, and one which is highly visible- the "filling potholes" of public perception. It is expected that further development in the indicator systems will improve the performance of this PI.

Whilst the indicator for the percentage of streetlights out is slightly below target, this represents an insignificant variance. Given the good performance being maintained with this indicator, and the need for significant investment in workforce or new technology to improve this performance even a small amount, the strategy for Streetlighting is thus to maintain performance.

Although slightly below target, the indicator relating to road condition compares well with other Welsh Authorities, with past performance showing Powys in the top quartile.

The satisfaction measure is slightly below target, although it should be noted that this was an estimated target, as no prior baseline data was available.



#### 4.5.4 Highways and Transport Projects

Works programmes for the forthcoming year were finalised by the Board in April although the New Year is likely to see the completion of the major works at Caerhowel Bridge and underpinning works to address a landslip in Meifod.

It is anticipated that the changes introduced in respect of the Highways Maintenance Best Value Action Plan will improve the response to Highway defects, increasing the number of potholes repaired. Actions related to review of the Winter Maintenance programme support more effective road salting.

Ind	2000/01	2001/02	Welsh Ave 2001/02	English Ave 2001/02	Best Est 2002/03	Target 2002/03	Target 2003/04
<b>6.8</b> Damage to roads and pavements repaired within 24 hours	78.54%	86%		92%	78.8%	85%	90%

Other Directorate initiatives include;

- Work to retain Trunk Road Agency in Powys; maintain Asset Register- consider IT systems to better capture front-line data; improve audit trail for remediation of dangerous defects; establish post of Trunk Road Liaison Officer.
- Review the role of Streetworks, consider the scope for monitoring PCC works, undertaking additional targeted checks (based on Contractor performance), improvement of Works for Road Purposes; and develop appropriate local PIs and satisfaction measures, and implement.
- Continue to support schemes such as Bikesafe and Safe Routes to School; continued monitoring of accident black-spots; expansion of safety camera scheme.
- Develop performance measures for Highways Design Service (including satisfaction) and use results to inform future improvement strategy; improve communication with stakeholders (information to Members, more detailed briefs, informing client more regularly, closing loop on project consultation)
- Street Lighting: Improve communication with public- close feedback loop with Helpdesk, number on columns & vehicles; develop performance measures & benchmarking; develop links with partners on Crime reduction initiatives; implement recommendations of Audit report; local review of service efficiency options against WATO data.
- Transport grant funding will support the final phase of the Newtown Safe Routes to School project and begin a two year programme to develop a similar scheme in Brecon. This will be supplemented by the Brecon Phase III works and development of cycling and pedestrian facilities in Brecon along with the construction of a transport interchange near to the Watton. Funds will be made available to support schemes such as Bikesafe and monitoring of accident black-spots; expansion of safety camera scheme.
- Interchange works will also be carried out at railway stations in Llandrindod Wells and Knighton, both of which will involve the provision of new footbridges to improve access to platforms. Other rail projects include £1.3m of grant funding to begin the construction of the Dyfi loop on the Cambrian rail line.

**TARGET:**

Publish an updated Local Transport Plan, Bus Strategy, Mid Wales Public Transport Strategy, Quality Bus Corridor Study and to take a lead role in the updating of the Mid Wales Integrated Transport Strategy, by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004

There will be an increased emphasis on flexible services within the Council's Public Transport provision that will consider the use of taxi/buses on lesser-used routes. The New Year will see the extension of concessionary travel to men aged 60 and the service information will be more closely monitored through the introduction of Smartcard technology.

Other technological developments in the transport field include the development of a user friendly on line bus timetable and touch-screen travel planning facilities in the major towns in Powys. In addition a Best Value Review of Public and Home to School Transport will consider further improvements to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in service provision.

**TARGET:**

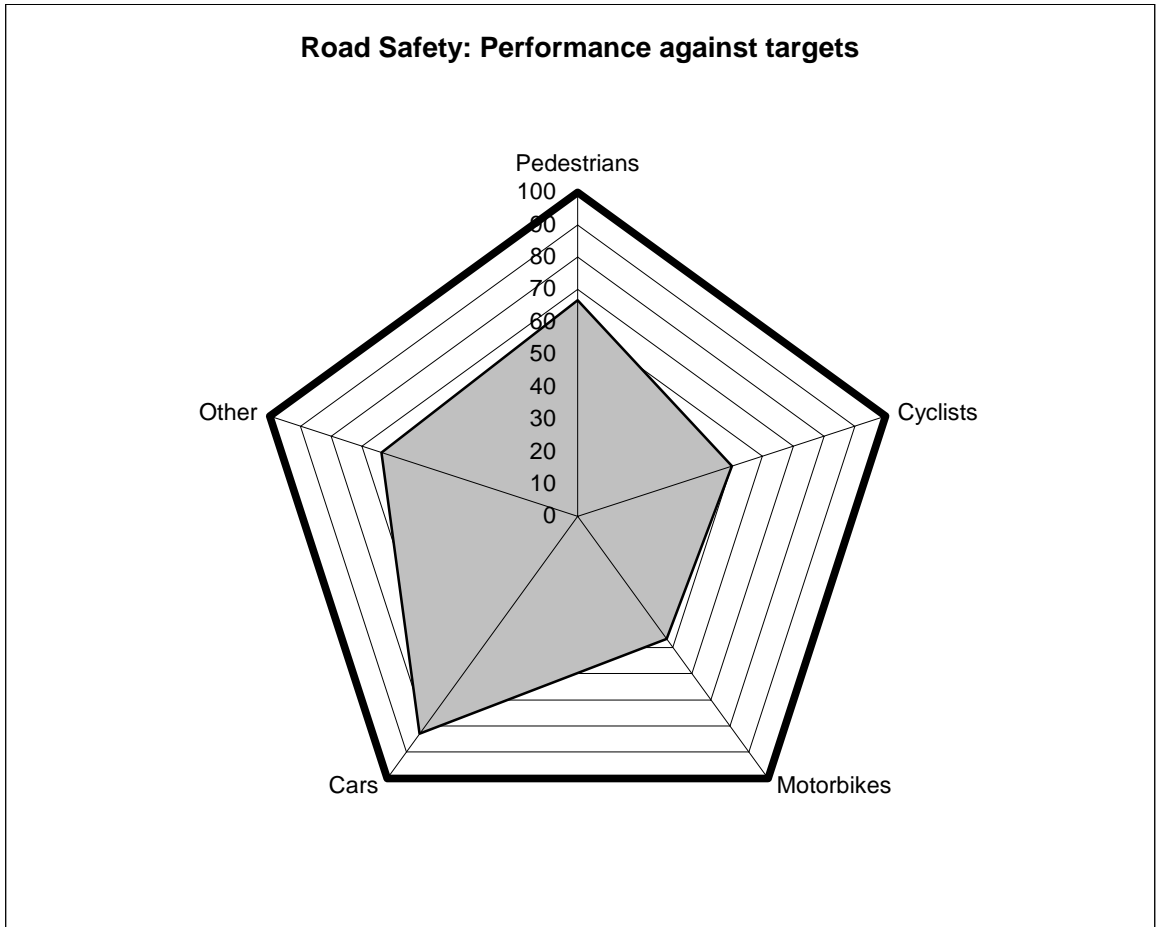
Implement touch-screen kiosks for real-time Transport information. Investigation of kiosks complete, and database feed is currently being developed. Install Kiosks in Llandrindod Wells, Newtown & Knighton 2003/04, Kiosks in Brecon, Ystradgynlais, Welshpool 2004/05

Of particular note is the reduction in the Bridge Maintenance programme and the moratorium on Traffic Regulation Orders. Both measures were introduced as a result of a budget set to minimise the increase in Council Tax charges. The reduced spending on bridges will increase the number of weight restrictions and will influence travel options for HGVs in particular.

**TARGET**

To commence the introduction of satisfaction surveys for Highways Development Control users; to continue to provide more information about the service to Members and the public (leaflets guidance notes etc.); to develop benchmarks with other Authorities

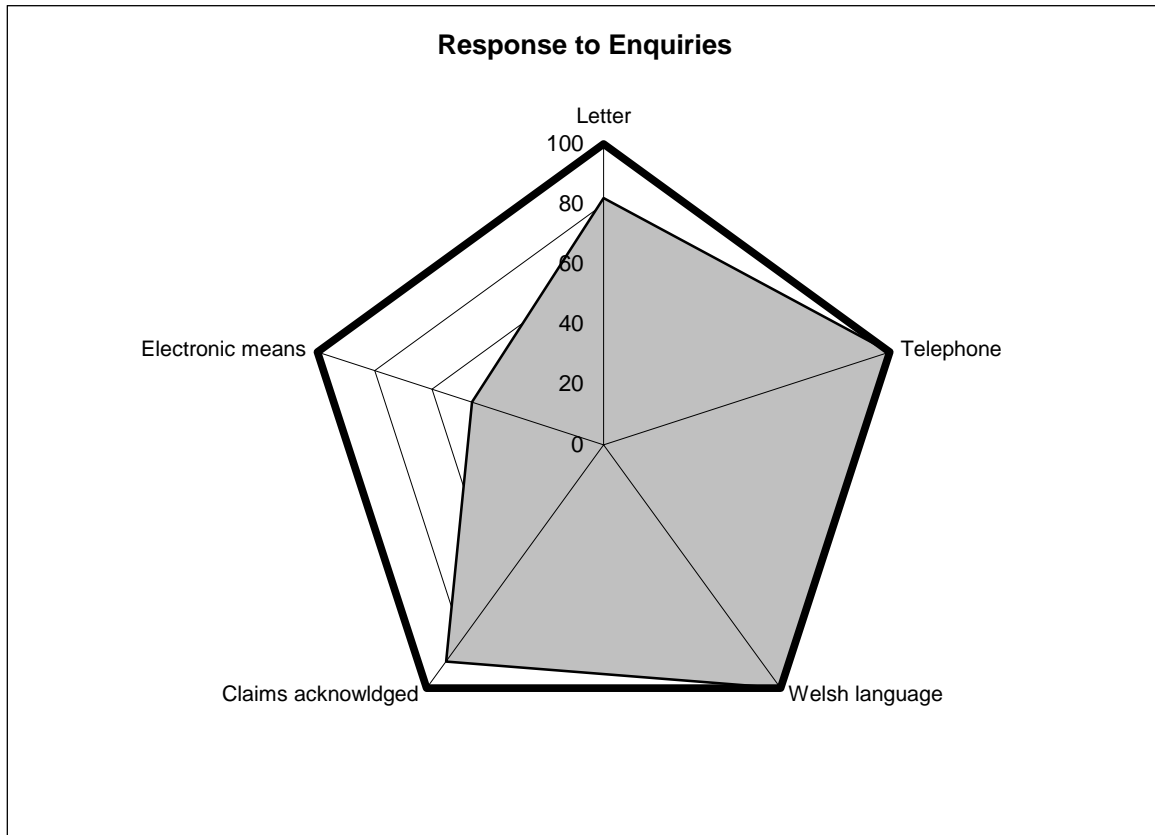
#### 4.5.5 Road Safety



This indicator reports the number of killed or seriously injured people per 100,000 resulting from road accidents in the County. It is a difficult indicator to interpret and it can be argued that effects do not always follow causes and that at best the indicator can identify how some safety initiatives impact on accidents but many other variables, weather conditions and attitudes to speed, can impact heavily on the results.

The accident reduction targets for the service were set nationally to achieve a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 2010. The baseline for this reduction was the average between 1994 and 1998. The strategy for achieving this reduction was published in the Local Transport Plan. The reduction in accident levels for all types of road user is below target although the reduction in serious car accidents achieved 83% of the target figure. It is hoped that the success of the Safety Camera Partnership will improve performance for the New Year.

