

MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

Our achievements towards our policy priorities

The following pages set out, under each of our policy priority areas: -

- Brief details of our achievements during the last year (2001/02) – (full details of all our achievements are published in our service performance plans).
- Our progress against best value national performance indicators.

During the last ten years local councils have developed a range of measures, now known as - **Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's)**. These show how we are performing in comparison with other councils and with our own performance in previous years. We have compared ourselves against other county councils using national data (details of our performance against all current national performance indicators can be seen in Appendix A).

Provide improved road maintenance standards and better bus services.

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Our achievements include: -

- Opening the County's first permanent park and ride site taking an estimated 275 cars a day out of Worcester city centre streets.
- Being awarded £1.2 million, the highest single award to a local authority under the government's 'Urban Bus Challenge'. The funding will provide the first cross city bus service in Worcester linking the housing estates of Dines Green and Warndon and giving direct public transport access to two of the biggest employers in Worcester, Reality and the new Worcestershire Royal Hospital.
- Carrying out a study for improvements to Kidderminster rail station aimed at helping buses, taxis, cars, pedestrians, cyclists and disabled passengers to more easily access the station.
- Being one of the top county councils in the country in maintaining our street lights (Chart 1- using published data for BVPI 98 in 2000/01); and keeping our principal roads free from major defects with only one other county council with fewer defects recorded in 2000/01.

Chart 1
Percentage of street lights in working order



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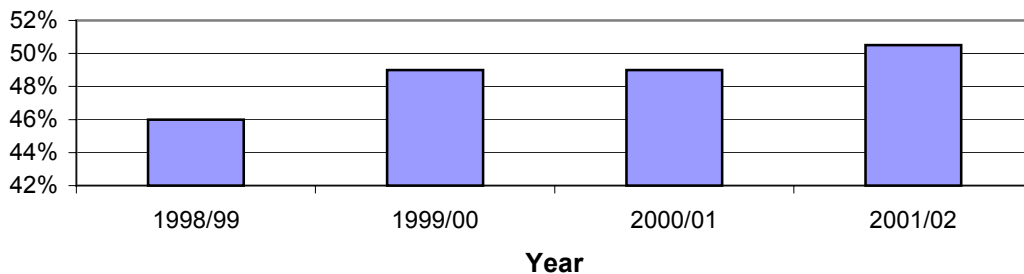
Raise standards in schools, increasing the number of children who benefit from education beyond the statutory age limit and encouraging lifelong learning for all.

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Our achievements include: -

- Continuing to increase the attainment levels of 14 year olds in English, Maths and Science Tests (Key Stage 3) and the number of 16 year olds gaining 5 or more GCSE's at Grade A*-C (Chart 2 – BVPI 38).

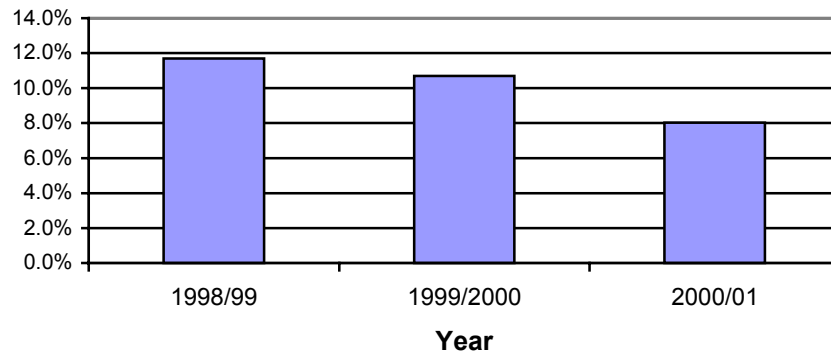
Chart 2
Percentage of 16 year olds gaining 5 or more GCSE's at grade A*-C
(BVPI 38)



