

APPENDIX F

Identification and sharing of best practice

F.1 This Appendix gives further examples of best practice, as described in Chapter 2. It includes many examples of practical ways of working with others to improve performance including:

- How we share best practice
- How we implement effective and / or innovative practices
- How our best practices are recognised by others.

Sharing best practice

F.2 The following paragraphs give examples of how we have shared best practice, and the groups that have facilitated this process:

F.3 **Local Transport Plan day** In March 2005 we held the latest of an annual series of participation meetings on local transport, held jointly with Leicester City Council. It included an examination of key issues and provided an opportunity to both inform local people of the implementation of the Local Transport Plans and stimulate discussions on local issues. Over 80 people attended the day, including representatives from central and local government, neighbouring authorities, Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from industry, public transport operators, hospitals, Friends of the Earth, British Horse Society, British Motorcycle Federation, CTC, Civic Society, minority ethnic groups and resident associations.

F.4 **Benchmarking clubs** We play an active role in numerous Clubs. These enable participants to learn from each other, continuing to improve performance, reduce costs and improve customer service and satisfaction.

F.5 **Exchanging ideas with other authorities** We welcome contact from other authorities to discuss and view our procedures, systems and policies. Amongst many visitors Kent County Council, another 'excellent' authority, has recently visited to discuss a wide range of topics including improving communications with customers, website improvements and public transport initiatives. We also regularly contact other authorities, either by telephone or through visits, to exchange ideas and learn from colleagues.

F.6 Other transport groups that we are members of include:

Midland Service Improvement Group (MSIG)

F.7 The MSIG Group was established in 1997 to deal with matters concerning Best Value and performance management, specifically within the highways and road safety disciplines.

F.8 Other objectives of the group include credible benchmarking, regional input and acting as a contact group for other best value forums at national and regional levels. It also provides an opportunity to develop performance indicators, develop improvement logs and build contacts.

F.9 It consists of 11 shire counties (Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire), and two unitary authorities (Herefordshire and Rutland). The work of the group is undertaken by means of 16 task groups, to cover such topics as street lighting, highway maintenance, road safety, traffic management and asset management. Other midlands authorities are involved in some of the task groups, as invited or requested.

F.10 This MSIG group continues to go from strength to strength, particularly since the appointment of a full time support officer (collectively funded by the member authorities). The officer has specific responsibility for driving and monitoring progress within the group, facilitating outcomes from the various functional task groups and assisting with Best Value reviews. The officer is also responsible for maintaining a website which is shared and used by all member authorities.

F.11 The CSS (County Surveyors' Society) has high regard for the work of the MSIG and links its work with the national CSS Best Value working group. We have representatives on CSS groups, such as the street lighting group, where we share the national information gained with other East Midlands authorities. This sharing of best practice is used to assist in Best Value reviews and inform authorities' Best Value Performance Plans and Local Transport Plans, including the development of local performance indicators. This liaison is strengthened by the prominent role of our director in the CSS and his role as Chair of the UK Roads Board.

F.12 Recent examples of benefits from the MSIG Group include:

- The MSIG website, which contains various information and advice, such as process mapping and national and locally developed performance indicators. The website is used to share best practice, for example we have published our best practice guidance on advanced payment codes on the site
- The MSIG message board is used by the County Council and other authorities in the group to share information. Examples include data collection, PI guidance, contact and consultation and Best Value reviews
- The group has conducted a comparison of financial information. This sought to find comparisons between what central government was giving to local authorities and what they passed onto their highway services. An ongoing exercise is linking these figures to performance indicators, comprehensive performance assessments and Best Value reviews
- Where requested, the support officer provides assistance with Best Value reviews
- The production of a sustainability toolkit for member authorities produced by a small sub group including a representative from Leicestershire
- The production of an advisory paper for member authorities on the implications and opportunities arising from the Governments e-government agenda.

National Highways Best Value Benchmarking Club

F.13 A demonstration project within the Construction Best Practice Programme was commenced under the 'movement for innovation' by the five counties peer group, consisting of Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and their highways term maintenance contractors. Key performance indicators (KPIs) were introduced in February 2001, based on the ten headline KPIs as suggested in the Egan report ('rethinking construction').

F.14 In November 2001 a new National Highways Best Value Benchmarking Club was launched. The club was developed by the five counties peer group as a result of the Egan report and ‘constructing excellence’, to specify 10 KPIs tailored specifically to highways maintenance, based on the demonstration project. This club, which we have been a member of since its launch, includes local authorities from across the country and private sector representatives.

F.15 The club shares best practice on all issues relating to highways works and compares performance against nationally agreed performance indicators. The objective of the benchmarking club is to improve customer service, share best practice and improve efficiencies.

F.16 The club includes two divisions: ‘works’ and ‘design’, and each includes over 35 members from both local authorities and the private sector. Between them the members manage at least 60% of the UK road network under County Council jurisdiction, and keeping up to date with the latest requirements is vital in maintaining the momentum of the club. One of the current challenges is to be able to demonstrate Gershon efficiency, and members are already able to demonstrate efficiency gains using data collected. The group is currently assessing whether there are any other measures that could assist with this process.

Other transport groups

- **Park and Ride Benchmarking Group** During the development of the park and ride scheme we became a member of the national park and ride benchmarking group, which shares best practice in this field. Meetings are held quarterly, and are attended by up to 20 different local authorities involved in park and ride provision, including pioneers in the field such as York, Oxford and Cambridge.
- **The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership**, which shares best practice within the Leicestershire constabulary area. This partnership made a successful bid as part of the national implementation of safety cameras.
- **The East Midlands Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers**, which shares best practice relating to public transport. This group has a number of special interest groups attached to it, including information and ticketing, social services and community transport, rail and education. The group is currently setting up practical workshops, for example on real time information, community transport and school transport.
- **The Local Authority Cycle Planning Group** which shares best practice and resolves issues relating to cycling. Participants include local authorities, consultants and Sustrans.
- **The East Midlands Highways Development Control Forum** comprising 10 east midlands authorities which shares best practice on the effective integration of transport, land use planning and highways development control.
- **Midlands Safety Camera Partnership (MSCP)** Formed in 2003 the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safety Camera Scheme is part of a wider midlands alliance called the Midlands Safety Camera Partnership (MSCP). The group share the same view that effective communication underpins the drive to reduce road casualties through changing driver behaviour, and by pooling our resources, budgets and expertise we can develop high quality campaigns and get best value from our investment. This approach to publicity is unique within the national safety camera scheme and was born out of an approach to achieve the best possible results from limited resources.
- **The ‘Shiny Side Up’ Partnership**, comprising Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire County Councils, meets approximately six times a year to share best practice and deal with issues relating to the vulnerability of motorcyclists.