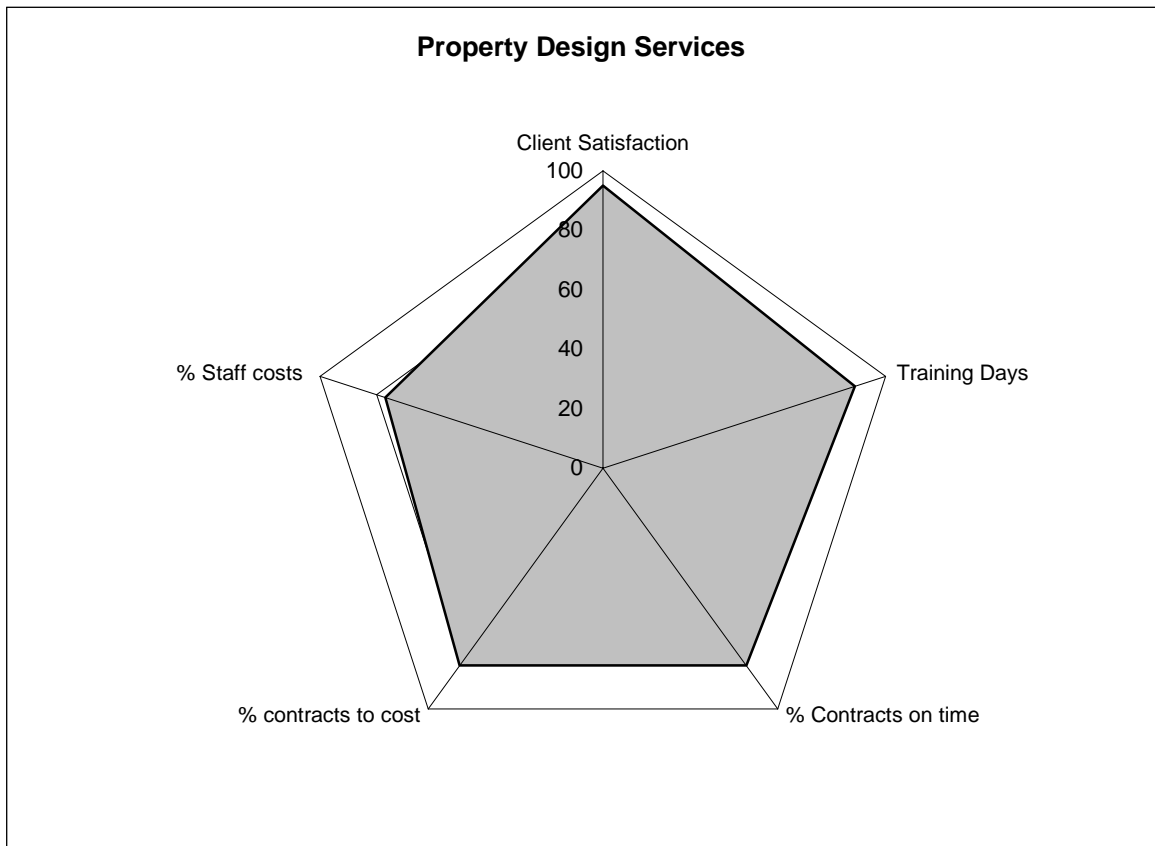
#### 4.5.6 Response to Public Enquiries



This diagram shows the Directorate's performance in relation to communicating with its service users. The 100% response to telephone calls and Welsh language enquiries is largely facilitated through the Directorate's telephone helpdesk and systems. An average of the indicator reporting compliance with guidelines on written correspondence shows the Directorate's performance as 82% within deadlines. This compares reasonably well with other Directorates (previous year's performance 87%) when the volume of correspondence is considered (over 9,000 items of correspondence handled within Technical and Local Services for last calendar year)

The Directorate has improved its performance in managing claims for compensation and 89% of such claims are now acknowledged within the 'Woolf' guidelines. The Directorate has increased the level of service provision through electronic means from 39% to 43% over the last year.

#### 4.5.7 Property Design Services



The performance levels in this diagram indicate the Building Design Service position in national benchmarking exercises. In terms of clients satisfaction the service score in the top 95%. The allocation of an average 7.5 days staff training per person in the group places the service in the top 89% of the sample group which for this indicator includes public sector competitors. The level of staff costs by turnover is also good with the Directorate well inside the lowest quartile, upper performance, and the delivery of contracts to cost and time are both in the top 82%. This differs from most other diagrams as, with the exception of parking, the reported figures represent actual provision levels rather than progress towards targets.

#### 4.5.8 Building Services

Major building projects for the new year include the design of a new ASD unit at Ysgol Penmaes, which will be followed by construction of the new school. A new sports hall will be built at Cedewain Special School, and site works are due to start at Maes y Dderwen High School within the next few months. Additional education projects are expected as the Government's SBIG funding feeds £9m into the service over the next seven years.

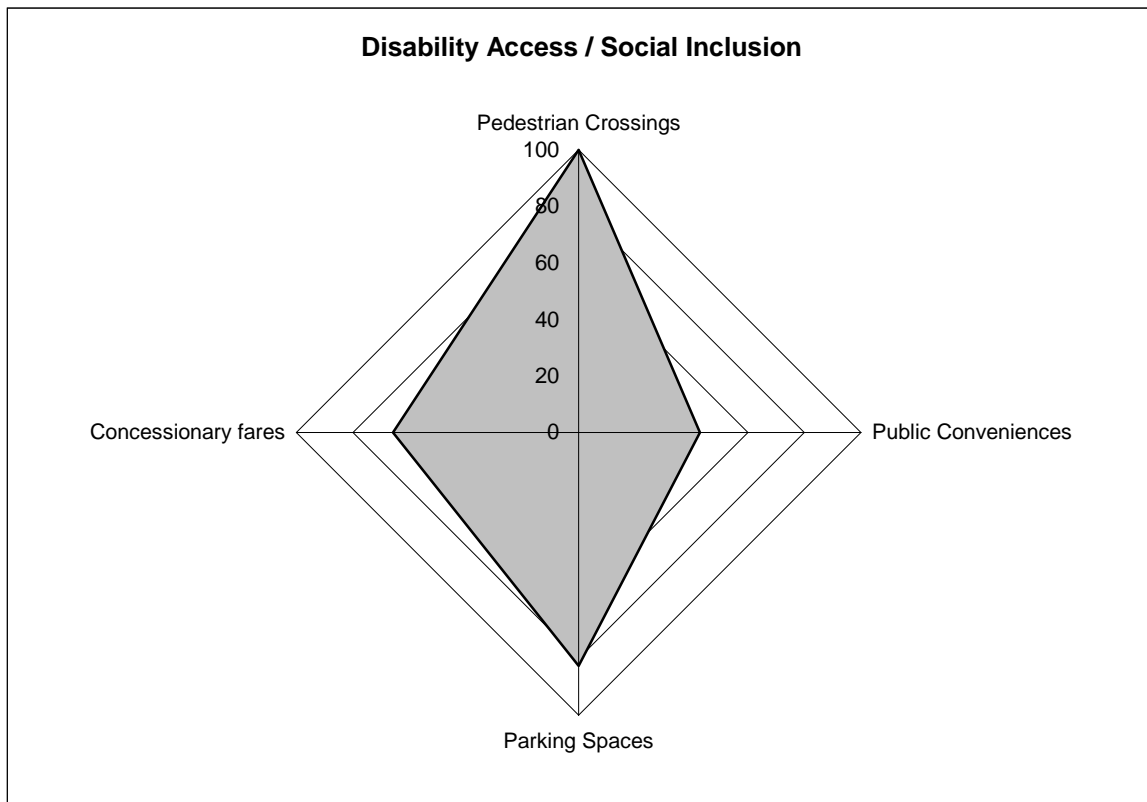
The condition survey of the Council's smallholdings will be completed during 2003 and this information will feed into the development of Asset Management Service Blue-prints, a project being managed by the E&BS Function.

The service will further develop the programme of satisfaction surveys to cover the whole group; incorporate performance measures to main systems and monitor; develop new performance measures; introduce Purchase Cards and PDAs, and implement access to real-time information for service users

The New Year will see an improvement in project management and fee recovery through further development and integration of the FM ROCC and Profess systems. The purchase card pilot scheme in the Authority will cover the Facilities Management and Vehicle Maintenance services, allowing these groups to increase the speed of processing creditor invoices, and simplifying internal accounting procedures. Service contracts will also be launched to include activities such as fixed wire testing and Legionella monitoring.

**TARGET:**  
 Purchase card pilot scheme to be working in Facilities Management and Vehicle Maintenance by September 2003

#### 4.5.9 Disability Access / Social Inclusion



The diagram above explores how various public services are enabling the Directorate to meet its requirements as set out in the Council's Access Policy. This differs from most other diagrams as, with the exception of parking, the reported figures represent actual provision levels rather than progress towards targets.

100% of all controlled pedestrian crossings have disabled facilities such as dropped kerbs with tactile surfaces and pelican crossings have an audible or tactile indicators that it is safe to cross the road.

During the first year of the free fare travel concession the level of take up in the community has been 66% of the estimated eligible population of 29,700 and it is anticipated that the extension of the concession to men over 60 will generate higher levels of take up for the New Year.

43% of public conveniences in Powys meet the standards for disabled access and work is ongoing to improve this through the reinvestment potential generated by a rationalisation process.

The Directorate provides special disabled parking bays at pay and display facilities throughout the County and the current level of provision is 5%. This compares favourably with other Welsh authorities and shows considerable progress towards the interim target of 6%.

#### **4.5.10 County Farms**

The Council adopted a Farms Rationalisation Strategy in 2000, which aims at establishing farming units of 80 acres or more. The programme is financed through the reinvestment of Capital receipts from the sale of surplus property, and aims to reduce the accumulated Landlord liabilities. A survey of the holdings has informed the investment programme, with priorities being attached to Health and Safety issues, potential pollution incidents, Tenant Rights payments and improvements to fixed equipment (where farm enlargement dictates). The strategy is guided by 3, 5 and 10 year targets, and aims to reduce the number of tenancies from 218 in 2000 to some 140 by the end of the programme.

The Directorate has ensured that the Capital value of the Estate increases above inflation year on year in order that it achieves its potential valuation, offering the Council an asset which, if liquidated, provides a good rate of return on the investment. Increasingly, Tenancies are being converted to Farm Business Tenancies (FBTs), enabling a more flexible management approach to be adopted. In turn, income has increased and, given the further transition to FBTs, this income will provide an excellent capitalised return.

In 2003/04 it is intended to recover £1.1m in sales, of which 75% will be used to fund the Capital programme. This will involve the amalgamation of 9 farms. The one area of risk that the Council cannot currently evaluate is the proposed Community Agricultural Programme (CAP) reform. The introduction of this will be closely monitored.

The Directorate will also complete the Condition survey programme; develop maintenance ranking system; continue to introduce satisfaction survey programme, and develop performance measures and systems

#### **4.6 Best Value Reviews**

Several service areas have been the subject of Best Value Reviews, indeed the Directorate has taken a proactive approach to the use of the Review system to drive improvements. The recent Review programme, with the resulting judgements from the Audit Commission Inspections, is as follows:

#### 4.6.1 Amenity Services (2001)

*“A good service with promising prospects for improvement”*

It is expected that improvements in the provision of Street Cleansing, rationalisation of Public Conveniences to enhance quality, and a long-term strategy for market development will result from this Action Plan.

**Further improvements:** Strategic review of Produce market services; improved financial and performance information; closing loop with public queries; more information about services to public (leaflets, website etc.); partnership approach to contracts; closing loop with public queries; more information about services to public (leaflets, website etc.); PC Rationalisation programme; Town Clocks Condition Surveys.

#### 4.6.2 Car Parking (2001)

*“A good service with promising prospects for improvement”*

Key improvements to result from the BV Action Plan are increased recovery of ECNs (Excess Charge Notices), increased income and the rationalisation of charging systems across the Authority. The action plan is now being delivered through a Member-Officer working group.

**Further improvements:** Improved financial and performance information; closing loop with public queries; more information about services to public (leaflets, website etc.); partnership approach to contracts; charging strategy to be developed on findings from Car-Parking Working Group; further satisfaction surveys; use of back of tickets to provide information about Council and other support services.

#### 4.6.3 Waste Management and Refuse (2001)

*“A good service with promising prospects for improvement”*

Key improvements include development of a unified structure and waste system that is able to deliver an enhanced service, increased recycling in line with WAG targets, and improvements in Risk Management of the closed landfill sites.

**Further improvements:** Introduction of Trade Waste system in Llandrindod, Welshpool, Newtown; expand kerbside collection of recyclables to main towns in South Powys; pilot for kerbside collection of garden waste in Summer months; introduce Home Composter scheme; open CA site in Machynlleth; develop at least 6 new Bring sites; complete Refuse logistics study; improve Waste Management Website; revise PI spreadsheet systems to improve quality of audit trails; monitor user satisfaction

The Action Plan has been revised and updated to fall in line with the progressing Waste Management Strategy.

#### 4.6.4 Laboratory (2001)

*As a desktop inspection no judgement was made although the results in the inspection report were generally positive about the service*

Key improvements resulting from the Action Plan are a sustainable Trading Account balance (i.e. surplus rather than deficit), more efficient use of the Building asset, improvements in Performance information, and delivery of the service that the users want. The Plan has been largely delivered and updated to include new developments.

**Further improvements:** Further satisfaction surveys; introduce performance measures and monitor; improvements to management information systems in line with Function plans; develop strategy for monitoring of materials

#### 4.6.5 Fleet Management (2002)

*“A poor service but with promising prospects for improvement.”*

It is expected that the Action Plan will result in better service quality for users, improvements in satisfaction have already been noted as a result of the first stages of implementation of the Action Plan, and the service now trades in profit.

**Further improvements:** Service to fully implement Fleetplan; appointments system for vehicles; Standard Procedures for inspection/servicing regimes; staff training; improved budgetary and performance information; repeat of satisfaction surveys.

#### 4.6.6 Buildings Maintenance (2002)

*“A fair service with promising prospects for improvement”*

Key improvements likely to result from the Action Plan, in particular the ROCC project, are improved financial control, better risk management and enhanced access to performance and service information by both service users and management.