- Achieving a national quality award for the excellent work of the Early Years Team in supporting the provision of nursery places for 3 and 4 year olds in the County.
- Increasing the participation and achievement of pupils in Art, Music, Dance and Drama, which has been recognised, by a 16% increase in the number of pupils gaining GCSE's in Art subjects.
- Securing £3.6m to improve school sport and P.E. facilities and out of school hours study support.
- Securing almost £800,000 of European Social Funds to support socially excluded pupils.
- Achieving an Eco Centre award for Malvern Hills Outdoor Education Centre in recognition of their sustainable policies and practices.
- Making available adult learning courses in over 100 schools and community venues.
- Providing a programme of community-based Laptop Computer courses, which attracts over 2,500 new learners each year.
- Improving information links with schools and the media through two training events for school staff plus innovative media training for young people, which has received praise from the Cabinet Office.
- Improving our performance against the national performance indicators we have: -

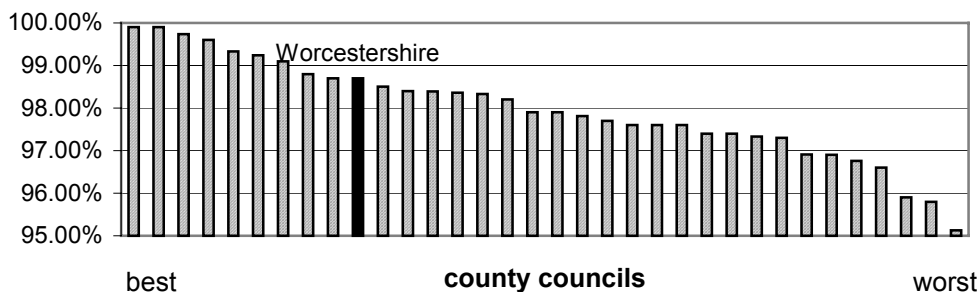
- Achieved a continuous reduction in the number of unfilled secondary school places making more efficient use of our resources (Chart 3 – BVPI 35b).

Chart 3
Percentage of unfilled secondary school places (BVPI 35b)



- Compared well against other county councils with a low level of overcrowding in the youngest classes in primary schools (Chart 4 – data taken from the Audit Commission’s published figures for BVPI 160 in 2000/01).

Chart 4
Percentage of primary school classes (reception to year 2) with 30 pupils or less



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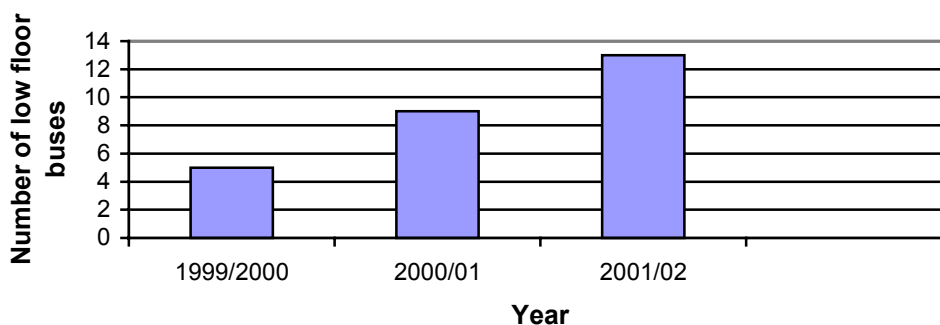
Older and vulnerable people helped to live independent lives

Our achievements include: -

- Increasing our level of support for informal carers to help people stay in their own homes.
- Fully integrated Health and Social Services Teams in the 6 main localities in the County to improve our services for people with mental health problems. This has led to improved assessments of people's needs, far less duplication and overlap between services and much quicker response to crises.

- Increasing the take up of a fund that enables people with learning disabilities to live independent lives.
- Improving our services to older people following a detailed review.
- Appointing a co-ordinator to develop and implement independence initiatives for older people. We are working to help maintain the independence of older people and enable more to remain at home by increasing the level of home care and support. This has resulted in a turn-around in our previous year's decline against the national performance indicator for older people helped to live at home and we are on track for continuing to improve against this indicator in future years.
- Providing a local base for a Community Mental Health Team in Droitwich with another under way for Worcester City.
- Setting up a dedicated team to provide employment support for people with physical disability and sensory impairment.
- Improving the opportunity for independent travel for disabled people by purchasing accessible vehicles for community transport schemes and increasing the number of low floor (easy to access) buses in operation in Worcestershire (Chart 5).

Chart 5
The number of low floor buses in operation in Worcestershire



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Give a voice to the people of Worcestershire by listening to their views and representing those views locally, regionally and nationally.