- **Central and Local Government Information Partnership - Transport Statistics Group (CLIP-TS)**. This group includes representatives from DfT, the Local Government Association, passenger transport executives and six local authorities, including Leicestershire. It has a key role in ensuring that statistics and monitoring meet the needs of local and national government and that expertise is shared. One role of the CLIP-TS group is to assist with DfT monitoring advice for LTPs.
- **Confirm Engineering User Group** Regular meetings are held with other authorities that use the Highways Management System. The groups discuss and share information on such issues as hand held data capture devices, NRSWA and the Confirm engineering software.
- **Special interest groups (SPIG)** We are an active member of such groups as the Confirm engineering user group, street works user group and street lighting user group. These groups are run by the local authority representatives and have two main functions. Firstly, they advise the software developers on how the systems should be developed and, secondly, they are used to spread best practice in the operational use of the system within the user base. Ad hoc special interest groups are formed within the main user groups when areas of particular interest are identified and more specialist issues have to be examined.
- **East Midlands Regional Assembly** We offer advice to the assembly on a wide range of issues including monitoring Regional Planning Guidance (RPG), incorporating the scope for using LTP practice for target setting. For the regional transport strategy within the RPG, the assembly has been encouraged to use LTP transport data to minimise additional work and costs.
- **Vaisala User Group** Following the installation and commissioning of three ice detection/weather monitoring stations during 2001/02 we continue to have an active role in this group, exchanging information and working practices relating to ice detection and weather monitoring. The group provides an opportunity to exchange information with other users from both private and public sectors. We also continue to arrange the weather forecasting service for Leicester City Council and Rutland District Council.
- **UK PMS Technical Steering Group** (UK pavement management system) We attend regular meetings of this national steering group, which results in participants sharing best practice, information and ideas.
- **MARCH Liaison Group** This group discusses the development, use and update of the MARCH pavement management system
- **Corporate groups** A number of corporate groups within Leicestershire County Council have been set up with the objective of sharing best practice in specific areas. These include a sustainability group whose remit includes the production of the County Green newsletter containing good practice information, a procurement group, a consultation and public involvement group and a performance management group.

Summary of groups

F.17 All of the groups listed below have provided, and continue to provide, invaluable opportunities for sharing, and learning from, best practice.

- Central and Local Government Information Partnership - Transport Statistics Group (CLIP-TS)
- Confirm Special Interest Group (SPIG)
- Construction Best Practice Programme (CBPP) Midlands Group

- Countywide forum for liaison with builders and developers
- CSS Direct Management Group
- DLO Midland Counties Group
- East Midlands Accident Reduction Working Group
- East Midlands Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
- East Midlands Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
- East Midlands Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
- East Midlands Highways Development Control Forum
- East Midlands Regional Assembly
- East Midlands Regional CSS
- Freight Quality Partnership
- LatDag meetings
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Travel Planning Network
- Local Authority Cycle Planning Group
- Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA)
- Local Authority School Travel Forum (LAST)
- MARCH Liaison Group
- Midlands Regional Best Value Strategic Planning Sub-group
- Midlands Regional Cycle Benchmarking Project
- Midlands Regional Development Control Best Value Group (part of MSIG)
- Midland Region Street Lighting Service Improvement Group
- Midlands Safety Camera Partnership (MSCP)
- Midland Service Improvement Group
- Motorcycle Forum
- National Advisory Group for Provision of Road Safety Education
- National Highways Best Value Benchmarking Club
- National Park and Ride Benchmarking Group
- National TravelWise Association
- Pedestrian and walking forums
- Regional ATCO Transport Sub-group
- Regional Forum for East and West Midlands Safety Camera Partnerships
- RoSPA's National Safety Education Committee
- Shiny Side Up Partnership
- Street Lighting User Group (SPIG)
- Street Works User Group (SPIG)

- Town Centre Improvement Benchmarking Meetings
- UK Highway Liability Claims Joint Task Group
- UKPMS Technical Steering Group
- User Groups (i.e. Charnwood Consultative Cycle and Pedestrian Groups)
- Vaisala User Group.

Implementing effective and / or innovative practices to enhance performance

F.18 The following paragraphs give examples of how we have shared our own best practice, learnt from others and implemented effective and / or innovative practices. These include:

Tackling congestion

Highway management

F.19 **Traffic management policies and standards document** The Highway Network Management Best Value Review recommended the introduction of a traffic management policies and standards document. During research we gained information from both Derbyshire and Northamptonshire County Councils and subsequently introduced our own policies and standards document. The document provides a useful single source of information, bringing together all relevant traffic management information, guidelines and policies. This document is proving useful internally, as the single source of information saves time and ensures consistency of approach. The document is now being shared with other authorities.

F.20 **Disabled parking places in residential areas** We continue to provide advisory disabled parking places in residential areas, as initially learnt from Portsmouth City Council. Over 50 parking places have been provided for disabled people in the vicinity of their homes this year.

F.21 **Spiral marking at roundabouts** The County Council's approach to providing spiral markings at roundabouts to improve lane discipline and road safety has been quoted as best practice in the national driving instructor's magazine. The article urged other authorities to adopt a similar approach. Spiral markings have been provided at a number of sites, for example at the A50 / A46 roundabout in Glenfield, Oadby racecourse roundabout, Cossington Lane roundabout on the Syston Bypass and Fosse Park roundabout.

Public Transport

F.22 **Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU)** An independent review of passenger transport procurement was completed in late 2004. This review made a number of recommendations, including the development of a new integrated transport unit to procure and manage passenger transport on behalf of the authority. The new unit, which will be operational in April 2006, will generate cost savings and efficiency gains in passenger transport and fleet management

F.23 **School yellow buses** Three buses were introduced in March 2004 to transport children to and from schools in the Loughborough, Barrow on Soar and Kibworth areas. This initiative was originally informed by visits to Norfolk and Staffordshire County Councils. These buses have been very well received by parents and schools and are contributing to improvement in the quality, safety and security of the home to school journey. Many schools are also hiring the vehicles for swimming bath trips and other extra curricular activities. We have shared our

experience of the yellow buses with Bedfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Aberdeenshire, Suffolk and a bus company from Cardiff City.

F.24 Bus Information Strategy An implementation group, including Leicester City Council and local bus operators, provided input on the development of our Bus Information Strategy produced by consultants (the TAS partnership). The strategy has also been subject to the testing of best practice by bus company partners and informed by work of the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO). The implementation group will now be working together on delivering the strategy to agreed standards, quality and timeliness.

F.25 Bus stop database (NaPTAN) This database was the first in the country to go live with all information complete. It is successfully feeding into the national network and informing Traveline of all bus routes, including any changes to services and to any new developments. The development of the database has been subject to the sharing of experiences by means of monthly meetings with authorities in Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Peterborough and Northamptonshire

F.26 Raised bus kerbs to improve accessibility The choice of the type of bus kerbs we use has been informed by carrying out a study of best practice including Nottingham City Council, Wolverhampton Borough Council, and Milton Keynes Borough Council. We also learned from a study of kerb types carried out by Leicester City Council which looked at near level access onto buses, which in particular benefits people with mobility impairments and those with pushchairs.

F.27 Park and ride Our project management and design officers observed the operation of park and ride services in Oxfordshire, meeting senior officers of the County Council. This has led to the exchange of design and operational information between the authorities.