#### 4.6.7 Highways Maintenance (2003)

*“A good service likely to improve”.*

The Key improvements highlighted in the Action Plan are: more efficient use of a limited resource, reduced risk, improved user satisfaction, enhanced communications and better understanding of service performance.

**Further Improvements:** Target funding (Safe, Clean & Tidy initiative) to areas of concern- potholes, drainage, sweeping; completion of the Highway Asset inventory; improve communications with external stakeholders; information to public- closing the loop on Helpdesk reports, leaflets, website, radio bulletins in Winter, roadworks information; develop a suite of performance, satisfaction and financial information; review the SoR system; review internal communication arrangements.

The Directorate has an established procedure, which enables the delivery of Best Value Action Plans to be regularly monitored, and this has been particularly important to the successful delivery of the Plans for the Laboratory and the Waste Management reviews. This has also led to a revision and updating of plans for improvement in these units. A similar revision is expected for the Amenity and Car-parking plans in the near future.

## 4.7 IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The Directorate takes a proactive approach to the development and use of ICT, the Directorate Helpdesk has been developed over a number of years to become a single point of contact to access all Directorate services.

Several initiatives are underway in the Directorate to improve communication and service request handling, to provide real-time performance information, improved access to information for clients, and developing the potential for electronic billing. Further improvements being considered include systems to enable real-time provision of Bus Timetable information. In future, increased management of communications and information in electronic format, with e-mail management have the potential to further improve efficiency, and allow better management of limited office space.

**TARGET:**

Introduce touch-screen kiosks for live traffic information and Smartcard system for concessions during 2003/04.

The enthusiastic use of ICT and the introduction of the Safe, Clean, Tidy concept are more recent ways in which the Directorate continues to improve front line services.

There are, however, issues to address, with the difficulties of retaining skilled staff and steadily increasing public expectations potentially posing long-term risks to the service. Developments in Government and European Union policy, particularly in the areas of Transport and Waste Management, also have the potential to significantly impact the Directorate's approach to service delivery in the future.

## 4.8 Risk Assessment – Services

Service	Work Programme
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>	Develop the outline PIs from business plan: undertake satisfaction surveys, and set up performance measures. Use results to inform future improvements.
<b>Street Works</b>	Review the role of Streetworks, consider- scope for monitoring PCC works, undertaking additional targeted checks (based on Contractor performance), improvement of Works for Road Purposes; develop appropriate local PIs and satisfaction measures, and implement.
<b>Highways Design Service</b>	Develop performance measures (including satisfaction) and use results to inform future improvement strategy; improve communication with stakeholders (information to Members, more detailed briefs, informing client more regularly, closing loop on project consultation).

Service	Work Programme
<b>Highway Maintenance</b>	Target funding (Safe, Clean & Tidy initiative) to areas of concern- potholes, drainage, sweeping; completion of the Highway Asset inventory; improve communications with external stakeholders; information to public- closing the loop on Helpdesk reports, leaflets, website, radio bulletins in Winter, roadworks info; develop a suite of performance, satisfaction and financial information; review the SoR system; review internal communication arrangements.
<b>Street Lighting</b>	Communication with public- close feedback loop with Helpdesk, number on columns & vehicles; develop performance measures & benchmarking; develop links with partners on Crime reduction initiatives; implement recommendations of Audit report; local review of service efficiency options against WATO data.
<b>Passenger Transport</b>	Touch-screen kiosks for live traffic information; Smartcard system for concessions; continue to lead introduction of more accessible vehicles, satisfaction surveys- continue in Passenger Transport, expand to Education transport.
<b>Vehicle Maintenance and Fleet Management</b>	Fully implement Fleetplan; appointments system for vehicles; Standard Procedures for inspection/servicing regimes; staff training; improved budgetary and performance information; repeat of satisfaction surveys.
<b>Markets - Produce &amp; Livestock</b>	Strategic review of Produce market services; improved financial and performance information; closing loop with public queries; more information about services to public (leaflets, website etc); partnership approach to contracts.
<b>Trunk Road Management</b>	Work to retain Trunk Road Agency in Powys; maintain Asset Register- consider IT systems to better capture front-line data; improve audit trail for remediation of dangerous defects; establish post of Trunk Road Liaison Officer.
<b>Traffic Management &amp; Road Safety</b>	Continue to support schemes such as Bikesafe and Safe Routes to School; continued monitoring of accident black-spots; expansion of safety camera scheme.
<b>Amenity Services: (PC's Town Clocks &amp; Street Cleansing</b>	Improved financial and performance information; closing loop with public queries; more information about services to public (leaflets, website etc.); partnership approach to contracts; PC Rationalisation programme; Town Clocks Condition Surveys.
<b>Waste Management</b>	Introduction of Trade Waste system in Llandrindod, Welshpool, Newtown; expand kerbsite collection of recyclables to main towns in South Powys; pilot for kerbside collection of garden waste in Summer months; introduce Home Composter scheme; open CA site in Machynlleth; develop at least 6 new Bring sites; complete Refuse logistics study; improve Waste Management Website; revise PI spreadsheet systems to improve quality of audit trails; monitor user satisfaction.

Service	Work Programme
<b>County Farm Estate</b>	Complete the Condition survey programme; develop maintenance ranking system; amalgamation of 9 farms; continue to implement the Farms Rationalisation Strategy; introduce satisfaction survey programme; develop performance measures and systems.
<b>Property Design Service including maintenance</b>	Further develop the programme of satisfaction surveys to cover the whole group; incorporate performance measures to main systems and monitor; develop new performance measures; introduce Purchase Cards and PDAs, and implement access to real-time information for service users.
<b>Car Parking</b>	Improved financial and performance information; closing loop with public queries; more information about services to public (leaflets, website etc.); partnership approach to contracts; charging strategy to be developed on findings from Car-Parking Working Group; further satisfaction surveys; use of back of tickets to provide information about Council and other support services.
<b>Laboratory Services</b>	Further satisfaction surveys; introduce performance measures and monitor; improvements to management information systems in line with Function plans; develop strategy for monitoring of materials.
<b>Cycling Development</b>	Satisfaction surveys; introduce performance measures and benchmarks; continue to expand Safe Routes to Schools scheme.
<b>Highways Development Control</b>	To introduce satisfaction surveys of users; to continue to provide more information about the service to Members and the public (leaflets, guidance notes etc.); to develop benchmarks with other Authorities.

## 5 Economic and Community Regeneration

### Supporting the Community and Sustaining the Environment

#### 5.1 Introduction

The Directorate is led by Graham Davey and is responsible for a very wide range of both mandatory and discretionary services including Economic Development Services, Planning Services, Recreation and Countryside Services and Community Planning and Support Services.

The Chairman of the Board, Councillor E M Jones, has lead Member responsibility for the Community Strategy Partnership.

The Board portfolio holders with specific responsibilities for the Directorate's functions are as follows:

Board Member	<i>Portfolio Responsibilities</i>	
<b>Cllr. Gwyn Gwillim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Development (LA 21);</li> <li>• Planning Policy (Unitary Development Plan);</li> <li>• Built Environment;</li> <li>• Recreation Policy and Leisure Services;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid Wales Partnership (with Board Chairman and one other);</li> <li>• Coalfield Communities Campaign.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Gareth Morgan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and Culture;</li> <li>• National Eisteddfod;</li> <li>• Tourism Development and Marketing;</li> <li>• Tourist Information and Attractions;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Grants;</li> <li>• E Government (for the Directorate);</li> <li>• Voluntary Sector Liaison.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. John Thompson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Affairs and Programmes (Powys Regeneration Partnership);</li> <li>• Economic Development and Business Support;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Environment; Countryside Policy and Access;</li> <li>• Powys Energy Agency</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Aims and Objectives

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES	DIRECTORATE OBJECTIVES
<b>Community Leadership and Economic and Community Regeneration</b>	To maximise access to external funding consistent with service goals through proactive innovation.
<b>Community Leadership</b>	<p>To ensure that the Welsh Assembly and other national organisations are aware of Powys priorities.</p> <p>To strengthen the commitment to sustainable development principles in both policy and practical work.</p> <p>To foster the effectiveness of the voluntary sector in all fields of community activity.</p> <p>To provide effective, relevant and responsive information and research services</p>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<p>To strengthen the focus on customer needs and aspirations, developing effective systems of stakeholder consultation and delivering quality services</p> <p>To develop systems for service monitoring and evaluation, founded on an enhanced range of meaningful local performance indicators</p> <p>To implement service improvements founded on good practice, review outcomes and user consultation.</p> <p>To support the development of staff to maximise their contribution and commitment to the work of the Directorate.</p> <p>To develop Planning Services that are policy-led and customer focused.</p> <p>To identify and implement new technology solutions which lead to service improvements or efficiency savings.</p>
<b>Economic and Community Regeneration</b>	To support business formation and growth, the creation of better quality jobs and the expansion of economic sectors with local potential.
<b>Social Inclusion</b>	To maintain and develop recreational, countryside and cultural services responsive to both local and visitor needs, designed to enhance their health and well-being.
<b>Environment</b>	To implement programmes to conserve the County's built heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

### 5.3 Key Performance measures and targets

	Performance Indicator	Achieved 2000/2001	Achieved 2001/2002	Achieved 2002/2003	Target 2003/2004
Business Services	Business Grants Awarded	136	120	118	150
	Private Sector Investment Levered	£589,600	£1.2m	£1.3m	£1.8m
Tourism	Tourism Operators Promoted	214 (2000)	197 (2001)	258 (2002)	220 (2003)
Planning Policy & Conservation	Built Heritage Fund Grants Approved	34	45	70	70
	Public/Private Sector Investment Levered	£218,684	£312,319	£574,650	£430,000
Development Control	% of Planning Applications determined under delegated applications	Not Collected	73%	74.3% (based on ¾'s)	85%
Community Grants	Community Grants of all kinds awarded	291	302	244	200
	Value of Grants	£1.03m	£1.09m	£1.14m	£920,000
	Funding Levered for Grant Aided Projects	£9.2m	£12.8m	£7.8m	£9m
Community Planning and Regeneration	Preparation of Community Strategy	N/A	N/A	N/A	By April 2004
Sports Development	Percentage of Sports Development Grant Applications successful				93%
	Value of Grants Allocated				£57.7k

Other key measures appear in Appendix C.

### 5.4 Directorate Analysis

The Council's Whole Authority Assessment has included Assessments of the Current Performance of individual services, judged against impact on the public, stakeholder satisfaction, service performance, outcome of any recent reviews, understanding of external/internal environment, scale of budget and potential for market/partnership working.

In generic terms these Service Assessments have identified the following key issues:

- Importance of Community Strategy process and integration of sustainable development principles to all work.
- Importance of strategy and policy development.
- Importance of stakeholder involvement and partnership development.
- Need to develop more meaningful performance measures, including measures of stakeholder satisfaction.
- Need for revenue and capital investment to respond to service needs.
- Securing the potential benefits of restructuring.
- Implementation of Best Value Review action plans.
- Completion of some further key Best Value Reviews.

## **5.5 Best Value Reviews**

Best Value Reviews have been completed for three Directorate services: Local Agenda 21, Workspace Management and Development Control. These reviews have already led to significant operational improvements, the more important of which are listed below. Other key improvements to come are identified later in the Directorate's Work Programme.

### **5.5.1 Local Agenda 21 Best Value Review**

- LA21 integrated into new Community Strategy process from April 2002, in order to increase potential for "mainstreaming" sustainable development.
- Council commitment made to pursue Green Dragon environmental audit and management system.
- Consultants commissioned to review future role and integration of LA 21 Round Tables with strategic partnerships.

### **5.5.2 Workspace Management**

- Unified workspace management achieved from April 2002, integrated with other Business Support services.
- Additional capital resources secured for workspace maintenance.
- Dialogue with appropriate bodies concerning potential sale of sites.

### **5.5.3 Development Control**

- Unified management structure for all Planning Services achieved from April 2002.
- Additional development control and medium term enforcement resources secured in 2002.
- Medium term funding secured in 2002 for new Built Heritage Conservation Officers.
- Major further changes approved by Council for implementation from April 2003.
- Independent consultant to undertake Review of all operating procedures, processes and protocols prior to the production of Development Control Procedures Manual, to be completed by December 2003.
- Development of Web-site as part of Council's commitment to conduct business electronically by 2005.