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Our achievements include: -

- Consulting more young people in Worcestershire through: -
 - Coordinating and supporting the election of 3 Youth MP's for Worcestershire.
 - Setting up the "Listening to Children Group" to enable looked-after children to have greater involvement in the development of children's services.
 - Improving our consultation arrangements to include youth groups.

- Involving five new community groups in projects as part of the “Discovering Worcestershire” scheme.
- Consulting the public on the options for changes to the school catchment areas in Bromsgrove.
- Producing a County Flood Plan in partnership with the Police, Fire service and other partners which sets out the operational response to major flooding events in order to minimise the future impact of the flooding that has caused devastation across the County in recent years.
- Improved our ability to respond to representations by implementing a new corporate representations procedure and complaints database.
- In response to your demands improving the number of books in libraries and extending opening hours. Libraries are now open for an extra 34 hours per week bringing the total increase in opening hours to 95.67 hours per week over the last 3 years.

Further details of consultation can be found shown in the section ‘Working in partnership and involving the community’ below.

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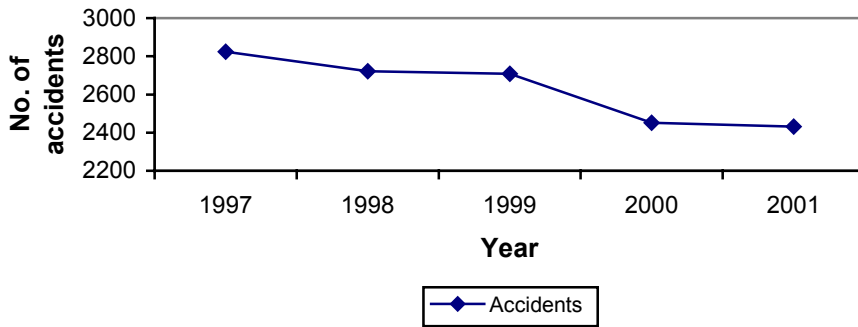
Reduce crime and make Worcestershire a safer place in which to live, work and travel.

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Our achievements include: -

- Providing £120,000 to support a range of community safety improvements in different parts of the County, including work with young people, work with ethnic minority groups and tackling domestic violence.
- Supporting those affected by domestic violence through funding a countywide helpline. Only five other county councils provide or support more domestic violence refuges per head of population.
- Making key school routes safer and more convenient for walking, cycling and using public transport with the further aims of reducing peak hour congestion and improving children’s health.
- Working with the Police and other partners to continue to reduce road traffic accidents (Chart 6). We have installed a new accident analysis computer package allowing us to more accurately assess accident data provided by the Police and consequently identify black spots and provide the most appropriate solutions.

Chart 6
Road traffic accidents per year



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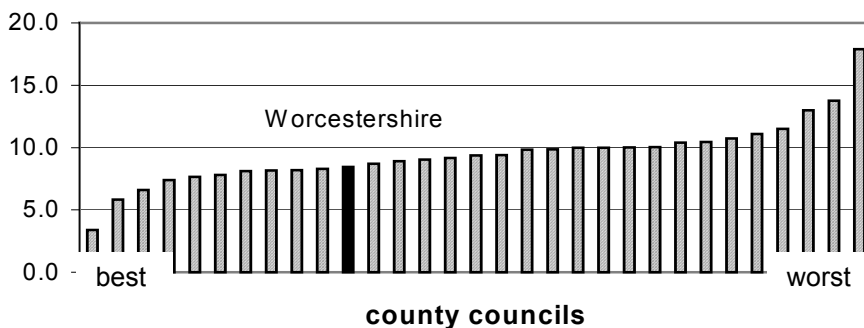
E ffective services provided to all the people of Worcestershire by a quality, well - motivated workforce.