F.28 Quality Bus Corridor Our new Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) between Leicester and Loughborough has been one of the success stories outside London, improving bus services and increasing bus passengers by 26% in its first year.

F.29 Essential skills training for bus drivers This essential skills training, which is run in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council and Loughborough College, involves the training of bus drivers in various topics, including disability awareness issues. It is intended to improve service and customer satisfaction. To learn from regional best practice we have joined a Nottingham based East Midlands Steering Group.

F.30 Passenger Delay Indicator (PDI) Surveys We have liaised with Greater Manchester Transportation Unit regarding the use of a camera system to carry out PDI surveys. As a result we are currently considering introducing and expanding the use of this technology, which provides improved accuracy and efficiency, for future data collection surveys.

Smarter Choices - travel plans

F.31 Travel detective We studied Halton Borough Council's junior travel approach and developed a similar scheme called travel detective. This involves several one hour sessions with Year 5 and 6 children, taking them through the fictional development of a school travel plan using various techniques including role play. The aim of travel detective is to encourage children to participate in the development of travel plans, and it is used as part of the overall approach to travel plans. The scheme has been running since the beginning of 2003 and many schools have participated.

F.32 Walking Bus We utilised the experience of Hertfordshire County Council through the Local Authority School Travel Forum to introduce our own walking buses, which continue to be very well received by schools and parents. We have also developed a 'Walking Bus pack' as a result of learning from Hertfordshire and Staffordshire County Councils. This pack is given to Walking Bus organisers and gives practical guidance on the setting up and organisation of schemes and safety issues etc. Twenty walking bus routes have now been successfully organised, several of which have been kick-started by the Walking Bus pack. Other Walking Buses are in the pipeline for development.

F.33 County Hall travel plan The development of the County Hall travel plan has been informed by drawing on best practice from other authorities, including Suffolk and Cheshire County Councils. Our County Hall travel plan is continuing to provide benefits and provides a good example to other employers in Leicestershire. The success of our car-sharing scheme has resulted in our doubling the designated car-sharing parking spaces at County Hall. There are a number of benefits to car sharing including reduced congestion on Leicestershire roads, more sustainable use of our existing car park and sharing travel costs. We also encourage staff to participate in European Car Free Day, as part of mobility management week.

Smarter Choices - public transport information and marketing

F.34 Star trak We are a member of the partnership that introduced, and is planning to expand, the star trak real-time information public transport system in Leicestershire. This system is currently in operation on 24 routes in the county and is widely welcomed by passengers. We will continue to introduce this system on quality bus corridors, and on other areas where we are making substantial investment in bus stop facilities. Other counties have also expressed an interest in using this system to create a regional system and it has been adopted by neighbouring authorities.

F.35 Star text messaging This system is associated with the star trak real-time information system. The Leicester and Leicestershire StarTrak Partnership is the first in the country to introduce a text messaging service from mobile phones linked to the real time information system. The service is used by over 600 callers per day.

F.36 East Midlands travel information We were founder members of 'EMTIS', the East Midlands Travel Information Service, and have played a leading role in moving the regional Traveline telephone enquiry service forward to its present high level of performance. We have entered into a data sharing agreement to ensure effective input to Transport Direct.

F.37 Bus timetable information To help ensure effective publicity for changes and improve information to customers we have joined an agreement with bus companies and local authorities across the East Midlands to change bus timetables on only six standard days each year.

Travel marketing and promotion

F.38 Road safety services to schools Lessons have been learnt from Babtie Consultants following their evaluation of our road safety services to schools. One of the recommendations was to look at how the service is marketed, and as a result we developed and introduced an interactive website for schools. The website will primarily be for secondary schools where teachers will be able to download lesson plans and ideas. It will provide a more efficient way of targeting road safety services to the vulnerable age group of 12 – 13 year olds.

F.39 'Star Walker' initiative We have achieved excellent results in our primary schools with our 'Star Walker' initiative. Monitoring of primary schools indicates that one school achieved a 17% increase in the proportion of pupils walking, and in another a 23% reduction in the proportion of pupils arriving at the school by car.

F.40 **'Bike 4 Life'** We have launched our modified cyclist training scheme 'Bike 4 Life' to encourage cycling as an alternative means of transport. The 'Bike 4 Life' scheme is primarily targeted at year 6 (10-11 year old) children and includes on-road training where the children are assessed throughout the six-session course. Currently nearly 60% of year 6 pupils benefit from this training.

Cycling

F.41 **CTC – Midlands Regional Cycle Benchmarking Project** This project was funded by the Department for Transport and organised by the CTC. Its objective was to develop the skills and knowledge of professionals, particularly those working in local authorities, who are responsible for the development and delivery of cycling strategies. Central to this was the commitment to promote best practice and encourage exchange of experience.

F.42 Along with 10 other authorities, CTC and Cycling England we took part in this project which enabled authorities to visit and learn from each other. Twenty of our cycling initiatives have been presented to the group as examples of best practice, including our cycle design guide.

F.43 A visit to Leicestershire by 8 participating authorities and the CTC took place on 20 & 21 October 2005, which was the fifth visit in the midlands region. We are enthusiastic about building on the good work that we have undertaken so far, in order that we can continuously improve. The Benchmarking Project is an ideal opportunity to do this and during the visit various issues were raised which would assist us to improve our cycling initiatives even more.

F.44 A consolidation workshop was held in March 2006 and an Action Plan produced, which includes actions to be taken as a consequence of the comments received from the Benchmarking Project visit.

F.45 **Best practice cycle guide** We have written and produced a Best Practice Cycle Guide to share with other authorities, neighbours and developers. It is used internally and has been shared with numerous others, including Northamptonshire, Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils, Sustrans and the National Parks. It is also shared with consultants who are designing new schemes and as a result schemes are now designed in the first instance to County Council standards and best practice which has saved significant hours of staff time in consultant liaison. The folder has been extremely well received with very positive comments and praise.

F.46 **National Cycle Network (NCN)** We have been used as an example of good practice for signing the National Cycle Network (NCN), which contributes to our objective of promoting safe and healthy communities. The Network has been developed over the past 10 years by the transport charity Sustrans, in partnership with local agencies. The project has resulted in several routes connecting towns and villages in Leicestershire, providing local networks for recreational, school and commuter cycle journeys. In September 2005 we received an award from Sustrans for 'consistently delivering the (cycling) Network swiftly and imaginatively, across disciplines and departments'.

F.47 **National Cycle Network (NCN) Waymarking Project** The style and standard of waymarking of routes within Leicestershire was felt to be of such a standard that Sustrans requested our expertise in helping to develop new standards and designs for the waymarking of cycle routes, which is to be carried out by rangers.

F.48 **National Byway Project.** We are a flagship authority for how we sign cycle routes. The National Byway has commended us for the excellent quality of signing and the integration of new signs into existing signage in Leicestershire. In its letter to the County Council the National Byway said that it will photograph the signs and show them to other local authorities as an example “of how the Byway can and should be signed”.

