

SCRUTINY ITEMS CONSIDERED BY ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

	ITEM	COMMITTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS
1	Local Agenda 21 Community Grants	17 October 2000	Following the examination of the Local Agenda 21 Community Grants Scheme by Environment Scrutiny Committee this scheme was looked at again as part of the wider Best Value Review of Voluntary & Community Sector Funding & Support. As a result of this review the Local Agenda 21 Grants Scheme is now incorporated into the corporate approach to voluntary and community sector funding and has for the past two years been included in the County Council single prospectus for funding available to the sector. The process for determining applications for grants from the LA21 scheme is also now part of the wider corporate approach adopted following the findings of the best value review.	Finished
2	St Albans Road Green Route, Watford/Green Route Scrutiny	17 October 2000	<p>The Scrutiny Committee agreed a set of recommendations on bus priority measures, in general, and recommended specific alterations to the St Albans Road Green Route.</p> <p>The recommendation that “ clear objectives should be set for all future bus priority measures, within a framework” has been adopted as an operational standard within the Environment Department.</p> <p>Joint working with the bus operators has been enhanced through the “bus summits”, the Intalink partnership and local officer / bus company liaison meetings.</p> <p>A rolling programme of minor alterations to the St Albans Rd Green Route has been ongoing since the scrutiny in accordance with their recommendation. A further joint member workshop was held in November 2002.</p>	Finished

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3	Ranking Scheme for Traffic and Environment Measures	17 October 2000 23 January 2003	The Scrutiny Committee supported the maintenance of the existing Traffic and Environment Ranking system. It continues to be used to prioritise which schemes to fund during the annual budget allocation process. It effectively ensures a uniform and consistent approach across the County. The Committee welcomed any additional budget flexibility to allow district and borough councils to use discretion on local schemes. Discretionary budgets for Joint Member Panels were introduced into the Partnership Areas in 2002/03 and will be rolled out to cover all districts and boroughs in 2003/04. The discretionary element is being used to address local issues, which fail to receive priority from Countywide programmes.	Finished
4	Service Property Strategy and Corporate Asset Management Plan	23 January 2001	The short-life panel did not meet because of the creation of the Property Panel, which amongst other issues now considers all the Service Property Strategies at a series of meetings in March each year.	Finished
5	Withdrawal of Commercial Bus Services During 2000/01	23 January 2001/16 October 2001	<p>The Scrutiny Committee recommended that a bus summit be held with operators to explore the factors influencing the provision of commercial bus services to help determine the scope of any future scrutiny.</p> <p>Bus summits were held on 21 March 2001 and 11 July 2001, which proved to be useful for members and bus operators in understanding all the issues. Following these summits, members requested the production of a Bus Strategy. The strategy is now published and being implemented.</p> <p>At a subsequent meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (16 October 2001), the committee resolved that it should not scrutinise the issue any further.</p>	Finished

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6	Scrutiny of Development Control Enforcement and Monitoring Provision within Hertfordshire	23 January 2001/10 July 2001	Committee recommendations have been implemented including additional resources for enforcement and adoption of new standards for enforcement and monitoring.	Finished
7	Planning Obligations	23 January 2001	At its meeting on 23 January 2001 Environment Scrutiny Committee recommended that "In view of the wide impact of planning obligations on all County Council services, the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Select Committee be asked to consider scrutinising this activity." The RPPC Select Committee received a report at its meeting on 15 March 2001 and recommended that a short life working group of 5 Members to be nominated by Group Spokesmen be established to scrutinise the work already done on planning obligations and to report back to the November 2001 Select Committee. The Group has not yet been established. Meanwhile the Government is proposing changes to the planning obligations system, the details of which are awaited.	Ongoing
8	30mph Speed Limits in Villages	20 March 2001	The Scrutiny Committee's recommendation for amendment to the County Speed policy has been adopted as an operational policy within the Environment Department. The proposal was adopted on the basis of qualification criteria stipulating the number of properties constituting a village and that the residents desired that their village be included in the programme. On this basis, 75 villages have received new reduced speed limits and there has been a reduction in the number of complaints of inappropriate speed through rural villages. The Committee recommended the use of vehicle actuated signs (VA signs). A range of different types of VA signs were introduced in a variety of locations as part of a pilot study started in 2001/02. The results of the after study will be used to shape a policy on the use of VA signs.	Finished

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9	The Effectiveness of Current TravelWise Projects	16 October 2001	Progress has been made on all nine recommendations made by the Committee Topic Group and has been reported to County Council. Further contact has been made with all schools yet to request a copy of the School Travel Plan guide and Members have been provided with a list to encourage direct contact. New guidelines on incorporating the development of School travel plans in the planning process will be considered by the Development Control Committee at its April meeting. Funding of the Travel Plan Co-ordinator post remains on a fixed term and no agreement has been received from government to make the funding permanent. A detailed update on the position with all recommendations was provided in a separate note to Scrutiny Committee Members in January.	Finished
10	Bus and Intalink Strategies	22 January 2002	The Scrutiny Committee was asked to comment on the consultation draft of the Bus and Intalink Strategies. The Committee welcomed the documents and endorsed the initiatives outlined in them. The strategies were formally adopted by the County Council on 18 June 2002.	Finished
11	Mobile Telephone Masts	22 January 2002	The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the existing County Council policy in relation to mobile telephone masts. The County Council now has similar agreements with the following Mobile phone providers for the shared use of lamp columns for booster aerials. Orange/One to One/Hutchinson 3g In total there are now 94 facilities across the county housed in this manner. Since the Scrutiny there have been relatively few enquiries made about the policy.	Finished