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Our achievements include: -

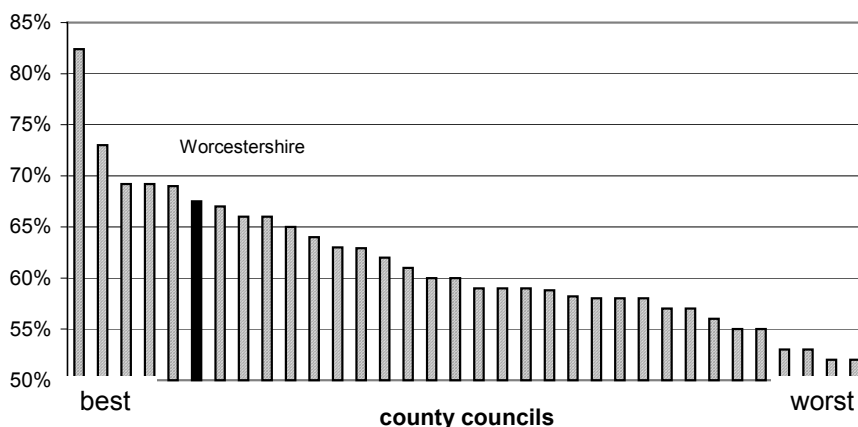
- Investing in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) updating computer hardware and installing new systems for geographical information, education management and finance. The new systems provide potential savings and productivity gains (a saving of £0.5 million this year was estimated for the new financial system) and the updated hardware contributes to better service delivery.
- Producing our first Asset Management Plan to help us make more efficient and effective use of our land and buildings.
- Adding to the success of other parts of the Council in previous years achieving the Investors in People award in Financial Services Directorate indicating a quality and motivated work force providing a quality service to the public.
- Achieving a lower than average number of working days lost to sickness each year compared with other county councils (Chart 7 – BVPI 12 Audit Commission published data for 2000/01).

Chart 7
Number of days lost to sickness per full-time employee
(BVPI 12 - 2000/01)



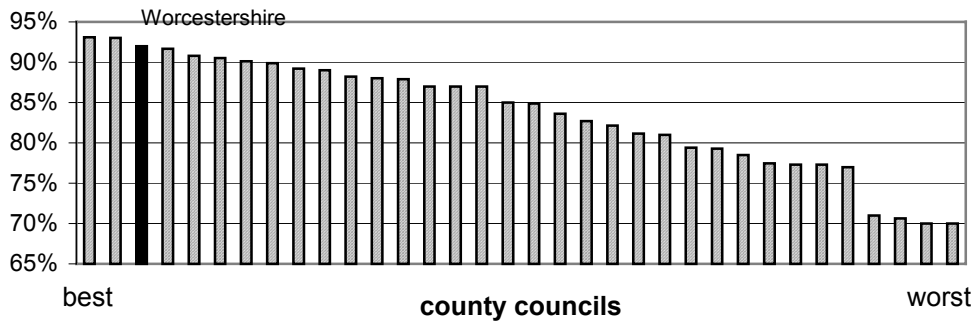
- Receiving positive feedback from external inspectors for the services that have been reviewed to date. The last three reviews that were subject to full inspection were judged very positively with: -
 - The Library and Information Service being a **“Good service that has excellent prospects for improvement.”**
 - Development and Training being a **“Good, two star service which will improve.”**
 - Educational Psychology being a **“Good service with promising prospects for improvement.”**
- Receiving positive feedback from light touch best value inspections including: -
 - Legal Services external income generation – “...process has been used in a constructive way to generate an awareness of what the business is about, to drive greater effectiveness and increase income generation.”
 - Local searches – “...the searches service provides an efficient service at a reasonable cost.”
 - Payroll Service – “...the service is currently performing well and the Council staff we met on site endorsed this view.”
 - Pension fund administration – “This statutory service is well thought of by its members.”
 - Reprographics – “...the service is delivered by enthusiastic staff, working in a professional manner and is well thought of by Council staff...the service compares well on cost ...(and) the customer survey showed high levels of satisfaction...”
 - Traffic Signals – “...the review shows that it is rated highly by stakeholders...”
- Performing well compared with other county councils in providing an overall satisfactory service to the public (Chart 8 – BVPI 3 Audit Commission published data for 2000/01).