F.49 **Cycle routes on our website** The public can now download 16 different cycle routes from our website. Information available includes route maps, local points of interest and contact details.

Reducing road casualties

F.50 **Road safety review** To utilise resources effectively, and maximise casualty savings, we carried out a review in 2004 of our accident investigation and prevention procedures. During the review we visited several other authorities to discuss their procedures. As a result new systems have now been put in place, including how programmes of schemes will be identified, prioritised and implemented and how the effectiveness of schemes will be monitored.

F.51 **National road safety week** Leicestershire County Council has teamed up with Leicester City Football Club (LCFC) to promote road safety. We sponsored a LCFC match, which coincided with the start of National Road Safety Week.

F.52 **Road safety theatre for Leicestershire schools** We have teamed up with three professional theatre groups to provide road safety plays to students in 27 schools across the County during November 2005. This initiative provided enhanced input to all four Key Stages covering pedestrian safety, in car safety, young drivers and attitudes to speeding.

F.53 **Safety centre** A new safety centre, called “Warning Zone” is being established by the Leicestershire Road Safety Partnership. The centre will be part funded by money received from speed awareness workshops. It will mainly target children in Year 6 (10-11 year olds) and will cover a range of road safety scenarios. A presentation to the East Midlands Region Road Safety Team was carried out during March 2006 and, in the future, consideration will be given to marketing the centre to the rest of the region.

F.54 **‘First Steps’ child pedestrian scheme** This scheme was developed following initial research in Strathclyde University. The scheme was introduced to prepare young children for independence as pedestrians by improving their knowledge and skills in a practical way. The scheme has been operating in Leicestershire schools and Leicester City during the past three years and has been very well received. It continues to reach around 30 schools each year and about 1500 pupils in the County and City areas.

F.55 **Junior road safety officer (JRSO) scheme** This scheme is now in its 19th year. A DfT funded report “guidelines for evaluating road safety education interventions” evaluated our JRSO scheme and was very positive about its benefits. It concluded that JRSOs and other children in their school benefited in terms of increased knowledge and safer attitudes towards road safety. The author endorsed this view at the RoSPA road safety congress in Cardiff.

F.56 **Junior road safety officer (JRSO) website** As a result of the positive evaluation of our JRSO scheme we launched our Junior Road Safety Officer Website in April 2003. This site was designed by children through competitions, and continues to be a great success. It is used by Junior Road Safety Officers in approximately 200 schools. The London Borough of Richmond has quoted the website as good practice in presentations that they carried out.

F.57 Young drivers Risk of injury shifts at age 14-15 to car passengers, with the car often driven by inexperienced 17-18 year olds. We have therefore set up a series of 'driver days' at Mallory Park. These consist of both workshops and accompanied drives for new and aspiring drivers. It is anticipated that the venue will prove attractive to young drivers, therefore maximising attendance.

F.58 Safer driving with age (SAGE) initiative was introduced in 2001/02 after learning from Gloucestershire County Council and our own Driver Improvement Scheme. The initiative, in conjunction with local health centres, optometrists and approved driving instructors, assists drivers who are aged seventy or over. It offers a medication review, eye sight check and driving assessment. The initiative has proved to be very popular and the service has been provided to approximately 150 clients in 2005/06. The Safer Driving with Age (SAGE) initiative has now been extended and continues to experience a continued uptake.

F.59 Review of Leicestershire motorcycle safety In Spring 2006 we will be embarking on a review and analysis of motorcycles casualties in Leicestershire, with a view to producing a comprehensive Motorcycle Action Plan. The review will include:

- An analysis of accidents
- An appraisal of current best practice throughout Leicestershire (based upon work undertaken by partners in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership (LLRRSP))
- A literature review of interventions in other parts of the country
- An attitude survey of other road users
- An overview of motorcyclists' attitudes and understanding of safety.

F.60 The completed plan will form the basis of our work over the next five years to bring about a reduction in the number of motorcycle casualties.

F.61 Leicestershire motorcycle forum We are members of the Leicester and Leicestershire Motorcycle Forum. This consists of delegates from the motorcycle trade, bikers' groups, highway authorities and the police and was set up to give motorcyclists a voice in transport issues which affect them, particularly road safety. This forum also contribute invaluable feedback when we undertake investigations of rural routes that are experiencing motorcycle casualties. Members of the forum ride the routes and help to identify issues from a riders' perspective that may contribute to motorcycle collisions.

F.62 'Shiny Side Up' partnership The regional 'Shiny Side Up' partnership comprises authorities from Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. We develop and share best practice in education and publicity and the training of motorcyclists. The partnership received the Prince Michael International Road Safety Award in 2003. Through the partnership we undertake a range of activities including the targeting of sports bike riders at key events. John Reynolds, British Superbike Champion, also gives invaluable time and effort to this campaign.

F.63 'Fatal Attraction' campaign The Shiny Side Up Partnership developed a campaign called 'Fatal Attraction' to target sports bike motorcycle users. A video wall is used at motorcycling events and competitions are used as a mechanism to gather user data to enable targeting of specific campaigns. As a result of learning from this experience we utilised the idea of competitions as a method of collecting data about near miss motorcycle incidents. We used an exhibition trailer at a British Motorcycle Federation Rally on an 'Act of Blind Faith' theme. The data collected and the trailer will be shared with a national campaign and the 'Shiny Side Up' partnership.

F.64 **‘Blind Faith’** Another important initiative is our ‘Blind Faith’ display, relating to a specific motorcycle accident in the county. This is taken to numerous motorcycle events along with the motorbike involved in the collision. The rider involved in the accident also helps us to deliver the safety message. Competitions that run in tandem with the display have allowed us to build up a database of approximately 4,000 motorcyclists, to whom we now send safety promotional material. We also loan the display to other local authorities.

F.65 **BikeSafe** This is a new initiative, which was launched in March 2006 and involves assessed rides with the police or local training organisations. Riders will receive feedback on their riding and advice on how to minimise risk and maximise the benefits of their motorbikes.

F.66 **‘Think Bike’ campaign** We run poster campaigns on routes with motorcycle casualties, to encourage motorcyclists to take responsibility for their own safety and to encourage other road users to be more aware of motorcyclists and ‘Think Bike’.

F.67 **Driver improvement training** Driver improvement courses are offered to drivers who might otherwise be prosecuted for driving without due care. This course has now been running for 8 years, with approximately 200 drivers taking up the course each year. In January 2006 we commenced a profiling exercise, to identify the type of offences and person typically sent on the course. On completion of this exercise we will review the course, amending it as necessary to target our audience and maximise benefits.

F.68 **County wide speed limit review** In a recent review we ensured that all Leicestershire villages have a speed limit below the national speed limit for single carriageway roads and that any new speed limits were both realistic and appropriate to the road environment. We welcome the publication of new DfT guidance and will carry out a further review in light of this.