Indicator Description	Actual 2000/01	Actual 2001/02	Wales Average 2001/02	English Average 2001/02	Target 2002/03	Best Estimate 2002/03	Target 2003/04
<b>The number of advertised departures from the adopted development plan approved by the Authority as a percentage of total permissions granted.</b>	1.30%	1.9%		1.12%	1%	1.50%	<2%
<p>The majority of 'Departure' applications are for new dwellings in the countryside including farm worker dwellings, local needs dwellings and conversion of redundant buildings to form new dwellings. Powys advertises all such applications as 'Departures' upon receipt of application; some of these applications following detailed examination are subsequently approved in line with policy but nevertheless still need to be recorded in Welsh Assembly statistical returns. The returns may not therefore be totally representative of actual 'performance'.</p>							
<b>Percentage of total applications determined within 8 weeks.</b>	71.10%	61%		66%	71%	69.20%	70.00%
<p>There has been an increase of over 6% in the number of applications from the last year. This increase in workload coincided with both restructuring and a major Best Value Review of development control. In addition, the Service failed to recruit staff and vacancies continue to place pressure on resources. Notwithstanding, the Council has agreed to increase the scope of officer delegation in line with Government recommendations, which is anticipated will achieve improvements in the speed of application determination.</p>							

## 5.6 IEG Strategy (Implementing Electronic Government)

The Directorate has embraced the development of electronic interface with its clients where that is appropriate and in the right format :

- **Transactions** – developing credit systems for cashless transactions at points of sale (TICs, leisure centres, tourist attractions) and ticketing systems to monitor and improve services;
- **Business** in partnership to develop broad band services for all business in Powys and developing information exchange;
- **Community** aiding telecentres to facilitate community information and development of life long learning, seeking electronic interaction e.g. planning applications via the web;
- **Information** developing integrated information systems – this year having secured funds for the development of a single address system for the whole County.

The Directorate will seek to use electronic means of transaction and exchange where it will enhance and improve communication and where it will offer the opportunity to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of standards and targets.

## **5.7 Conclusions of Analysis**

Nine key themes or messages for the Directorate emerge from the analysis.

### **5.7.1 Flexibility**

There is a limit to which services can be planned. Some factors identified in the analysis are beyond the Council's control or influence. We cannot anticipate all changes. There is an essential need for the Directorate to retain the ability to respond flexibly to changing circumstances.

### **5.7.2 Innovation**

Flexibility is also essential, in order to allow the Directorate to be proactive and innovative, to seek out good practice and to respond to new opportunities providing they reflect Council priorities.

### **5.7.3 External Influence**

Powys is by far the largest rural authority in Wales and may be more able than some to think and operate strategically. The Directorate should play its full part in seeking to influence the Welsh Assembly, its agencies and other national and regional organisations on important issues relevant to its services.

### **5.7.4 Community Leadership**

The Directorate has a leading role in the Council's new duty to prepare an effective Community Strategy that promotes the economic, social and environmental well-being of the County's communities. There is a need for this and other work to mainstream the principles of sustainability and to respond to rising community aspirations using effective partnership working and making the most of the voluntary sector.

### **5.7.5 Vision and Priorities**

The Community Strategy process and the Corporate Plan Review provide a transformational opportunity for the Council to re-define its vision and priorities. The Directorate has such wide ranging functions that it should contribute actively to this work.

### **5.7.6 Customer Focus**

The Directorate is building its focus on customer needs. Recent progress on business planning and performance measurement needs to be refined, to quantify service quality and stakeholder satisfaction. Performance management needs to be valued as an essential foundation for service improvement and the recognition of each service's value.

### **5.7.7 Finance**

Financial constraints sadly limit the Directorate's ability to improve existing services, introduce new services and maintain or develop its property assets.

There is a continuing commitment to access external funds, but this can bend Council priorities and has led to a significant dependence on short-term funding, notably Performance Incentive Grant. A strategic and challenging approach to asset management is also necessary.

### **5.7.8 Human Resources**

The Directorate's services and their reputation rely on the professionalism, commitment, loyalty and motivation of our staff. The outcome of the Whole Authority Assessment has underscored the need to develop a Human Resources Strategy and the Directorate should contribute actively to such work.

### **5.7.9 Electronic Government**

The County's rurality places a heavy cost burden on the Directorate. It is keen to play a full part in developing the potential of information and communications technology to help improve access to services.

## **5.8 DIRECTORATE STRATEGY: WORK PROGRAMME**

### **KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

#### **5.8.1 Economic Development Services**

- Completion of Tourist Information Services Best Value Review and its consideration by Members as an input to 2004/05 budget and service planning.
- Develop the WTB Tourism Growth Area programmes.
- Develop Business Support Services in new contracts/partnerships with WDA and ELWa.
- Seek to secure continued external funding for Powys Business Development Grant schemes.
- Review Workspace provision and their asset management. £100,000 allocated for 2003/04 and 2004/05.
- Develop the new Powys Food Links and Glasu LEADER+ programmes

#### **5.8.2 Planning Services**

- Implement key outcomes of the Development Control Best Value Review, including:
  - Consistent Neighbour Notification policy.
  - Managed Public Speaking rights at Planning Committees.
  - Extended Officer Delegation.

- Establishment of County Planning Committee.
- Member development for Planning Committees.
- Publication of Planning Guides, at a cost of £1,000 by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003.
- Develop enforcement policy and monitoring.
- Complete consultation on Draft Unitary Development Plan and prepare statutory deposit version.
- Establish Llandrindod Wells Townscape Heritage Initiative subject to Heritage Lottery Fund approval.
- Commence electronic submission and handling of Building Control applications.

#### **5.8.2.1 Recreation and Countryside Services**

- Continue implementation of the Council's Recreation and Leisure Strategy, to identify and pursue areas of operational improvement.
- Pursue effective implementation of the Capital Programme.
- Continue to seek new external funding opportunities to improve the Directorate's assets and services.
- Implement the new Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme.
- Review Rights of Way maintenance procedures and prepare Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Establish a new Countryside Access team and develop Local Access Fora.
- Review Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Complete Arts Strategy and Museum Strategy, by September 2003
- Complete Concurrent Functions Best Value Review.

#### **5.8.3 Community Planning and Support Services**

- Development of the Powys Community Strategy Partnership and fifteen Local Area Fora, to progress work effectively on a Powys Community Strategy that incorporates the principles of sustainability.
- Continue to pursue external funding for community regeneration.
- Re-launch the Powys Voluntary Sector Liaison Group and further develop the contribution of the voluntary sector to community capacity building.
- Complete Grants to the Voluntary Sector Best Value Review.
- Develop Directorate Website in collaboration with corporate IT.
- Disseminate and analyse Census 2001 data.
- Pursue development of the corporate Local Land and Property Gazetteer.

#### **5.8.4 General**

- Continue to refine the Directorate's Performance Management, identifying further meaningful performance indicators that measure service economy and quality, and pursuing benchmarking opportunities where possible.
- Develop methods for determining stakeholder satisfaction.
- Address priority staffing issues impacting on recruitment, retention and development.

## 5.9 Risk Assessment – Services

### Area for Improvement 2003/04

Service	Action
<b>Grants to the Voluntary Sector</b>	Complete Best Value Service Review; Undertake stakeholder satisfaction assessment;
<b>Tourism Development &amp; Marketing</b>	Develop and implement sustainable tourism strategy; Instigate regular (annual) stakeholder satisfaction surveys; Prepare 2 <sup>nd</sup> round Objective 2 bid to maximise funding for marketing and product development.
<b>Tourist Information</b>	Complete and implement Best Value Service Review.
<b>Arts &amp; Culture, Museums &amp; Theatres</b>	Develop Arts Strategy; Develop Museums Strategy.
<b>Community Strategy</b>	Monitoring of the Community Strategy process Establish PIs; Target reviews.
<b>Concurrent Functions</b>	Complete Best Value Service Review
<b>Sports &amp; Recreational Facilities &amp; Sports Development</b>	Continue to implement improvements arising from performance management process.
<b>Countryside Services including Commons Registration &amp; Rights of Way</b>	Introduce business planning structure to clarify aims of service, assess stakeholder views and develop PI's.
<b>European Affairs Unit</b>	Conduct internal review, including stakeholder satisfaction, and raising public awareness of European policies and programmes.
<b>Building Control</b>	Achieve ISO 9001-2000; Applications on-line.
<b>Economic Development, Business &amp; Environmental Grant Schemes</b>	Measure stakeholder satisfaction: dependent on result, consider need for full review.
<b>Planning Policy &amp; Conservation</b>	Undertake consultation on draft Unitary Development Plan.
<b>Research, Graphic &amp; Information Services</b>	Institute survey of customer views; Broaden ability to improve information management in accordance with IEG – linking databases to National Land and Property Gazetteer.

## 6 Community Services

### High Quality Locally Accessible Services

#### 6.1 Introduction

The Directorate is led by Brendan Cullinane and includes public protection, public and private sector housing and adult social care services. The Directorate also manages the interface between the Council and the Health Service.

#### 6.2 Board Members

The portfolio holders with specific responsibilities for the Directorate's functions are as follows :

Board Member	<i>Portfolio responsibilities</i>	
<b>Cllr. Graham Brown Llandrinio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Health Alliance;</li> <li>• E-Government;</li> <li>• Environmental Health;</li> <li>• Trading Standards;</li> <li>• Emergency Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety;</li> <li>• Police liaison;</li> <li>• Crime and disorder – anti-social behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Michael Jones Old Radnor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairman of the Board, with no specific portfolio responsibility</li> </ul>	
<b>Cllr. Chris Mann St John</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domiciliary and residential care of the elderly;</li> <li>• Mental Health;</li> <li>• Learning disability;</li> <li>• Physical disability;</li> <li>• Management of Local Authority properties;</li> <li>• Tenant participation;</li> <li>• Links with social landlords;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector housing including housing repair / renewal;</li> <li>• Housing strategy;</li> <li>• Social inclusion;</li> <li>• Anti-poverty;</li> <li>• Voluntary sector;</li> <li>• Sustainable rural communities.</li> </ul>

Under the leadership of the Group Director, Community Services, there are three Heads of Function. The Head of Social Care also holds the statutory post of Director of Social Services.

Within these three functions:

**6.2.1** Public protection encompasses the following services:

- Environmental Health;
- Trading Standards;
- Community Safety;
- Emergency Planning.

**6.2.2** Housing encompasses the following services:

- Public Sector Housing management and maintenance;
- Homelessness and supported housing;
- Housing advice and information;
- Development of new projects in partnership with Housing Associations;
- Housing Strategy development.

**6.2.3** Social care encompasses services for the following:

- Older and Disabled People;
- People with mental illness and substance misuse;
- People with learning disabilities;
- Care Management and assessment services;
- The approved Social Work Service;
- Protection of vulnerable adults from abuse.

In addition to their role as service commissioners, Social Care and Housing Services both include 'provider' units within their functions: provision of the housing management and maintenance service within a ring fenced Housing Revenue Account; and non-residential social care services, such as domiciliary care and day centres. Social Care Services also manage the out-of-hours emergency service for children and adults. A significant proportion of social care services are provided by a range of external providers including residential and nursing home provision. Public Protection Services cover a wide range of regulatory services, the consistent and effective delivery of which have significant implications for public health and safety.

### 6.3 Aims and Objectives

Corporate objectives	Directorate objectives
<b>Community leadership</b>	<p>To ensure, by working closely with local communities, that good quality, affordable and if necessary supported housing is provided where it is needed.</p> <p>In the event of a major incident or disaster, to provide a service, in conjunction with other agencies, to assist the residents of Powys to return to normality as quickly as possible.</p> <p>To protect and promote public health and safety and enhance environmental conditions in the county.</p> <p>To work in partnership with others with a view to reducing crime and disorder levels across the County.</p>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<p>To engage staff and service users in setting and monitoring service standards, and produce clear and well written information based on that consultation.</p> <p>To contribute to the provision of responsive, reliable, accessible and equitable services across Powys.</p> <p>To ensure that the statutory and regulatory functions for which the Directorate is responsible are carried out efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>To ensure service delivery is based on an assessment of each individual's needs and be provided as locally as possible.</p> <p>To safeguard and protect vulnerable people.</p> <p>To ensure services are delivered by staff, maintaining the highest levels of personal and professional integrity.</p> <p>Provide good quality information for all service areas.</p>
<b>Social inclusion</b>	<p>To maximise household income, improving access to debt advice, welfare benefit-take-up and introducing fairer charging.</p>

Corporate objectives	Directorate objectives
	<p>To ensure good quality support services are available for carers to meet their needs.</p> <p>Ensure that carers needs are identified and that carers have a voice in the planning and delivery of services.</p> <p>Increasing individual and community access to a wide range of consumer information and advice.</p> <p>To enable older and disabled people to retain their independence for as long as possible, through support services and suitable adaptations.</p> <p>To support better health and well-being.</p>
<b>Economic and community regeneration</b>	<p>To continue to work towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for local authority housing stock by 2012.</p> <p>To develop and implement a Housing Renewal Strategy in order to improve the condition of the private sector housing stock in Powys.</p> <p>To support independent care providers to maximise their business opportunities and maintain capacity in the care market.</p>
<b>Enhance the living environment</b>	<p>To protect public health and improve the quality of the environment, both rural and urban.</p>

#### 6.4 Key performance measures and targets

Ref	Description	Actual 2001/02	Probabl 2002/03	Target 2003/04	Target 2004/05
NAW PI 4.2	Average SAP rating of BV local authority owned homes.	51.06	52.19	58	60
NAW PI 4.14	Number of homeless households placed by local authorities in temporary housing for more than six months.	N/A	2	0	0
NAW PI 4.15	Average rent lost per tenant through dwellings being left vacant during the financial year.	N/A	£32.26	£30.00	£29.00

Ref	Description	Actual 2001/02	Probable 2002/03	Target 2003/04	Target 2004/05
NAW PI 8.1a	% of food premises inspections that should have been carried out that were carried out for High Risk Premises.	83%	79%	80%	85%
NAW PI 8.1b	% of food premises inspections that should have been carried out that were carried out for other premises.	60%	78%	50%	50%
NAW PI 3.6a	Cost of providing social services to adults by reference to gross cost per week for residential and nursing home care.	Changed Definition	£518.28	£520.00	£530
NAW PI 3.6b	Cost of providing social services to adults by reference to gross cost per week for home care.	Changed Definition	£125.26	£125.00	£130
NAW PI 3.7 (PIG)	The rate of older people (aged 65 or over) helped to live at home per 1,000 population aged 65 or over.	106.34	105	90	90
NAW PI 3.8 (PIG)	The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over.	20.42	20.16	19	19
NAW PI 3.11	The number of nights respite care provided or funded by the Authority per 1,000 population aged 18 or over.	87.85	85.32	90	90
NAW PI 3.13 (PA 1) (PIG)	The number of people aged 65 or over whom the Authority supports in residential care homes or nursing homes per 1,000 population aged 65 or over.	21.49	16.72	20.00	20
NAW PI 3.14 (PA 2) (PIG)	The number of adults aged under 65 whom the authority helps to live at home per 1,000 adults aged under 65.				
	a) Physical or sensory disabled;	a) 2.40	a) 2.40	a) 1.75	a) 1.75
	b) People with learning disabilities;	b) 4.59	b) 4.70	b) 4.50	b) 4.50
	c) People with mental health problems.	c) 0.72	c) 0.75	c) 0.95	c) 0.95

## 6.5 Directorate Analysis

The following factors are regarded as critical or influencing in terms of the work of the Directorate over the next three years.