Chart 8
Percentage of public satisfied with the overall service provided by their county council (BVPI 3)



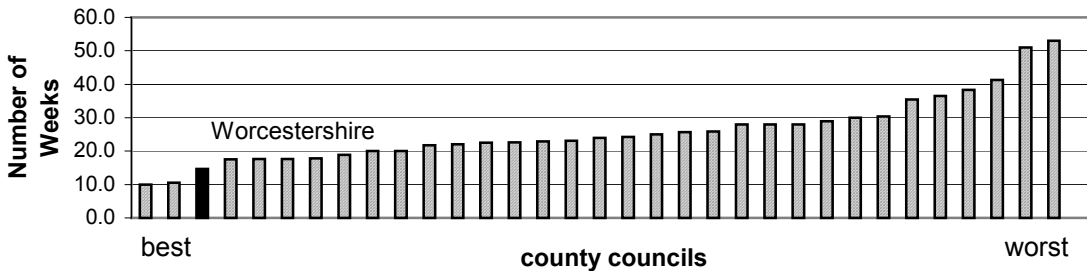
- Providing an efficient service when settling payments and comparing well against other county councils in paying our invoices on time (Chart 9 – BVPI 8 Audit Commission published data 2000/01).

Chart 9
Percentage of invoices paid on time



- Providing an efficient planning service comparing well against other county councils in the average time taken to process planning applications (Chart 10 – BVPI 110 Audit Commission published data for 2000/01).

Chart 10
Average number of weeks taken to process a planning application



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Strong local economy that gives satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the environment.

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- In partnership with Advantage West Midlands, the Birmingham Districts, Chamber of Commerce and the Learning Skills Councils of both Birmingham and Worcestershire forming an investment company to help modernise and diversify the economy linking Birmingham hi- tech industries with Malvern Science Park.

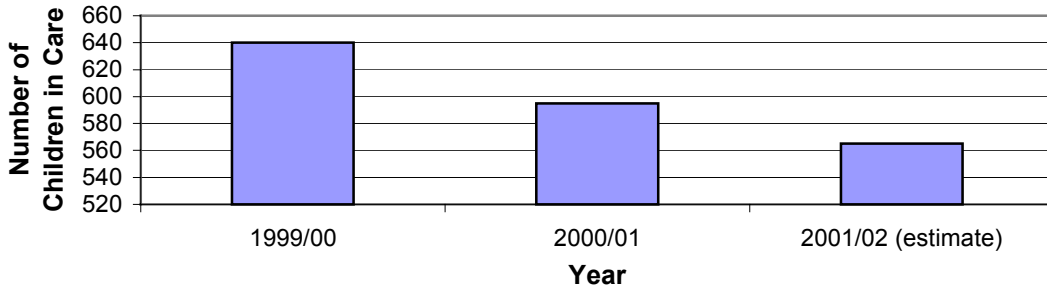
- Working in partnership we have produced a Foot and Mouth Recovery Plan with the aim of ensuring a stronger rural economy for the long term.
- Regenerating the rural environment through the “Vital Villages” Initiative, which provides advice and arranges grants for providing or improving village shops, post offices, community centres and halls. Vital villages is a joint initiative with Warwickshire County Council and to date: -
 - 6 Worcestershire village shops have been refitted.
 - The village hall has been upgraded and a community shop set up in Cleeve Prior.
 - A new community room has been provided for Clifton-Upon-Teme nursery.
 - 20 village shops throughout Worcestershire and Warwickshire have received grants to create a more pleasant shopping environment or wider range of goods and services.
- Setting up the Worcestershire Ambassadors Scheme, which has over 80 members, predominantly senior representatives from the private sector, whose role it is to promote Worcestershire to the people they meet through their business activities. The scheme has also developed into a successful local business networking club.
- Commissioning a study to find ways of reducing traffic congestion problems and improve access into and out of Stourport.
- Setting out an audit framework to ensure that sustainability is integrated into all services provided by the County Council and a programme of audits began early in 2002.
- Developing an overarching planning strategy for the development and use of land in the County for the period up to 2011 to ensure a balance is maintained between economic development and the conservation of the environment.
- Starting work on a Waste Local Plan to increase the proportion of waste that is recycled and reduce the proportion disposed of in landfill sites.

Support children, young people and their families.