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12	Transport Operations Best Value Review Implementation Monitoring	19 March 2002	<p>The Scrutiny Committee considered this issue in response to a request by the Resources, Prosperity & Consultation Select Committee (July 2001).</p> <p>The Committee considered a progress report on the original Best Value Review recommendations, a revised Improvement Plan and the outcome of the Audit Commission's Best Value Inspection into this service. The Committee welcomed the Inspector's report, accepted its recommendations for incorporation into the Improvement Plan and noted that it may consider scrutiny at a later date.</p>	Ongoing
13	Vehicular Traffic as it Affects Rural Roads (U & C Roads) and Villages	19 March 2002	<p>The Scrutiny Committee recommended a range of general aims, which have been embodied within the developing asset management approach and the new way of working in Hertfordshire Highways.</p> <p>The Committee made some more detailed recommendations, which have been actioned as follows:</p> <p>Database of drainage trouble spots – programmed for 2003/04 Grass cutting database – in hand Presumption against the use of kerbing – adopted as an operational standard.</p> <p>Permanent full depth repairs, rather than short term repairs – improved knowledge of the highway network condition and deterioration modelling is enabling Hertfordshire Highways to implement an optimum programme of maintenance activity that best improves the condition of the network overall with the funding available.</p>	Finished

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13	Vehicular Traffic as it Affects Rural Roads (U & C Roads) and Villages (cont.)	19 March 2002	The ratio of long term structural maintenance activity to short term structural maintenance activity has increased substantially. Quieter surfaces than “bitumen and chip” to be used in villages - adopted as an operational standard. Research and Development – pilot projects are being identified for 2003/04.	Finished
14	Speed Camera – ‘Netting Off’ Project	25 June 2002	DfT agreed to Hertfordshire's application to join the project. Officially included from November 1st after all the existing camera housings were 'yellowed'. The Constabulary appointed the Camera Unit Manager in January, with other staff being appointed currently. It is hoped the Unit will be operational from April, being housed on the middle floor of the Rotunda building in Hertford. 22 additional camera housings will be implemented this financial year, with additional static sites and mobile enforcement being deployed in Year 2 (from April 2003). The DfT agreed that Hertfordshire's 'environmental cameras' should be retained because of their effect on general speed reduction.	Finished
15	Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	25 June 2002	Following consideration by Scrutiny Committee, the draft Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Hertfordshire was adopted by the Cabinet at its meeting of 22 July 2002. It has also since been adopted by nine of the ten District and Borough Councils, the exception being Broxbourne Borough Council who wish to reserve their position on the Strategy whilst continuing to take a pro-active role in its development and implementation. The Waste Management Panel is overseeing the County Council's role in the implementation, and January 2003 saw the inaugural meeting of the Joint Waste Management Group, a new joint Member Group with the purpose of implementing and monitoring the Strategy across all the Hertfordshire Local Authorities.	Finished

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16	Light Pollution and Conservation Area's (Street Lighting – it's Impact on Hertfordshire)	25 June 2002	The Topic Group has agreed the scope of the scrutiny and its programme of activity.	Ongoing
17	SERAS	15 October 2002	<p>The Scrutiny Committee considered SERAS (the Government's consultation on airport development in the South East) on 15 October 2002. At a meeting to which all members were invited the Committee questioned Mike Fawcett of the Department for Transport on the Government's consultation and future policy.</p> <p>The Committee determined that a further meeting should be held in early December to consider the Government's airport policy. A wide range of stakeholders, including operators, parish councillors and amenity groups, with an interest in airport development affecting the county were invited to give evidence.</p> <p>This meeting was postponed when the Government announced it would be re-issuing its consultation early in 2003 with a further 4-month consultation period. The Committee will need to make suitable arrangements to note the new consultation documentation that was issued at the end of February.</p>	Ongoing
18	Baldock Bypass	15 October 2002	The Scrutiny Committee welcomed the finalisation of negotiations to secure funding for the Baldock bypass and confirmed that statements made by members of the County Council were factually correct. No further scrutiny was considered necessary.	Finished

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19	School Crossing Patrols	15 October 2002	The recruitment campaign resulted in a very welcome increase in the number of school crossing patrols being appointed (around 20- some relief appointments). A minimum standard has been introduced for every crossing patrol site, and funding has been awarded to upgrade all sites where necessary in the next financial year. The works will be managed by the Area Offices.	Finished
20	2001/02 Performance Indicators	15 October 2002	Performance indicator results are reported annually. The department is devising an improved PI's monitoring and reporting framework although this may still be subject to (externally imposed) change to measurement rules.	Finished
21	Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan – A Review of Actions to Date	21 January 2003	The Committee's concerns about realistic targets and clear reporting lines have been conveyed to the Hertfordshire Environment Forum. Member briefings on Green Tourism and the BAP review timetable are currently being prepared. A further report will be considered by the Committee.	Ongoing
22	The Provision of the Highway Grass Cutting Service	21 January 2003	The Scrutiny Committee recommendation to adopt the Contractors Frequency Method for cutting County managed verges has been adopted as operational practice commencing April 2003. A further report reviewing the performance achieved with the new method of specification together with an overview of District managed Highway grass performance will be provided after 12 months operation.	Ongoing