### Whole Authority Assessment

Within the framework of the Wales Improvement Programme, the Community Services Directorate has assessed key areas of service delivery, detailed in the Service Profiles included with the Group and Function Business Plans. These have been prioritised because of their importance in meeting statutory responsibilities, significance to service users and customers and their contribution to overall performance.

Key issues arising from these Reviews vary between functions. For example, Housing and Social Care Services have longer term contact with many of their external stakeholders and therefore find it easier to measure service user satisfaction. This is not the case in Public Protection Services where more effective stakeholder consultation needs to be developed. Difficulties in collecting statutory performance indicators remain in some areas, although there is improved understanding and use of information technology and development of local PIs.

In terms of the part the Directorate can play in responding to corporate priorities arising from the Whole Authority Assessment, the following are important:

#### 6.5.1 Internal Communication

Internal communication – in all three functions, staff are highly dispersed, working out of not only ‘shire’ offices but also smaller area offices. This creates particular challenges for effective two-way communication and also for release of staff for training events. The Improvement Plan highlights more written guidance and procedures for staff, and a commitment to more training in areas where staff ‘buy in’ is crucial, for example, performance management and mainstreaming equalities.

**TARGET:**

The Directorate Communication Strategy will incorporate an increased range and quality of written procedures and process maps for staff as an aid to provision of quality services. This will be developed in line with the Corporate Communication Strategy.

#### 6.5.2 External Communication

External communication - the commitment to improved links with service users and clearer service standards are common throughout the Directorate and are part of the Improvement Plan. The development of a Directorate website will also assist better communication and attract a wider range of service user to contribute to service development. Social Care Services engage with service users through a range of multi-disciplinary planning groups. These groups will be developed and will form the basis of a public engagement strategy.

**TARGET:**

Publicise provision of a range of advice services through various means of service delivery and in partnership with other agencies. Develop Directorate website by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

### 6.5.3 Human Resource Issues

Human resource issues – the Directorate accepts that the provision of quality services is dependent on there being a well-trained and motivated workforce able to deliver the wide range of services required by service users and their carers. In recent years, new initiatives and change in patterns of service delivery have meant that there have been increasing concerns about recruitment and retention of staff at all levels. Staff training and human resource strategies are being developed within the Directorate, and all three services have signed up to achieve ‘Investors in People’ by March, 2005.

The Trading Standards section was awarded IIP status in 1996 and have recently been informed that they have retained the status.

Social Care Services are using guidance issued by the Social Services Inspectorate Wales to develop a formal Human Resource Plan.

**TARGET:**

Development of a Human Resources Strategy to address recruitment, retention and other problems such as higher than average levels of sick leave. A working party consisting of Directorate and Corporate personnel has commenced this work and liaising with WAG. Service training plans also assist in meeting this aim, as does Investors in People. Draft Strategy to be complete by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003

### 6.5.4 Performance Management

Performance management – resources for the development of performance management and monitoring were augmented during the restructuring in April, 2002 but remain stretched across the Directorate, and particularly in Public Protection Services which has no dedicated staff resource. Welsh Assembly Government have made a special grant available to all local authorities in Wales as part of the Social Services Performance Management framework. This money will be used to fund a new care management and information database. Extensive work is being undertaken with nine other Welsh authorities to standardise and improve data collection to comply with Welsh Assembly Government performance requirements. A range of local performance indicators are also being developed.

**TARGET:**

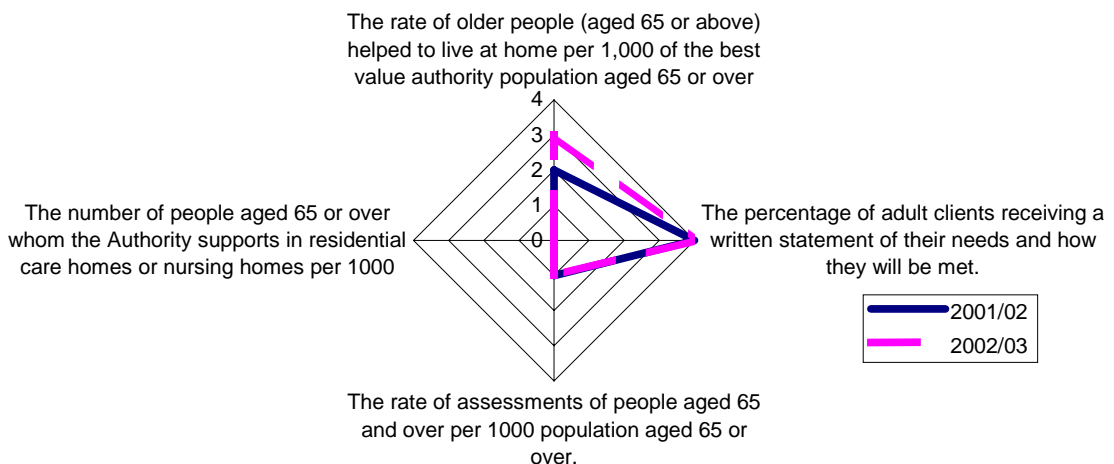
Develop more local performance indicators which are relevant and informative, by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003

### 6.5.5 Community strategy/partnerships/cross boundary working

Community strategy/partnerships/cross boundary working – a range of issues to do with more effective joint working internally and with external agencies arose during Whole Authority Analysis. The Directorate aims to maximise opportunities for sharing core business and the proposals for the new warden service and structuring Supporting People are both examples of this commitment. The Directorate will be closely involved with the new Local Health Board and the development of joint initiatives. Within the Social Care function several partnerships and joint working arrangements are in existence with both the Health Service, voluntary and not-for-profit sector.

**TARGET:**  
Continue mainstreaming Community Safety into all the services provided by the County Council.

**Figure 6: Adult Social Services**



The above chart depicts comparative performance for Powys against Welsh Authorities on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 reflects a level below the lower quartile, 2 equals average performance and a score of 4 indicates performance above the top quartile, i.e. best performing.

During the financial year 2002/3 the Authority has undertaken the transfer of service provision information from manual records to the Social Services Information Database (SSID). This process is in its infancy and it has therefore been unable to rely fully on the accuracy of the figures submitted for the indicator; “The rate of older people helped to live at home”. Work is being done to validate the relevant information on SSID as this indicator's previous figures have been submitted on the basis of manually collected data.

However, using an average figure it is possible to discern an improvement in performance as shown above.

The number of people aged 65 or over whom the Authority supports in residential care homes or nursing homes is shown to be in the lower quarter in comparison to Welsh Authorities. This is based on a fewer number per 1000 being supported in this way in Powys. However, it is Government policy to promote care for people within their own homes and new schemes within the County such as the re-ablement project are proving to reduce dependency.

The Authority will be the subject of a Joint Review during 2004/05 as part of an ongoing five year programme.

## 6.6 Best Value Reviews

Thirteen Best Value Reviews have been undertaken within the Directorate since the introduction of Best Value and there are a number of Action Plans arising from these reviews. Progress with these are reflected in more detail in the Group and Function Business Plans and summarised in the Areas for Improvement later in the Directorate Plan. The nature and outcome of the reviews is as follows:

### 6.6.1 Rent collection and arrears recovery

This review considered the Council's arrangements for collecting rents and the recovery of areas from tenants and former tenants :

*A fair service with promising prospects for improvements*

#### **Improvements**

The review identified a desire to review the structure of the rent collection service and this will be considered in conjunction with the work being undertaken with the review of the Council's Area Offices.

The service will continue with the implementation of the Action Plan and consideration of any implications of reductions in performance. One anticipated outcome of ongoing monitoring is that more specialist management of rent arrears may be necessary for certain types of arrears.

### 6.6.2 Housing renovation grants

This review looks at the way in which grants for housing sector housing renovations are administered and distributed.

*A fair service with promising prospects for improvements*

#### **Improvements:**

- 1.) Implement the Renovation Grants Best Value Action Plan which is on going.
- 2.) Widen consultation base to include applicants who 'drop out' of the system.
- 3.) Develop a new Housing Renewal Policy by July 2003.
- 4.) Develop the Directorates Web Site to provide information, consultation and service improvement in respect of Renovation Grants.

The points based prioritisation system is now working well, with an equitable service being provided across the County, and the policy and procedures are

reviewed at regular team meetings. The new Housing Renewal Strategy is complete and adopted by the Council.

The service will undertake a stock condition survey during 2003/04 in partnership with the Powys Health Board.

### **6.6.3 Building maintenance (cross cutting)**

*A fair service with promising prospects for improvements*

The review determined that improvements could be achieved through :

- The establishing of an 0845 local call number for out of hours housing maintenance service. This has been completed and is being publicised to tenants in Newsletter in May 2003;
- The setting up repairs surgeries as part of all Tenant Panel meetings, following pilot in Montgomeryshire. Further action as a result of these meetings is to develop a proforma to record and facilitate monitoring of all repairs problems/ complaints arising from these surgeries, to provide another measure of stakeholder satisfaction for the Whole Authority Assessment. This will be finalised by end of June 2003.
- The introduction of a target of 5 working days for completion of any repairs which will hold up re-occupation of dwelling. This is to be included in new voids standards, with separate budgets and monitoring reports created. The timescale for the introduction of this was by April 2003. The current situation is that the New Voids standard is being consulted on, it went to Tenant Liaison Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> May and is expected to be complete by July 2003.
- The introduction of an appointment system for housing tenants. A pilot scheme was undertaken in Newtown, which finished in January 2003. However take up was small. A report will be made to Committee.

The service will continue with the Action Plan arising from the review and inspection, and utilise new staffing resources (additional maintenance officers to manage two teams and contribute new skills to those teams). Maintain excellent position in terms of condition of local authority housing stock within Wales and aim to achieve WHQS by 2012.

### **6.6.4 Community safety**

*A fair service with promising prospects for improvements*

#### **Improvements**

Continue implementation of the Community Safety Best Value Action Plan. A Community Safety Officer has been appointed and undertaken a series of workshops with Members and Officers across the County to raise awareness. Senior Link Officers from each Directorate have been nominated. Domestic violence alarm telephones purchased out of Dyfed Powys Police funding.

### **6.6.5 Homelessness and housing advice**

Not inspected

#### **Improvements**

Continue to implement the BV Action Plan in advance of any inspection, and monitor extent to which increased homelessness acceptances is straining staff resources.

The extent and nature of hostel accommodation is also a crucial issue in terms of temporary housing and use of Bed and Breakfast is also being monitored.

*Action - Introduce dedicated Homelessness Officers in Montgomery and Brecknock & Radnor*

These were introduced as part of restructuring.

*Action - Review and standardise temporary accommodation charges and identify scope to maximise transitional housing benefit.*

This was time-scaled to be completed by September 2002. The current situation is that staff resources are not available for this due to huge increase in homelessness. It is being reported to Board, Community Services and Personnel May 2003 to agree temporary post of Homelessness Accommodation Manager to deal with this and a number of other tasks.