F.69 **Community Speed Watch.** When investigating the potential effectiveness of this scheme we learnt from other Councils. The scheme empowers parishes to contribute towards speed reduction in their own communities. Volunteers are sought, pledges given by parishes and individuals, and training is provided by both Leicestershire Constabulary and the County Council. It is anticipated that this scheme will encourage more proactive community involvement in the monitoring of speed, and help to encourage drivers within those communities to take greater responsibility for their own actions. We intend to introduce approximately 8 pilots in the first year, with the first trial launched in Spring/Summer 2006.

F.70 **Work related road safety (WRRS)** Leicestershire County Council has used the business register to target medium sized companies to encourage and promote safer driving at work. Distribution of over 450 CD Roms on work related road safety has recently taken place to both local and national companies. As a result several companies have asked us to run driver attitude training for them.

F.71 **County Hall driver and vehicle safety policy.** This work-related road safety initiative ensures that our employees drive safely and responsibly and that all employees who drive for work are competent and legally able. One aspect is an annual vehicle document check for those employees who drive for work, which covers such things as driving licences, insurance certificates and vehicle documents.

F.72 **Road safety publicity campaigns** We run campaigns throughout the year using radio, leaflets, posters and buses. These often follow DfT national campaigns and are co-ordinated with other Road Safety Partnership members to achieve more effective outcomes and better use of resources. In 2005/06 we ran approximately 40 campaigns, an increase of 25% on previous years. Regular liaison meetings with the police help co-ordination campaigns with police enforcement. Evaluation of our campaigns is a built-in element, enabling road safety officers to make value for money judgements in order to maximise the effectiveness of future campaigns.

F.73 Christmas 2005 drink drive campaign In 2005 Leicestershire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Derbyshire County Council launched their first Three Cities drink drive campaign 'Don't Dice with Death at Christmas', which was supported by the DfT. The police and local road safety officers aimed to warn drivers that it takes less alcohol than people think to become a drink driver. We also promoted a range of non-alcoholic cocktails for the Christmas period.

F.74 'Belt Up' campaign Research has shown that 12% of men and 5% of women still do not wear seat belts in the County. Buses are utilised in this campaign to advertise the road safety message. For maximum impact, the message covers the whole back and/or side of the bus, and special film is used which allows passengers to see through the message.

F.75 Scottish Road Safety Campaign (SRSC) We assisted in the development of 'Pole Position', a road safety game for 12 to 18 year olds who attend youth clubs and groups. Other partners are Youth Scotland, UK Youth and ReMit.

F.76 Other safety work We also work closely with local and national companies on various initiatives. One example is our work with the Loughborough based company '3M Heath Care'. They recently donated 8,000 high visibility vests to 7-10 year olds in the Loughborough area, in order to highlight the importance of wearing clothing that can be easily seen by vehicles in the winter months.

F.77 Vehicle activated signs (VAS) We undertook discussions with Norfolk County Council on the effectiveness of their VAS schemes before we implemented our own VAS programme. The VASs continue to provide a reduction in speed and accidents and, as a consequence, are being introduced more widely. We have now produced our own VAS guide, which other authorities have expressed an interest in. As a consequence of our experience in implementing VAS schemes we provided advice to Surrey County Council and the TRL for the new national website 'Vehicle Activated Signs Good Practice Guide'. Advice has also been shared with the consultants who built the Great Glen Bypass on behalf of the Highways Agency, which resulted in the installation of signs at the end of the Bypass in Kibworth. Advice has also been given to numerous other consultants and authorities.

F.78 Flashing amber lights The idea of using flashing amber lamps to denote a 20 mph zone during school starting and leaving times was developed after learning from Derbyshire County Council. This approach has been adopted at several locations, including Claybrooke Parva, Breedon on the Hill and Queniborough. At Breedon on the Hill the average speed reduced by 8 mph after the introduction of this measure, which is proving to be more popular with schools than a mandatory speed limit.

F.79 Solar powered flashing amber lights Our use of solar powered flashing amber lights for a school warning sign and cattle crossing sign at remote sites has been identified as good practice in a local newspaper and on national television.

Improving access to facilities

F.80 Hourly frequency bus service Our hourly bus services network was developed from our 'cross-county' bus service, which had originally utilised and developed some of Lincolnshire County Council's experience with its 'Interconnect' project, and our own experience with the Rural Rider service in east Leicestershire. We have now achieved coverage of the hourly, or better, bus service to 95% of Leicestershire. The hourly bus service concept has since been recognised by the DfT as an example of best practice and we are widely sharing our approach with others. This includes a presentation to DfT in spring 2003, Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO) regionally and visit by Kent County Council.

Reducing the impact of traffic

F.81 **Lorry route network** We continue to give advice to a number of other local authorities on our lorry control network and freight strategy, which has been referred to in a rural White Paper. This has included visits from officers from Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Norfolk and Derbyshire County Councils. In particular we are offering support to Northamptonshire County Council on their lorry control strategy and freight partnership. In addition, Gloucestershire County Council have invited us to talk about our freight strategy.

F.82 **Village entry treatments** We have learnt from Bedfordshire County Council about introducing road safety and speed reduction benefits in an environmentally friendly way. We have introduced timber village entry gateway signing at various locations, including Kilby and Stoughton. These measures were introduced as part of a package of traffic calming measures. At Stoughton the timber signing was used to highlight the start of a new 20 mph zone, whilst in Kilby similar signing was introduced as well as new road surfacing. The use of the timber gateway features has been well received by residents and, at Kilby, 85th percentile vehicle speeds were reduced from 37 mph to 25 mph.

Transport asset management

F.83 **Enhanced customer focus** The Highways Network Management Best Value Review recognised our good practice in managing and maintaining our highway network. Several new initiatives were already underway, to support and take forward this good practice and other activities are being reviewed for whole activity/service provision.

F.84 We have introduced several initiatives to further enhance our customer focus. These include moving front line services from County Hall to local offices, to facilitate an integrated local service delivery. This programme of depot and office rationalisation and improvements is ongoing to assist with more efficient delivery of joined up services. This includes:

- Our street lighting client has moved to Croft to join the Street Lighting Operations as a whole service provider. It is now intended to develop a target cost for whole service provision to produce efficiency savings
- Traffic management has been split between strategic and local functions, with local traffic management services integrated with the District Highway Maintenance teams, ITS and Highway Design as appropriate, to ensure a more responsive service to the customer. This will allow the remaining core group to focus on major strategic initiatives, such as decriminalised parking enforcement
- Combining district teams (from Divisions), including former agency areas, and Highways Maintenance Operations teams (from DLO) into two new Highways Area groups has built upon the benefits of the whole service management organisation (WSMO) trial.

F.85 **Highway charter** As an outcome of the Highway Network Management Best Value Review, a Highway Charter was introduced in 2005 which sets out standards for users and stakeholders. As part of our research into this initiative we studied many other local authorities and also contacted the Midlands Service Improvement Group and CSS for information.

