

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE BID

REVISED DRAFT

- 1. Worcestershire County Council is a new Authority established on 1 April 1998.**

The County Council's Corporate Plan identifies the priority for action as CLIMBS representing:

- Community involvement and community services
- Lifetime learning
- Improving economic and social well-being
- Making Worcestershire a better place in which to live
- Building an effective and efficient organisation
- Sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of the organisation which organised its Environmental Services Directorate to include a Sustainable Transport Unit, an Integrated Transport Team, a TravelWise Officer, a Cycle Officer, and a Green Transport Officer.

- 2. The Directorate** set up Highway Partnership Units (HPUs) in each District Council advised by a Forum of joint County and District members. These Partnerships are responsible for Traffic Management, Road Maintenance, Highway Development Control and small schemes implementation within each District area. They are closer to the District and the general public and able to be involved in direct discussion and negotiation on a local basis. This has proved particularly useful in the introduction of village speed initiatives working with Parish Councils to introduce 30 mph speed limits in villages throughout the County over a five year period. The HPUs also act as the local contact for School Travel Plan schemes and accident prevention measures.

- 3. School Travel Plans**

The County began with a countywide assessment to establish a detailed priority of school pyramids. In addition, a special case for schools review areas (Redditch) was carried out with Education Directorate. The schemes started with implementation in Worcester as part of the TPP package in 1998/99. Year 1999/2000 will see the start of implementation in Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest, and detailed design work for implementation in Malvern and Redditch in year 2001/2002. The County have been successful in generating enthusiasm and innovation within the schools, as well as capturing valuable input from local communities through pro-active education initiatives.

- 4. Integrated Passenger Transport Services**

Integration of local bus services, Social Services and Education transport provision has been carried out in order to rationalise provision, seek better levels of services, better use of resources, and enhanced services to all citizens. Providing improved access for all will address social exclusion.

5. Six Bus Quality Partnerships are being developed

- a. Worcester City has been ongoing for three years and has been reviewed and extended to 2006. It includes First Midland Red and Boomerang Bus Services. It has delivered a new fleet of buses, replacement bus shelters, a set of priorities on a radial route, and the first of three Park and Ride sites is under construction.
- b. Wyre Forest BQP is being set up to incorporate a new bus station and bus termini (developer funded) linked to Community Transport in rural areas, a bus shelter contract and priority measures on radial routes into Stourport and Kidderminster. There is also expected to be a fleet of new buses in the near future, and the above measures will be linked to improved frequency and service reliability.
- c. Redditch Bus Quality Partnership is also linked to a new bus station being a redevelopment of the existing station as part of town centre expansion funded by the town centre owners. Redditch has a framework of Bus Priority routes and additional facilities and improvements will be sought through the BQP together with Community Transport and Taxi related measures, to achieve an improved quality service.
- d. A Hospital Link Quality Bus Partnership with the Bus Operator and Health Service is being developed to serve Kidderminster/Redditch/Worcester with the transfer of certain health facilities beginning this summer and leading to a full service provision when the new Worcester Hospital is opened in 2002. Using high speed low floor buses, the new services will be jointly funded and be subject to bids for Rural Bus Challenge and Invest to Save funding.
- e. Following the award of a rural challenge bid for bus service improvement a BQP has been established for the Eckington bus services which provides a significantly improved facility to Worcester with improved interchanges on route, new quality buses and a revised timetable.
- f. Worcester City's first Park and Ride service will come into operation in the Spring 2001 providing high quality parking and dedicated frequent buses to the City Centre.

6. A Rail Partnership framework has been established with Railtrack, EWS and Rail Operators to identify problems, potential solutions, possible resources, timescales and project promoters. Specific studies have been commissioned in partnership on a Parkway Station for Worcester and upgrading of the single track Cotswold Line, which are expected to lead to Rail Passenger Partnership bids for funding.

The main targets and indicators for transport are included in the monitoring section of the LTP. In particular this includes the targets to meet national casualty reduction levels and national air quality standards. The frameworks developed for the discreet areas of work, ensure measurable objectives are delivered. The over-arching strategy therefore ensures the global objectives are met through the attainment of local monitoring programmes. At present through the existing Worcester City BQP monitoring of lost bus services is carried out on a three monthly basis, there is a better than 98% success rate. This is likely to be expanded to other BQPs. Monitoring of customer complaints is also carried out on a similar basis.

The partnership is seeking to replace Wayfarer 2 ticket machines with Wayfarer 3 which has greater potential for monitoring punctuality, on a joint funding basis to enable full analysis of all bus services operated by First Midland Red, which can then be extended to other operators.

In the meantime it is proposed to monitor punctuality on a bi-monthly sample basis at the CrownGate Bus Station. This can, if successful, be extended to the areas of Kidderminster and Redditch; the aim will be to seek to improve punctuality by 10% per year through the plan period.

The above identifies some of the areas where Worcestershire is advancing in the transport field. Work is also ongoing on many other aspects such as Employers Travel Plans, cycle and walking strategies, concessionary fares reviews, the PTI 2000 transport information systems, a survey and programme of interchange upgrades, as well as maintenance programmes and accident reduction programmes through education, training and improvement schemes.

If Worcestershire is successful in being identified as a centre of excellence it proposes to disseminate its experience through organising a local seminar, by sending representatives to make presentations at other seminars and conferences, and as part of the County's published information on the web site.