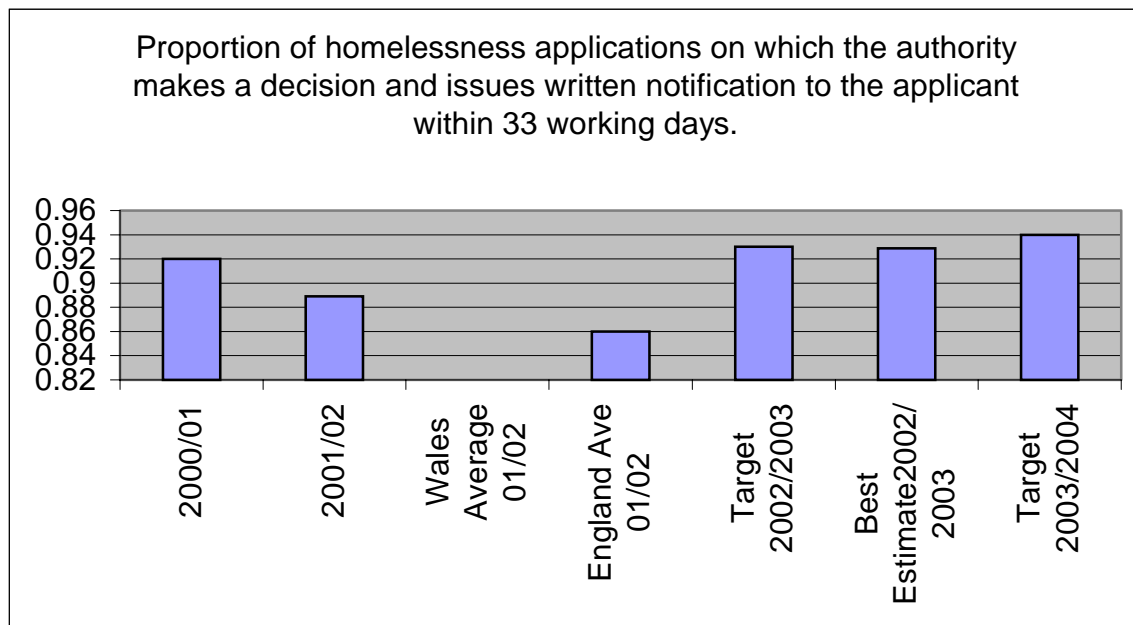
*Action - Continue Customer Satisfaction Survey and consider how this may be included in the CLS "Quality Mark" process.*

Same as above except it was time-scaled to be completed by April 2002.

*Action - Investigate scope for provision of dedicated staff resources for development of customer care services.*

This was time-scaled to be completed by March 2003. The current situation is that it is part of a report on Area Office Review going to Council Board in June 2003.

**Figure 7: Homelessness Applications Processed**



An increase of 14% in homelessness representation during the year has slightly effected performance, although the end of year target has been met.

#### **6.6.6 Sheltered housing**

*Not inspected to date*

##### **Improvements**

The changes prompted by both the Review and the new Supporting People regime are underway and the service will be more flexible, based on individual needs and preferences, and subject to a charge for new service users deemed able to pay. By the time the BV Review is inspected, it is likely that the service will be differently provided and managed.

The action plan was mainly dependant on an external consultation being carried out. The consultants report was completed in February and their report and our recommendations approved by Board in March 2003. This led to the restructuring of the warden service.

#### **6.6.7 Cemeteries**

*Not inspected to date*

##### **Improvements**

Implement the Cemeteries Best Value Action Plan which is on going. Improvements to the service have included the standardising of procedures across the County as a first step.

#### **6.6.8 Emergency planning**

*Awaiting final approval by Performance Improvement Panel*

##### **Improvements**

Duty Room software requires updating to provide improved analysis of calls etc. Local Emergency Planning Performance Indicators measured in Wales from April 2003.

Develop the Directorate Web Site to provide information, consultation, and service improvement in respect of Emergency Planning.

#### **6.6.9 Day and employment services for people with learning disabilities**

*A good service with promising prospects for improvements*

##### **Improvements**

To continue to implement the 22 recommendations that were identified in the Best Value Review of Day and Employment Services for People with Learning Disabilities. The remaining recommendations will be concluded as appropriate and include transition arrangements; income; self-advocacy and review of the new management structure

##### *Actions –*

- *Inconsistency in the implementation of existing income arrangements to be discussed with service users through self advocacy facilitator groups;*
- *Following service users feedback new policy to be developed;*
- *Draft policy to go out to consultation with service users and staff;*
- *Revise policy to Multi Agency Joint Planning Group;*
- *Agreed policy to be presented to Committee*

Arrangements made for Day Service Managers to consult with service users in all areas that provide services which earn income. Proposals to be drafted by each group and submitted to PSM (LD) to enable policy decision to be made.

Actions –

- *To identify potential further service users for the ‘First Steps to Work’.*;
- *To identify funding for additional Employment Placement Officer hours to support project on a long term basis.*

No further action has been taken on this project. Coleg Powys remain unable to meet the funding criteria.

#### **6.6.10 Social Services out of hours emergency service**

*A fair service with promising prospects for improvements*

##### **Improvements**

There is only one remaining action to implement from the recommendations of the Best Value Review of Day and Emergency Services, this will be completed shortly and involves a customer satisfaction survey. Since the implementation of the policy and procedure guidance, we have been collating service specific data which will be analysed in June 2003. The information will be used to make key strategic decisions relating to how the service will be structured in the future. The work is being undertaken in conjunction with staff representatives and full time union officials.

#### **6.6.11 Day centres for older and disabled people**

*A fair service with promising prospects for improvements*

##### **Improvements**

Continue the implementation of recommendations from the Best Value Review of Day Centres for Older People. The focus in the forthcoming year will include reviewing care management paperwork to include the application and assessment forms; providing clearer information about availability of services for stakeholders to include published brochures; redesign the specification for day centres in line with the modernisation agenda; improve the training profile of Day Centre Managers to ensure they meet the minimum requirements of the Care Council in terms of the Qualification Framework

*Action - Standards will be developed, involving service users and other stakeholders, and drawing on current good practice guidance and this will inform a revised service specification.*

This has been achieved, draft will be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.

*Action - Capacity will be reviewed and the system for applications will be revised.*

Capacity figures possible and actual identified. Reasons for not making possible sessions analysed and are linked closely with high age and dependency levels of service users. Non-attendance of four weeks or more - agreement with care management that these places will be reviewed.

*Action - The day service needs of people with high dependency needs will reviewed.*

This is dependant on the Care Management Review, which has been delayed.

*Action - The day service needs of people who are elderly mentally infirm will be considered within the Best Value review of Care Management.*

The Needs of EMI service users referred to EMI multi-agency planning group.

*Action - Appropriate models of day support for younger disabled people whose needs are not currently being met will be established and provision increased, working in partnership with other agencies.*

This is dependant on the Care Management Review which has been delayed.

*Action - Systems for improving feedback to carers will be developed, in consultation with carers.*

A Staff survey questionnaire has been agreed.

#### **6.6.12 Equipment and adaptation**

*A good service with promising prospects for improvements*

##### **Improvements**

We are currently implementing the recommendations of the Best Value Review of equipment and adaptations. There is a working group set up with Senior Occupational Therapists (OT) from Health and Social Care, who, in the first instance will be looking at pooled budgets; recycling equipment; developing a catalogue of equipment for the public; standardising equipment and bulk purchasing.

*Action - Joint management of occupational therapy service with Powys Health Care NHS Trust to be considered.*

Discussions are due to commence on this on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2003 at the Health and Social Care Partnership meeting.

*Action - A policy and procedure document entry should be written specifying the advice to be given to users about different ways to obtain equipment and adaptations services.*

The policy and procedure document entry has been done, it just needs approval and then distributed to all staff for inclusion in the policy and procedure manual. Should be able to do this by August 2003.

*Action - The Directorate will explore, together with Health colleagues, ways of increasing opportunities for people with disabilities to try out equipment.*

The feasibility study has been carried out by one of our OT's in conjunction with the Health OT. The completed document will go to the equipment group that meets on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2003 for discussion.

*Action - The Directorate will investigate the bulk purchase of equipment in partnership with Powys Health Care NHS Trust.*

A joint meeting with Health Care NHS Trust has been arranged in July to discuss this.

### 6.6.13 Domiciliary care services

*Nearing completion*

#### **Improvements**

We are currently undertaking a Best Value Review of Domiciliary Care and the key recommendations that result from the plan will form the Action Plan for the service.

## 6.7 Conclusions of analysis

Services provided by the Directorate have traditionally been subject to a wide range of performance indicators. These show generally good levels of performance and the capacity to improve, and demonstrate relatively good, positive contact with its stakeholders. The Social Services Inspectorate Wales have recently completed the first of what will be an annual performance review which has been incorporated into the Whole Authority Analysis. The Best Value Framework along with a number of externally driven pressures have clarified the following priorities for Best Value and Whole Authority Analysis for the next 5 years:

- Communication;
- Efficient and effective delivery of statutory and discretionary services;
- Increase focus on staff;
- Improve performance management and monitoring;
- Contribute to improved community safety;
- Enable people to maintain their independence and remain part of the community;
- Improve strategic and operational planning of services across the Directorate.

## 6.8 Risk Assessment – Services

### Area for Improvement 2003/04

Service	Action
<b>Services for people with sensory impairment</b>	The Directorate will be implementing the "Best Practice Standards - Social Services Deaf and Hard of Hearing People". To implement this, the Directorate will need to undergo a mapping and gapping exercise to measure where the Directorate is, in terms of the standards. An action plan will then be produced to document how we will meet any standards that we are not currently meeting. The exercise will include consultation with users, carers and user representatives.

Service	Work Programme
<b>Residential Care for Older People &amp; People with Disabilities</b>	Produce joint 5 year commissioning strategy with LHB; develop independent sector forum; commission feasibility study for extra care housing scheme in North Powys; develop/commission nursing home capacity in Machynlleth; develop pooled budget for purchasing residential and nursing care with LHB.
<b>Meals on Wheels</b>	Undertake Best Value Review of the Meals on Wheels Service in Sept/Oct 2003. The two drivers for this are to ensure we are receiving value for money services and also there are health and safety concerns that need to be examined.
<b>Complaints Service</b>	The complaints service is robust and its structure is defined by statute. We are looking to develop a Directorate Complaints policy; establishing some performance evaluation criteria; and primarily, developing local mechanisms for reporting complaints. We are also looking to implement the recommendations as identified by the new guidelines "Listening to People".
<b>Carers Support</b>	Create carers joint planning and commissioning Group; implement recommendations of consultants report concerning the development of unified Powys Carers Support Service; Agencies to commit to the Powys Carers Strategy and reflect this in their strategic plans; Agencies to introduce mechanism for consulting carers representatives when preparing strategic plans; agencies to ensure management arrangements are in place to implement Powys Carers Strategy; provide targeted publicity and information; increase numbers of carers assessments; obtain regular feedback from carers on assessment practice; review social service assessment form to more adequately identify carers needs; provide training for front line staff on a multi-agency basis on carers assessments; develop and maintain up to date information pack available in a range of media, signposting carers to sources of information and support.
<b>Care management including CMHT</b>	Implement new care management procedures; develop and implement audit tool for care management teams; review skill mix of teams; improve performance of reviews from 64% to 90%; review access points and intake arrangements; continue plans to co-locate care managers and health staff; migrate to new performance management system. Whole system review of mental health services with LHB; implement care management action plan for community mental health teams.

Service	Action
<b>Accommodation for People with Learning Difficulties</b>	<p>The two main drivers for this are to assess whether the provision offered is diverse enough to meet the needs of individuals and to identify the different sources of funding, examining the cost differentials across the schemes.</p>
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Trading Standards</b>	<p>Develop the Community Services Website to provide information, consultation and service improvement in respect of Environmental Health and Trading Standards services.</p> <p>Upgrade the Public Protection Software system (MVM) in August 2003 to improve the efficiency of the system.</p> <p>Address backlog of inspections in all areas.</p> <p>Revisit and reintroduce the Local Business.</p> <p>Partnerships and the Home Authority process.</p> <p>Public Protection to achieve Investors in People Standard by September 2003.</p> <p>Further develop stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>Further develop and measure local Performance indicators to be included in the Service Delivery Plans.</p> <p>Implement the action plan for improving performance in respect of BVPI166.</p>
<b>Housing Tenant Participation</b>	<p>The main action is to continue to develop the Tenants Compact and the capacity of the Tenant Liaison Committee. The development of Powys wide service standards will be undertaken with tenant involvement and there are a range of commitments from BV action plans to test specific consultation issues eg consultation on improvements</p>
<b>Housing Tenancy &amp; Housing Estate Management/ Housing Allocations, Transfers &amp; Voids</b>	<p>A service review covering lettings, voids, tenancy &amp; estate management will be undertaken during 2003/4, with external involvement and in accordance with the new service review framework. Notwithstanding such a review, the service is already working on service improvements in the following areas: Void standards, clear service standards for customers in respect of voids and allocations, Anti social behaviour protocols (through Community Safety Panel), Formal framework of the Tenants Compact as way of involving tenants in levels of service and standards of provision.</p>

## 7 Corporate Support Services

### Supporting the Whole Authority

#### 7.1 Introduction:

Corporate support is provided by the Chief Executive's Department, led by Jacky Tonge; Scrutiny and Democratic Services, led by Roger Eagle; and Corporate Services Directorate, led by Tony Thomas. The three main service blocks within the Corporate Services Directorate are Finance and Corporate Property, Legal Services, and Personnel and Payroll.