F.86 Highways management system The introduction of the Highways Management System (HMS) was one of the recommendations from the Best Value Review in 2002. During research into the system we visited Lincolnshire, Dorset, West Sussex and Derbyshire County Councils. These visits proved very useful and in particular the importance of planning resources necessary for both implementation of the system and the ongoing maintenance was found, and has proved, a useful lesson. This system delivers improved resource allocation and management, supporting the management of our highway network by improving inspection processes and work planning. This can be measured against increased throughput and faster responses. Nottinghamshire County Council officers have now visited us to learn from our ongoing experience of developing this system.

F.87 Highways Codes of Practice We have reviewed our maintenance policy in accordance with the national code of practice, defining the standard to which we will maintain the County's highways. Implementation of the new Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance gave an opportunity to review the inspection and defect repair operations. Our level of confidence with the Codes is already very high and we will be deciding in early Summer 2006 what further changes will be necessary.

F.88 We will utilise the whole service management organisation approach to give the most efficient, effective and consistent response. Member support has been gained through a successful MTCS bid for a high profile inspection, emergency and defect repair service called 'Highway Patrol'. This service will:

- inspect and repair defects
- provide a 24 hour guaranteed rostered emergency callout
- Remove, protect or repair serious hazards within 2 hours, and other hazards within 24 hours
- Liaise with parish and town councils and other community representatives before main inspections, to give them an opportunity to raise minor issues that are of concern. These issues can then be investigated and, where appropriate, be included in the Highway Patrol works on the next visit to the community
- Engage communities to help us to be even more proactive. This will enable us to reduce the causes for genuine highway accident claims and help to minimise spurious claims. This will enable more to be spent on highway maintenance rather than insurance payouts.

F.89 Highway patrols We are responsible for more than 4,000 km (2,400 miles) of roads and pavements and the highway patrol initiative is part of our commitment to provide an excellent service to local people. The initiative was launched in 2005. This service has enabled us to improve further our rapid response service and improve communications with local communities. We are continuing to improve the way we carry out safety inspections and how we react to local highway emergencies and defects and respond to minor repair work. The patrol consists of 13 new and 7 refurbished vehicles, with patrols in all districts in the County. Kent County Council have visited to find out more about this initiative.

F.90 Roadline Introduction of a single telephone number for main highway services to improve customer contact arrangements. A recommendation of the Highway Network Management Best Value Review was to set up a single telephone number in order to improve public access to the service. Whilst researching possible systems County Council officers visited and liaised with Northamptonshire County Council, Edinburgh City Council and Hampshire County Council. Advice was gained relating to the suitability and operation of systems and as a result of the research a single telephone number suitable to requirements was set up and running from 1 April 2003, providing the public with a single point of contact.

F.91 Highways inspectors training programme We are currently developing a highways inspectors training programme, based on the recommendations of the UK Highway Liability Claims Joint Task Group report, which is linked to the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management. We are also linking at a national level with the IHIE and other authorities and training providers to establish a nationally recognised standard. Once established this training programme will certify competency of all inspectors to a nationally recognised standard.

F.92 Highways roadworks protocol The need for a protocol was identified by a MORI survey in 2001, which highlighted that the public wanted improved roadworks information and greater involvement. It was also a requirement of the Highways Management Best Value Review. This initiative was launched in July 2005, and provides improved information to road users. It covers all highways work that is on site for more than 5 days. Information boards are used advising the public of the works and letters distributed to affected residents. In addition, customer feedback surveys are undertaken on approximately 25% of these jobs to assess satisfaction with the works. Questionnaires are distributed and responses analysed in order to ensure continued excellence in service.

F.93 Slurry sealing and surface dressing An effective preventative maintenance programme of surface dressing and slurry sealing is an essential element of the overall maintenance strategy. A whole service management organisation approach has been successfully implemented for in-house surface dressing. We also undertake customer satisfaction surveys after completing slurry sealing and surface dressing works, in order to establish customer satisfaction levels.

F.94 Winter maintenance review We are ready to carry out precautionary salting of our roads whenever freezing conditions or snow is forecast. We have a modern fleet of 29 vehicles which spreads approximately 17,000 tonnes of salt from 6 depots. Every summer an annual review is undertaken of our winter maintenance performance, including plans for the following year's winter maintenance. This review includes an analysis of performance and plans to ensure route optimisation. In Winter 2005 a bad winter was predicted and a report on Central News highlighted our proactive preparations for gritting roads over the winter, ensuring that we were prepared and could continue to provide an excellent service.

F.95 Quality assurance We have achieved the quality standard BS EN ISO 9001:2000 for the design, construction and maintenance elements of our department. This international accredited quality standard promotes consistent and uniform approaches and provides confidence to our customers in the quality of the work that we produce.

F.96 Standards officers Quality Assurance is being extended to all of Leicestershire Highways to get consistent standards. In September 2005 two Standards Officers were appointed to monitor quality, safety and service standards to ensure consistency, development of any good practice or good ideas and identifying and developing training needs and opportunities.

F.97 Noise survey After researching the contents of an article seen in TRL News (a trade Journal produced by the Transport Research Laboratory) we became the first county highway authority to commission TRL's TRITON. This is a purpose built vehicle to measure noise emitted from tyres. Various road surface materials i.e. stone mastic asphalt, hot rolled asphalt and surface dressing, have been tested at 50 kph and 80 kph, and initial results have been used to select the most appropriate surfacing material on our highway network. The results from our testing have been shared with other authorities.

F.98 Maintenance contracts New maintenance contracts based on NEC Term Service Contracts and target costing options are being developed to trial in 2006/07. These will be whole service contracts and form part of the Business Account. They will bring many staff into the disciplines of financial and performance targeting, combined with monitoring of their performance at delivering the service.

Recycling initiatives

F.99 Leicestershire Highways is committed to the County Council's recycling policies and maximises the opportunities to develop and use recycled materials in its works where they are a similar price to 'new' materials and meet recycling specifications.

F.100 Leicestershire Highways disposes of about 50,000 tonnes of waste material per annum, and buys a similar quantity. Our direct labour organisation (DLO) has developed several recycling initiatives and gained a national reputation for innovation. Our recycling initiatives have also been viewed by a number of other counties and received very positive feedback. The following were recycled in 2005:

- Arisings from maintenance and construction works are recycled to form aggregate suitable for use as sub-base material
- Surface Dressing chippings recovered during after care of surface dressing sites are recycled for re-use in surface dressing
- In-situ recycling of footway surfacing materials to form footway base course material
- 'Living Water' recycling of gully emptying 'waste' at Billesdon.

F.101 Although the major areas of recycling have now been tackled Leicestershire Highways is also pursuing the following new areas for recycling:

- Recycled wood chips from Forestry instead of bark mulch on Highway landscaping
- Recycling sites in the west and north of the county to reduce haulage costs of recycling.

F.102 Re-use of bitumous material The successful partnership with Mineral Recycling Co Ltd resulted in the development of a mobile unit to re-heat excavated bituminous material for re-use. The unit recycles 100% of break out material providing significant environmental benefits by reducing the use of non renewable resources, with savings on disposal and aggregate tax costs. It is subject to ongoing improvements. This method has been published as best practice by the Transport Research Laboratory and our experience is shared with others who have the use of a similar machine, including Suffolk County Council and some international authorities.