Our achievements include: -

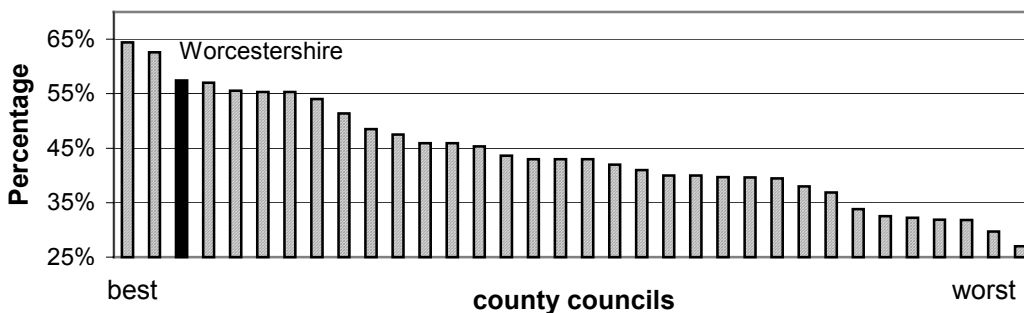
- Increasing the number of foster carers.
- Undertaking a comprehensive review of our Family Support Services and as a consequence totally restructuring this service. There is already evidence that this is working well with much greater support for children in their home environment and consequently fewer children coming into care (Chart 11).

Chart 11
Number of children coming into care each year



- Increasing the proportion of children in family placements. Compared with other county councils, of the children we have coming into care the proportion of children placed in a residential home is low. This is a consequence of our work to place as many children as possible in family placements.
- Implementing an action plan for short breaks for children with disabilities in partnership with Barnardos.
- Ensuring all schools have designated teachers and personal education plans to improve the education of looked after children. We compare well against other county councils in ensuring children leaving our care have received a good level of education (Chart 12 – BVPI 50, Audit Commission published data for 2000/01).

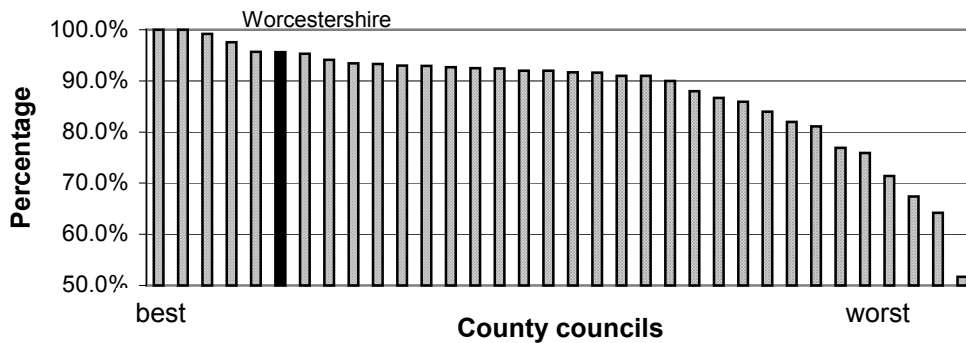
Chart 12
**Percentage of children leaving care with at least 1 GCSE graded A*.
 G (BVPI 50)**



- Establishing a separate adoption service with increased staffing levels.
- Producing a County Autism policy used by DfES as an exemplar for other local education authorities.

- Performing well compared with other county councils in the reviewing of children on the Child Protection Register (Chart 13 – BVPI 162, Audit Commission published data for 2000/01).

Chart 13
Percentage of children on the child protection register whose cases have been reviewed (BVPI 162)

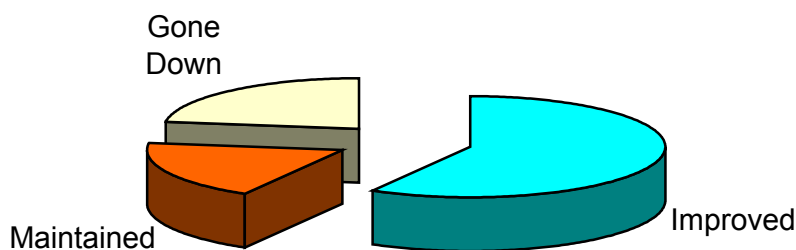


Overall Achievement

Overall we have: -

- Maintained or improved our performance in 77% of the national performance indicators, where comparisons were possible.

Overall Progress Against National Performance Indicators (where comparison is possible)



- Moved up a league table of county councils from 31st in 1998/99 to 28th in 1999/00 to 20th in 2000/01 (using different baskets of performance indicators).