#### 7.2 Board Members

The Board Members with specific Portfolio responsibilities for Corporate Services functions are as follows :

Board Member	Portfolio Responsibilities	
<b>Cllr. Mrs Marilyn Roberts</b> St David Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel, Payroll and Health &amp; Safety;</li> <li>• Policy and Performance Management;</li> <li>• Central Services;</li> <li>• Legal Services;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Representation and Member Training;</li> <li>• Best Value (Cross Cutting);</li> <li>• Equal Opportunities (Cross Cutting).</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Jack Evans</b> Llandysilio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Buildings;</li> <li>• Asset Management;</li> <li>• Office Accommodation;</li> <li>• ICT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-Government;</li> <li>• Procurement;</li> <li>• Data Protection.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr. Gwilym Vaughan</b> Glantwymyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance Services;</li> <li>• Benefits payments and administration;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Tax collection;</li> <li>• Scrutiny Budget;</li> <li>• Welsh Language Scheme (Cross cutting linked with Education)</li> </ul>

### 7.3 Aims and Objectives

Corporate Objectives:	Directorate Objectives
Community Leadership	<p>Provide administrative, legal and financial advice to the Council and its Elected Members;</p> <p>Develop corporate policies for consideration;</p> <p>Co-ordinate arrangements for meetings between the Council and Community Councils and other local agencies.</p>
Ensure that services are reliable, accessible and provided equitably across Powys.	<p>Ensure that the necessary finance, property and personnel are provided efficiently, effectively and economically for service delivery;</p> <p>Assist the Council to exploit the use of Information Communication Technology in the provision of services;</p> <p>Through Central Procurement support ensure that goods and services for service delivery are acquired under the most advantageous terms in accordance with UK and EC laws.</p>
Set clear standards for service delivery and ensure that monitoring and reporting mechanisms are effective.	<p>Improve communications, both within and external to the Council, including performance information and stakeholder satisfaction;</p> <p>Support the identification of improvements through effective performance management systems;</p> <p>Provide accountability both internally and externally.</p>
Ensure that Powys is served by a motivated and well-trained workforce	<p>Ensure that staff are paid promptly and correctly;</p> <p>Develop the Corporate Human Resources Strategy with a view to improving recruitment and retention of staff;</p> <p>Work towards obtaining the Investors in People Standard across all Corporate Services functions</p>
Promote social inclusion and combat social exclusion	<p>Ensure that the Council's policies on equal opportunities focus on the needs of service users, and in particular treating the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality;</p> <p>Assess and pay housing and council tax benefits;</p> <p>Prepare, maintain and publish the Annual Electoral Roll;</p> <p>Ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.</p>
Create, maintain and enhance the built environment in a way which is in harmony with the natural environment	<p>Promote sustainable construction and energy efficiency within the Council's buildings.</p>

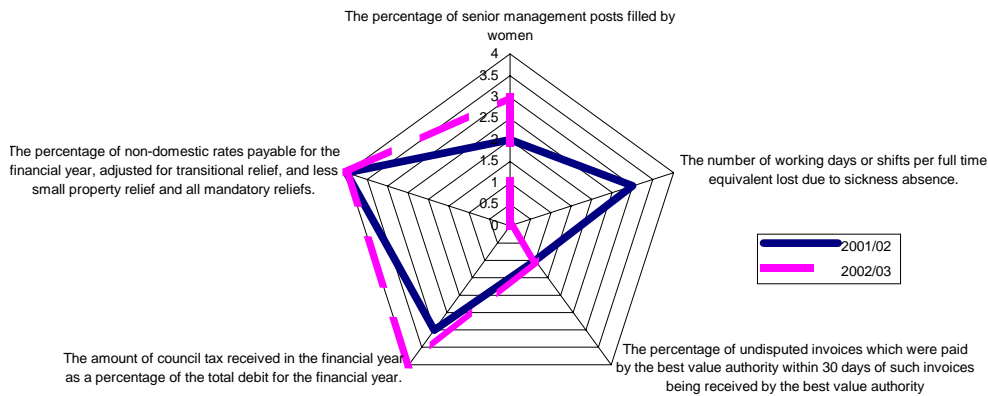
## 7.4 Key performance measures and targets

Ref	Description	Actual 2001/02	Probable 2002/03	Target 2003/04	Target 2004/05
1.1	* The number of working days/shifts per Full Time Equivalent lost due to sickness absence.	10.65	10.84	10.54	10.20
1.6	* The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days.	77.50%	76%	85%	90%
1.12	*Ill health retirements as a percentage of the total work force.	0.27%	0.22%	0.30%	0.27%
1.13	+ The number of authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition as a % of the BV authority workforce.	0.4%	0.36%	1.0%	1.0%
1.14	The number of staff from Minority ethnic communities within the authority's workforce as a percentage of the total workforce.	0.30	0.24	1.0%	1.0%
1.15	The percentage of the authority's buildings open to the public and that are suitable for and accessible to disabled people.	32.8%	32.8%	32.8%	32.8%
1.7	The Percentage of Council Tax collected.	96.59%	97%	97.5%	97.5%
1.8	The percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the authority.	98.92%	97.08%	97.5%	97.5%
11.3a	Speed of processing benefits: Average time for processing new benefit claims	56	51	49	47
11.4a	Accuracy of processing benefits: Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available for the determination for a sample of cases checked post determination.	92%	96%	96%	97%
CS-ACC1	Timely completion of accounts (relates to closing of previous years accounts).	Sept	Sept	July	July
CS-ACC1	General reserves as a percentage of net revenue expenditure.	3.5%	3.5%	3.3%	3.5%

\* Cross-authority performance measuring promoted by CSS Directorate

+ Prompt payment of invoices

**Figure 8: Corporate Health**



The above chart depicts comparative performance for Powys against Welsh Authorities on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 reflects a level below the lower quartile, 2 equals average performance and a score of 4 indicates performance above the top quartile, i.e. best performing. This chart demonstrates the improvement achieved in the areas of senior management posts filled by women and levels of council tax received. An improvement during the year has also been achieved for processing invoices within 30 days although recovery from the organisational restructuring has been slow. All Directorates receive a copy of the monthly performance and are encouraged to investigate and speed the invoice processing. However, there has been a downturn in performance in the average number of days absence. The reasons for this maybe attributed to the following:

- Leisure Centre staff are now included within the E&CR sickness return.
- Temporary staff for seasonal work in the T&LS were retained longer than the normal lay off date of September.
- The Rehabilitation Strategy programme take up has not been in line with expectations. This strategy brings long term sickness employees back to work early.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003, the Council now employs its own Occupational Health Advisor. The arrangements with Powys Health Trust have been terminated and all referrals are now undertaken in-house.

This has resulted in:

- A more focused approach to the difficulties of long term absence and dealing with employees who have been absent from the workplace for over 12 months.
- Referral to the appropriate consultant/specialist means that decisions are made earlier regarding medical retirement/ and or capability ill health dismissals.
- The regime for dealing with return to work interviews are now extended to all staff or all periods of sickness absence.

It is anticipated that it will take some time to cascade down and effect the statistical data for calculation of the performance indicator for sickness absence, but its effect should be evident in 2003/4.

## 7.5 Directorate Analysis

Corporate Support Services were rated as being low to medium risk in the Whole Authority Analysis.

### 7.5.1 Finance and Corporate Property Services

Through its management of finance and property resources the function supports all of the Council's objectives. The key messages from the analysis of the core financial services are :

- That the accounts and finances of the Council are sound;
- The Council is falling short of the performance target in relation to prompt payment of invoices;
- The resource allocation and the budget process need to be developed;
- The Pension Fund is in deficit but the Council has reduced the risk by putting in place measures to recover the position over time;
- There is a need to increase stakeholder satisfaction and internal communications;
- There is an impending statutory requirement to produce the Council's final accounts much earlier which will impact significantly upon the work of the section;
- That the Council's Corporate Asset Management arrangements need to be strengthened.

**Key Areas for improvement:**

Improve Corporate prioritisation of resource allocation through the Authorities Financial planning framework.

**TARGET:** Develop of 3 year financial planning framework, by 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2003.  
Draft a forward timetable and documented budget process, by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

Undertake, by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003, an in depth review of the Council's spending plans to inform the 2004/2005 budget cycle.

**Key Areas for improvement:**

Management of Pension Fund.

**TARGET:** Ensure adequacy of Pension Fund through quarterly monitoring of performance of new fund manager, commencing June 2003. And through additional contributions as the opportunities arise.

**Key Area for improvement:**

Improve stakeholder satisfaction and service performance.

**TARGET:**

Seek to obtain IIP accreditation for all corporate services by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

**Key Area for Improvement**

Improve Risk Management.

**TARGET :**

Develop Risk Management procedures and reporting mechanisms by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

**Key Area for Improvement :**

Improve Corporate Asset Management arrangements.

**TARGET :**

Develop an Asset Management Strategy by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003 and an Asset Management Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2004.

## 7.5.2 Revenues and Benefits

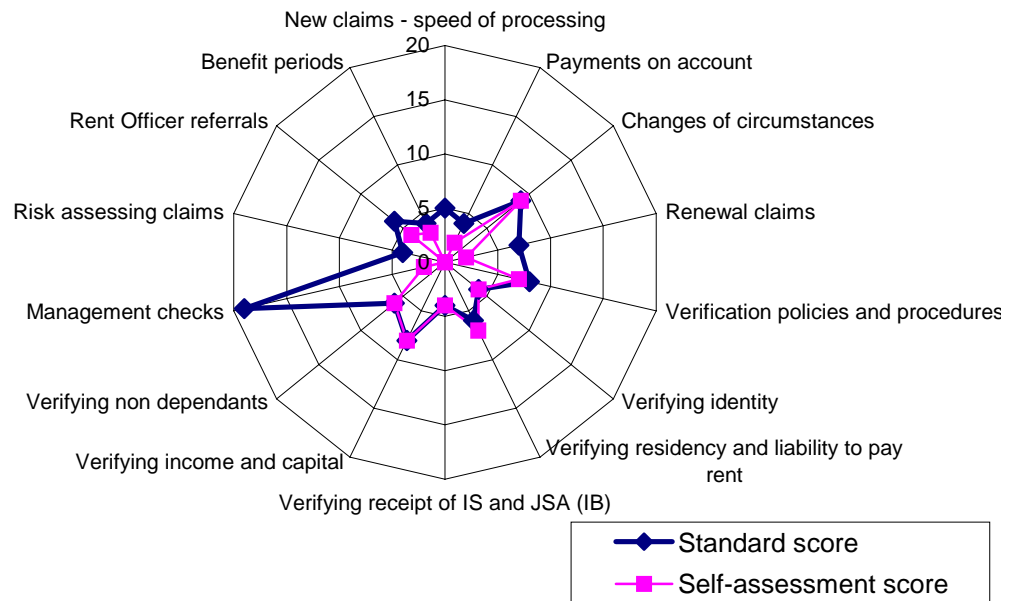
The Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit service is one of the most important “front-line” functions provided by the Council with over £20 Million being paid out to over 8,800 claimants within the Powys area each year.

The Council Tax and Business Rates units have achieved consistently good collection performance results and there are very few complaints about the service. A total of £36,000,000 p.a. is collected in Council Tax from 57,000 properties. Over £19,500,000 p.a. is collectable for Business Rates.

The Housing Benefit/Council Tax system has undergone a series of changes over the last few years and the problems nationally with the administration of this highly complex scheme have been widely publicised. The Council has encountered many of these problems and there are real issues with staff recruitment and retention and difficulties in delivering a high quality service.

The geographical area of Powys poses real problems and an example of this is the requirement under the “verification framework” process to visit benefit claimants in their own homes within a set period of the claim being assessed. The system is complicated for claimants and, as with any means testing scheme, is vulnerable to fraud and error.

As part of the improvement process, a full self-assessment of the Benefits service was carried out in late 2002. The results are compared with “top quartile/excellent performance”, and the graph showing the scores for processing of claims is shown below.



This information has been used to target specific areas for improvement and these include speed of processing claims, checking the accuracy of assessments, encouraging benefit take-up and improved customer services.

**Key Areas for improvement:**

Need to increase benefits take-up, undertake more accuracy checking and increase stakeholders' satisfaction in Revenues and Benefits Service.

**TARGETS:**

Undertake a Benefits Take-up campaign by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

Restructure the Revenues and Benefits Section to improve customer services to undertake more accuracy checks and reduce time taken to process claims.

Establish an internet website to promote public information about Council Tax, benefits and other services.