F.103 Screening surface dressing chippings Our practice of screening surface dressing chippings involves sweeping up of surplus surface dressing chippings which are stored, washed and screen sized to be used the following season. This process has been demonstrated and discussed at the Midlands CSS Direct Management Group. Derbyshire and Warwickshire County Councils now follow a similar practice.

F.104 Sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) Historically in rural areas highway drainage has been substantially dependent on the use of ditches, which provide a sustainable surface water management system. We have increasingly been using SUDS techniques on our new highway schemes. A good example of this is the Rearsby Bypass, where one substantial balancing pond was developed as a wildlife area.

F.105 Billesdon 'Living Water' SUDS project After learning from Tayside Contracts in Dundee, we commissioned Living Water in Billesdon in June 2002. Living Water is an

innovative application for recycling gully emptying arisings, which are drained through natural materials (straw) to a pond. The system is designed to accommodate six tankers per day discharging their liquid load with sufficient capacity for expansion. The process results in the dry residue from the arisings being used as verge fill and saves disposal to land fill. Also, in consultation with the parish council and local residents, an amenity area, taking the form of a wetlands, pond and meadow, has been created in an adjacent field that will enhance biodiversity and wildlife for the enjoyment of local residents.

F.106 Street lighting recycling We recycle the vast majority of waste including steel/aluminium columns, lanterns, lamps and bollard shells, which are recycled into raw materials for fleeces. During 2005 we recycled 29,000 lamps.

Street Lighting

F.107 Information technology We are developing handheld solutions for our operatives in the field, to enable a complete IT solution from taking the fault call from members of the public, to fixing the fault and updating all inventory and fault history programmes without the need to re-enter information. This working practice was viewed in operation at Cheshire and we have shared our implementation experiences with Derbyshire who are looking at similar systems.

F.108 Single non emergency number Street Lighting is one of the few County Council services involved in the single non emergency number initiative, led by the Home Office and ODPM. Leicestershire Constabulary have been chosen as one of 5 trial areas for this. The idea is to reduce the number of non emergency calls to 999 and our street lighting section is working with the SNEN co-ordinators to help set up the new service at their call centre. The trial will begin for Leicester City and Rutland in 2006 and the County area in 2007. The Home Office intend for SNEN to roll out nationwide in 2008.

F.109 Service level agreement National work by street lighting engineers has led OFGEM to introduce a draft "service level agreement" between public lighting authorities and distribution network operators. We have a "champion" for the Central Networks east area who acts as a conduit for information to and from local authorities to national monitoring bodies. It is hoped that, at the completion of the trial, a fully workable national service level agreement will be in place.

Structures

F.110 Structures database We have introduced an in-house programme which has been developed for the management of structures. Future development will include considering aligning the database to the new Code of Management for highway structures

F.111 Bridge maintenance We implemented a scheme to demolish and rebuild cantilevered spans of a bridge at Station Road, Croft. This was successfully completed whilst maintaining the services that crossed the bridge. The scheme was featured on BBC's early Breakfast News and in the Leicester Mercury. Severn Trent, took advantage of the works by replacing a water main at the same time to prevent further disruptions. On the Environment Agency's request we also provided an 'otter run' for the local wildlife which allows animals to cross the river in times of flood.

Major schemes

F.112 Hinckley town centre Learning from Mid Bedfordshire District Council, a new way of setting out maintenance agreements was developed with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. This covered maintenance responsibilities for all aspects of works. This approach was used for Hinckley town centre, which has been transformed by a £1.5m pedestrian scheme. In addition liaison with the Hinckley Town Centre Manager has enabled us to learn lessons about the control of public space, including creating space for 'café culture' and the display of 'A' boards. The Hinckley town centre scheme has been identified as an example of best practice by Babbie, who requested photographs to include in the design guide they are preparing for several West Midlands local authorities for Urban/Streetscape/Town Centre traffic management schemes. The lessons learnt have also been extended to other town centre schemes, including the Biggin Street, Loughborough scheme.

F.113 We are also assisting Essex County Council in their selection of automated bollard systems following the experience gained as part of the Hinckley town centre scheme.

F.114 Access by public transport to pedestrian areas We have assisted the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) in investigating the costs and benefits of access by public transport to pedestrian areas. This was as a result of providing detailed monitoring information following the completion of the Hinckley town centre scheme. In recognition of these efforts, TRL subsequently made available unpublished research material which has been invaluable in the development of projects being developed for LTP2.

Highways Development Control

F.115 Local development frameworks (LDFs) In addition to our work with district councils and Leicester City Council we have recently agreed a joint working arrangement with the Highways Agency on LDFs. We will work together on sharing information and data, traffic modelling, infrastructure provision and mitigation measures, 'soft' measures and a more joined up response to consultation.

F.116 Leicestershire planning application database Further to a request from the Regional Service Improvement Group we have undertaken presentations to other authorities, including Nottinghamshire County Council. Feedback was very positive and Nottinghamshire are now looking at the feasibility of using our system.

F.117 Section 38 agreements We are using best practice guidance for Section 38 agreements (new road adoptions), developed by Nottinghamshire County Council, to improve our procedures. This guidance has been published on the Midlands Regional Best Practice Group website.

F.118 Highways, transportation and development (Htd) This document is founded on the LTP priorities and is updated on an annual basis, to take into account current guidance and practice. A presentation on Htd has been given to the IHIE DC conference and other authorities, including Leicester City Council, have expressed an interest in adopting Htd.

F.119 Securing commuted sums Through the Regional Best Value and East Midlands Development Control Forums, we have developed best practice on securing commuted sums from developers. This covers future maintenance costs associated with new developments. We organised a regional meeting involving 12 authorities in June 2003, and obtained agreement on how the regions should move forward relating to commuted sums. Our best practice guidance has been published on the Midlands Regional Best Value Group website for other authorities in the group to share and develop their own approach and it has been used by other authorities

outside of the region for example Cambridgeshire. It has also informed County Surveyors' Society (CSS) work.

F.120 Advanced payment code We published Advanced Payment Code best practice guidance on the Midlands Regional Best Value Group website for others to use. This has also been publicised through task group meetings.

F.121 PPG3 and highway adoption procedures We have had significant involvement in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister research on PPG3 and highway adoption procedures. We were one of seven highway authorities involved in the sounding board meeting on the ODPM draft report.

F.122 Extent of highway The extent of the public highway is available as an overlay on our Schemes System. Through the use of GeoMap we maintain information on the status and extent of the highway. All users of the system have access to this information, improving efficiency and reducing the risk of inaccurate information being used. We have demonstrated this system to Derbyshire County Council, who have expressed an interest in it.

F.123 Electronic documents and record management system (EDRMS) Our Section 38 team is leading the region in using a fully electronic document storage system linked to a geographic information system (GIS). This shows all roads being constructed under a Section 38 agreement in the County. An oracle database has been developed to allow tracking of the progress of all Section 38 agreements and is currently being extended to cover Section 278 agreements. It will also incorporate an element of work flow to improve our business processes. It is hoped this system will provide efficiency savings through the electronic filing and storage of documents.