Introduce a facility to allow customers/service users to pay by debit/credit card electronically by telephone or by the internet by 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2003.

The Council is committed to the prevention and detection of benefit fraud and liaises closely with other agencies and carries out joint fraud investigations where appropriate.. The authority has been fully compliant with the verification framework since September, 2002. This requires a significantly higher level of claim verification and home visiting as described above. The fraud section investigates potentially fraudulent benefit claims and, in 2002/03, there were 11 successful prosecutions, 10 administrative penalties and 9 official cautions.

### 7.5.3 Personnel Services

Personnel Services were found to be cost effective overall but comparison with other similar sized public and private sector organisations indicated that the Service as a whole may be under resourced and there is a need for them to be more pro-active in areas such as recruitment, training/staff development and performance appraisal. Areas for improvement include consistency of advice, accessibility and the development of a Human Resource and Workforce Planning Strategy for the Council.

The Authority is also committed to the installation of an integrated personnel and payroll system to enhanced management information. This system is being purchased in a collaborative procurement programme with a number of other Welsh Authorities and is being resourced through the Capital Programme - £500,000.

**Key Areas for improvement:**

Development of a Human Resource Strategy for the Council.

**TARGETS:**

To develop the Human Resource Strategy for approval by Council by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003.

The Whole Authority Analysis determined that communication channels could be improved, both internally and with external stakeholders. The Authority will review and revise its Communications Strategy and ensure improvements are identified and implemented.

**Key area for improvement:**

Identify and improve internal and external communication channels.

The Authority's Communication Strategy will be reviewed and revised with the first draft being complete by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2003. Following a programme of consultation the final Strategy will be published by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003.

**Key Area for Improvement:**

Enhance Performance Management techniques and improve the capacity for the identification, collection, verification and monitoring of performance information. Improve Project Management across the Authority.

**TARGET:** Continue to Implement Performance Management and Project Management Training programme to facilitate trend analysis and action planning.

### 7.5.4 Equalities

Powys County Council is required to challenge its performance in relation to equalities. Other than statute the drive behind equality development in local government is The Equality Standard, issued in June of 2002. The Standard requires all Local Authorities to make a commitment to mainstream and benchmark their approach to equalities in service delivery.

Powys County Council has adopted an Equalities Strategy to assist with this task and during 2002/03 the following steps have been taken.

### **Improving equality practice at both Corporate and Directorate level**

- Developing corporate strategies to include the Equalities Strategy; the revised Welsh Language Scheme; Race Equality Scheme and Access Policy;
- Establishing a framework within the Member domain - Portfolio Member for both Equalities and Welsh Language;
- Designating responsibility within the Administration - Chief Executive, Group Directors, Monitoring Officer and Senior Implementing Officer;
- Establishing a co-ordinated administrative framework - the Welsh Language Scheme Co-ordinating Group and the Equalities Working Group;
- On a Directorate level, services have identified and designated link officers in Directorates with responsibilities for equalities.

### **Earmarking specific resources for improving equality practice**

Performance Incentive Grant funding has been used to employ an Equal Opportunity Policy Officer.

### **Equality action planning and equality target setting within all Directorates and Service Areas**

All services have undertaken an equalities evaluation exercise as required by the Equalities Standard in order to obtain a position statement.

Directorates have identified actions, support needed and barriers. Reports have been presented to subject committees. Actions identified are to be incorporated into business plans.

The barriers identified are as follows :

### **Welsh Language Scheme**

#### Staffing

Corporate support needed to help recruit bilingual employees and develop a more responsive Welsh language training programme.

Proposal to remedy situation :

A bilingual skills strategy has been prepared – this will address issues relating to recruitment. Also due to recent efforts made by the Working Welsh Partnership Steering Group funding has been received from Elwa to assist with the appointment of an additional workplace tutor. This will enable an extended range of Welsh language training. The Steering Group will be asked to consider Powys County Council service needs.

#### Information and support

To maintain a corporate list of bilingual employees on the Council's web and update regularly.

#### Proposal

A list to be incorporated on the Personnel computerised system which is currently being developed.

#### Performance

Corporate targets, standards and PI's noted in the Welsh Language Scheme to be circulated and implemented.

#### Proposal

A detailed monitoring plan has been approved by the Council's Principle Scrutiny Committee.

### **Access and Race Equality policy**

With regard to Access and Race Equality the Mainstreaming Equalities exercise undertaken by services highlighted a need for corporate leadership. All Directorates stated their desire for:

- Support with implementation and compliance with the Race Equality Scheme and Access Policy with examples of best practice;
- Indicators to measure improvement in the delivery of services with regard to Race and Disability;
- Guidance on addressing issues of Race and Access in any new policies or when revising current policies;
- More information on facilities and equipment, availability of equipment, personnel trained to advise and assist.

All Directorates noted the need for consultation with minority groups in order to improve access to information on services and develop better standards of service delivery. Because of this obvious need they welcomed the prospect of establishing an Equalities Forum for Powys.

### **General improvement issues relevant to all matters of equality**

#### **Staff training**

The Mainstreaming Equalities exercise highlighted the undeniable need for staff training and awareness raising at all levels within the Authority. However there are significant budgetary implications for staff and managers that need to be released for training and development.

#### *Proposal*

To address this need for training and development the Council has produced a Matrix of Mandatory Training for Council Employees. This programme of mandatory training will introduce a systematic approach to the training needs of staff.

#### Management culture

Some service action plans noted difficulties in allocating time to accommodate the management of the equalities agenda.

*Proposal*

It is suggested that the Policy Unit jointly with Personnel Services provide Senior Management Team with a list of existing officers who have been given responsibility for equalities and for the Welsh Language Scheme within Directorates and that this be reviewed with a view to establish a consistent approach across all services. A report is to be taken to the Personnel Committee on outcome.

**Development for the future**

In addition to the identified improvement measures above, the Council plans to ensure that the following measures are put into effect next year:-

**Systematic consultation:**

The Policy Unit has mentioned previously that a forum for consulting with under represented groups would be developed. This is currently being done in line with the Equalities Strategy and other related policies.

A brief for establishing a means of consulting in this way has been approved.

**A fair employment and equal pay programme**

This is noted as an action in the Equalities Strategy and is currently being addressed by the Personnel Committee.

**TARGET :**

To achieve Level 1 of the Commission for Racial Equalities Standard for Local Government in Wales by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2004.

## 7.6 Implementing Electronic Government

A Cross Directorate Working Group is developing the Council's strategy for Electronic Government.

Issues which will be developed within Corporate Support Services include:

- Facilities to receive electronic payments by Debit/Credit cards;
- Introduction of purchase cards to reduce transaction costs with appropriate suppliers;
- Introduction of pilot electronic document image and workflow systems within the revenues and benefits section;
- Development of the Council's Technical ICT Strategy;
- Management and improvement of the Council's Web site.

**Key Areas for improvement:** Implementing Electronic Government.

**TARGET:** Produce a Position Statement by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003 and a revised Implementing Electronic Government Strategy by such date as may be required by the Wales Assembly Government

## 7.7 Best Value Reviews

Best Value Reviews relating to Corporate Support Services have been undertaken since the introduction of Best Value and there are a number of Action Plans arising from these reviews. The nature and outcome of the Reviews is as follows:

### 7.7.1 Health & Safety

Desktop Inspection – No Judgement

#### Improvements

- Identify and compile local performance measures;
- Develop arrangements for consulting stakeholders;
- Prepare and deliver Safety Awareness training;
- Identify Notifiable Accidents and incidents Report to Health and Safety Executive;
- Develop Occupational Health Strategies and Policies;
- A delay has been experienced with the planned auditing and inspection due to increased resources needed to respond to Health and Safety Executive Improvement Notices.

An Occupational Health Nurse has been appointed and is involved with revising and introducing "back to work " policies, and long term sickness/absence issues.

### 7.7.2 Asset Management

Awaiting further Inspection and final report

#### Improvements

As identified above the Asset Management arrangements need to be improved and the Authority has set out actions to complete its Asset Management Strategy by September 2003 and subsequently develop its Asset Management Plan.

### 7.7.3 Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths

Desktop Inspection – No Judgement

#### Improvements

Develop performance measures in conjunction with benchmarking club.

### 7.7.4 Legal Services

Fair Service - Uncertain Prospects for improvement

#### Improvements

The review identified measures for improvement which have now been implemented, including:

- The Childcare Solicitors undergoing training which permits them to be admitted to the Law Society Children Panel;
- A revision of service performance indicators;
- Achievement of IIP accreditation.

The service aims to improve stakeholder satisfaction through undertaking consultation exercise.

#### **7.7.5 Personnel**

Review to be completed

##### **Improvements**

The review has identified the following improvements to date :

- Develop Corporate Human Resources Strategy and Workforce Planning Policy;
- Undertake staffing review of the service;
- Ensure personnel policies are up to date;
- Improve communication with Trade Unions;
- Review recruitment and selection procedures as part of the Personnel and Payroll Project;
- Develop ICT systems;
- Develop new Payroll Web site;
- Complete Payroll Stakeholder satisfaction survey;
- Develop performance measures for corporate training and development.

#### **7.7.6 ICT – Desktop support**

Not inspected

Improve customer satisfaction ratings by reducing average response times for desktop support through increasing resource available and examining working practices

#### **7.7.7 Procurement**

##### **Cross Cutting Review of Procurement:**

Fair Service - Promising Prospects for improvement

##### **Improvements**

- A programme of Procurement training for authorised signatories has been rolled out;
- The Procurement Strategy has been reviewed and revised;
- Work in progress include the POPs – online purchasing programme, the establishment of the purchasing card scheme and the review of the staffing structure across the Authority;
- The area will continue to develop performance information as part of Benchmarking Club.

#### **7.7.8 Public Interface**

##### **Cross Cutting Review of Public Interface:**

Fair Service- Promising Prospects

## Improvements

The Public Interface Review examined the way in which the Council interacts with the public by letter, telephone and visits to the main reception areas. The action plan has strengthened the capacity to provide corporate direction and greater service delivery through the rationalisation of the staffing provision at the main reception areas, improving the physical attributes at those areas and examining the telephone response times across the Authority. However, further improvements are necessary, especially with regard to telephone response times, and the Council's Strategy for Access to Services needs to be developed.

## 7.8 Risk Assessment – Services

Service	Work Programme
<b>Corporate Health &amp; Safety</b>	Continue to implement Best Value Review Action Plan.
<b>Personnel &amp; Payroll</b>	Implement Best Value Review Action Plan.
<b>Legal</b>	Improve stakeholder satisfaction by undertaking consultation exercise.
<b>Registration of Births Marriages and Deaths</b>	Continue to implement Best Value Review Action Plan.
<b>ICT</b>	Continue to implement Best Value Review Action Plan.
<b>Procurement Unit</b>	Continue to implement Best Value Review Action Plan.
<b>Reprographics</b>	Review the reprographics process in order to develop a clear corporate print strategy to ensure that the most economical, efficient and effective methodology is implemented.
<b>Reception, General Office</b>	Obtain Performance data and stakeholder satisfaction information in order for targets for improvement to be set by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2004.
<b>Corporate Policy</b>	Support the Council in the implementation of the Corporate Strategies, particularly with regard to Equalities and access by improving internal communications within the Unit and with Service Directorates.
<b>Revenues and Benefits</b>	<p>Increase stakeholder satisfaction by establishing an internet web site and introducing a debit credit card facilities by phone and internet.</p> <p>Increase level of benefit take-up by undertaking a promotional campaign.</p> <p>Undertake a restructuring of the Revenues section to improve customer services through ensuring sufficient</p>

Service	Work Programme
	staff resources exist to cope with current workloads and new Tax Credits and Pension Credits.
<b>Land Charges</b>	Develop a full suite of performance measures including stakeholder satisfaction
<b>Welsh Language Services</b>	Promote unit internally
<b>Core Financial Services</b>	<p>Develop forward timetable and document budget process.</p> <p>Develop a three year financial planning framework.</p> <p>Bring forward closure of accounts to 30<sup>th</sup> June. Monitoring performance of pension fund following changed management arrangements.</p> <p>Increase stakeholder satisfaction and service performance by pursuing IIP accreditation.</p>
<b>Performance Management</b>	<p>Develop full suite of Performance data and stakeholder satisfaction information.</p> <p>Set local PIs during 2003. Identify any national or local comparative or review data available</p>
<b>Electoral Registration</b>	<p>Develop cost based performance information. Ensure liaison and training on electoral issues.</p>
<b>Communication Unit</b>	<p>Develop full suite of Performance data and stakeholder satisfaction information.</p> <p>Set local PIs during 2003. Identify any national or local comparative or review data available.</p> <p>Improve external communications.</p> <p>Reduce advertising costs.</p>
<b>Committee Services and Democratic Support</b>	Develop cost based performance information.
<b>Payroll</b>	Complete Stakeholder satisfaction survey.
<b>Corporate Property Unit</b>	<p>Develop a Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Plan. Provide Internet access to the Asbestos Register. Develop key performance measures and indicators in conjunction with CLAW.</p>

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