Wider Policies

Partnering arrangements

F.124 Procurement of highway services In order to improve efficiencies and service provision, and accommodate peaks in workload, we are in discussions with two other East Midlands 'Excellent' authorities (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire), with in-house design capability, to explore mutually beneficial options to deliver best value. This partnering arrangement will provide support to in-house highway construction works and design and consultancy services. We are hoping to have both new arrangements in place by April 2007.

F.125 This is an exciting opportunity for us to develop joint working between Local Authorities and the private sector, which is strongly supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the East Midlands Centre of Excellence, who have agreed to fund university research into how we can provide and measure best value through the partnering.

F.126 It is anticipated that this partnering can be extended to other activities and other authorities. We are already looking at collaboration on delivering and developing courses through the highways training centres in the East Midlands. We have also carried out a materials price comparison for some of the most commonly used highway materials, and as a result we are working with the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) to reduce annual tender prices. This will help the works units to give even better value for money. Derbyshire materials laboratory is going to carry out some of our materials testing.

Sponsorship

F.127 In 2003 the Highways and Transportation Best Value Review proposed that income could be generated by inviting local and national firms to sponsor schemes. Our new initiative, working in partnership with environmental sponsorship company Keegan Ford, will provide local and national businesses with the opportunity to informally re-brand their chosen roundabout and benefit from the erection of signage that will advertise their partnership with the County Council.

F.128 The sponsored roundabouts, and subsequently the public image of each sponsor, will now benefit from the environmental improvement and enhanced landscaping maintenance that will be taking place as a result. Sponsoring a roundabout is an effective marketing tool, helping to improve the environment. It will also generate in excess of £200,000 over the next three years, which is welcome additional income towards the cost of maintaining the highway.

Receiving recognition for our work practices, services and schemes

F.129 We continued to gain national and regional recognition for our services and work practices introduced during the first LTP. These included:

- **Public transport information** The Leicester and Leicestershire Star Trak Partnership was the first in the county to introduce a text messaging service from mobile phones linked to the real time information system. Recognised as best practice, this innovation was one of the three shortlisted for the National Transport Awards at the Annual Bus Industry Awards in June 2003. The initiative has also been published in DfT good practice guidance.
- **Public transport** The Public Transport Best Value Review recommendation to provide an hourly frequency of bus service has been recognised as cutting edge good practice. As a result of this we were invited to give a presentation to DfT in spring 2003. This approach has also been shared with the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers regionally.
- **School travel plan** In January 2006 we were advised that the Travelling to School Initiation (TTSI) Project Board, on behalf of the DfT, had assessed our school travel plan strategy and classified it as 'Category 1', the highest grade. A spokesperson for the Department for Transport stated, "Leicestershire has produced a robust strategy to guide the development of their school travel plan programme and I am not proposing to provide any more detailed feedback as their approach is fine and no further work is required at this stage."
- **Cycling** We have been an enthusiastic supporter of the Sustrans National Cycle Network, which contributes to our objective of promoting safe and healthy communities. In September 2005 we received an award from Sustrans for 'consistently delivering the (cycling) network swiftly and imaginatively, across disciplines and departments'.
- **CTC benchmarking project** A report produced after a visit by the Benchmarking Project in October 2005 included many positive comments, identifying excellent features in our approach.
- **Cycling** Sustrans recognised our National Cycle Network 'waymarking project' as a national example of best practice.
- **Road safety initiatives** A DfT funded report "guidelines for evaluating road safety education interventions" specifically evaluated our Junior Road Safety Officer scheme and was very positive about its benefits. It concluded that JRSOs and other children in their

school benefited in terms of increased knowledge and safer attitudes towards road safety. The author endorsed this view at the RoSPA road safety congress in Cardiff.

- **Road safety publicity** We have won four national and regional awards in the last two years for radio adverts developed for child pedestrian and young driver safety messages. As a result, requests have been received from other authorities, including Tayside Region and Cornwall County Council, for a licence to use the adverts in their areas.
- **Safety cameras** In November 2005 the Midlands Safety Camera Partnership (MSCP) was presented with a commendation certificate by the Prince Michael International Awards in recognition of our 'outstanding contribution to road safety'.
- **Motorcycle safety** The East Midlands 'Shiny Side Up Partnership', of which we are a member, develops and shares best practice in education, publicity and the training of motorcyclists. The partnership received the Prince Michael International Road Safety Award in 2003. In addition it has received the Motorcycle Industry (MCIA) premier award for the video campaign 'Fatal Attraction'.
- **Lorry control strategy** We completed implementation of our lorry control strategy in March 2006. Our strategy was recognised as best practice by the Government in its Rural White Paper. In partnership with the Ashby Woulds Regeneration Forum we also won the Royal Town Planning Institute Silver Jubilee Cup for National Planning achievement in 2001/02.
- **A607 Rearsby Bypass** The A607 Rearsby Bypass received a 'Considerate Construction Award'. The Considerate Constructors Scheme is a national scheme which is endorsed by the Government, LGA and many other affiliated bodies. Mowlem, our contractor partner achieved a bronze medal at the national award ceremony.
- **Hinckley town centre** This busy town centre has recently been transformed by a £1.5m pedestrian scheme. It has been identified as an example of best practice by Babbie who requested photos to include in the design guide they are preparing for several West Midlands local authorities for Urban/Streetscape/Town Centre traffic management schemes. The project gained commendation in the national Interpave public sector and local government magazine 2004 design awards for 'excellence in the design of public spaces'.
- **Highways development control** In recognition of our research and development of policies we have participated in several national projects, sponsored by the Office of the deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). These include research into PPG3 and adoption issues, where we participated in regional workshops and were a member of the 'sounding board'; and on residential parking, where we were a member of the 'sounding board' too. We are now involved with preparation of the proposed national Street Manual (covering design of residential roads) and with the east midlands regional assembly in the review of regional parking standards.
- **Signs** The use of solar powered flashing amber lights for school warning signs and cattle crossing sites at remote sites have been subject to publicity as good practice in local newspaper and on national television.
- **Spiral markings** Our approach to providing spiral markings at roundabouts to improve lane discipline and road safety has been quoted as best practice in a National Driving Instructor's magazine. The article urged other authorities to adopt a similar approach.
- **Training** We have been awarded the Centre Approval Certificate which enables us to run City and Guilds training courses at our Market Harborough training centre. We have also been awarded a certificate from the Highways and Construction Training Assessor which allows us to run their courses.

- **Quality assurance** We have achieved the quality standard BS EN ISO 9001:2000 for the design, construction and maintenance elements of our Department.
- **Arboricultural award** Our Forestry section is presently the only local authority arboricultural section within Great Britain that is accredited and listed by the Arboricultural Association as an “approved contractor”, entry of which is rigorously tested by three yearly examination of our systems and practices.

