

Independent

Accountable

Thorough

Impartial

Investigative

Open

Business Plan 2006-07

July 2006

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Introduction

Last year, the Commission set in train an important project to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the casework processes. A full review of the processes and ancillary functions was undertaken with the assistance of external consultants. The review came up with a number of recommendations and suggestions for further consideration, some of which were fairly fundamental to the way in which cases are progressed through the system. The Commission resolved to implement nearly all of the recommendations, and work began to lay the foundations for implementing a new casework process and managing the transition from the existing process.

The main focus of the plan objectives for 2006/07 will therefore be the completion of much of the work begun last year. This will be a challenge and will involve many of the caseworking staff in workstream groups and consultations. There will also need to be changes to the supporting systems to reflect the new processes.

Because of the changes to casework processes which will occur during the year, and the diversion of caseworking staff from reviewing cases to design and implementation of the new systems, the casework projections for the year are more uncertain than usual. The projections have been made using the best available information. They show that the situation during the year is likely to be that slightly more cases will be closed than new applications received. Projections for subsequent years (contained in the Corporate Plan 2006-09) are that the new processes will begin to make a real improvement and lead to reduced waiting-times.

2006/07 is also an important year for the support functions. New leases will be agreed for the office accommodation in Alpha Tower, a new contract placed for our IT managed service and a replacement telephone system installed. All of these are major projects for an organisation with no dedicated procurement staff. Financial resources continue to present a challenge, and rigorous control of expenditure will be an important feature to enable us to maximise caseworking resource whilst operating within our delegated budget.

During the currency of this plan, we shall continue to work closely with our sponsor, the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, and our key stakeholders, to ensure that we deliver value for money and fulfil expectations of our vital role in the criminal justice system.

Graham Zellick
Chairman

Aims

Overall aims

The overall aims of the Commission are to:

- investigate cases as quickly as possible and with thoroughness and care
- work constructively with our stakeholders and to the highest standards of quality
- treat applicants, and anyone affected by our work, with courtesy, respect and consideration
- promote public understanding of the Commission's role

Strategic aims

The Corporate Plan for 2006-2009 identifies three strategic aims through which the overall aims will be realised. These are:

① Casework

“To review and decide cases efficiently and effectively, and with the minimum of delay consistent with the circumstances of individual cases.”

② Resources

“To ensure that the core activities of the Commission are supported by the appropriate use of available resources, and that value for money is delivered.”

③ Corporate matters

“To ensure that the Commission's activities are properly planned and monitored, that it achieves an appropriate public profile, and that a positive contribution to the criminal justice system is made.”

Business Plan Objectives

Strategic aim ① - casework

“To review cases efficiently and effectively, and with the minimum of delay consistent with the circumstances of individual cases.”

Case intake is expected to be about 1,000 cases (2005/06 – 938). Although the proportion of cases dealt with at each stage has fluctuated slightly over the past few years, the forecast for the plan period has been based on an assessment of the likely continuing pattern.

The delivery of this strategic aim will be through the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective		Performance indicator	Ownership
Improve efficiency of casework process			
1.1*	Develop a revised case segmentation scheme with streams driven by case complexity and work content	Scheme agreed by Project Board by 07/06 Segmentation begins 10/06	Director of Casework
1.2*	Define casework pathways for each stream and for distinct case types	Pathways implemented 10/06	Director of Casework
1.3*	Develop Vectus in response to the changes to the casework processes	Changes agreed by Project Board by 11/06 Work complete by 03/07	Director of Casework
1.4*	Review method of case allocation and size and spread of caseworker portfolios based on experience and the Commission’s needs	Portfolio profiles agreed by Project Board by 09/06 Portfolios in place by 10/06	Director of Casework
1.5	Develop case audits to ensure compliance with formal memoranda	Methodology devised and audits commenced by 12/06	Director of Casework
1.6	Introduce systems to improve the progression of cases	Develop methods to enable Group Leaders to identify cases exceeding target times	Director of Casework
		KPI3 – case completion times	Director of Casework
Casework performance indicators			
1.7*	Develop appropriate casework performance indicators	Proposals agreed by Project Board by 11/06 Implemented by 01/07	Director of Finance & IT
Knowledge management			
1.8	Update knowledge management systems	Proposals agreed by Project Board by 10/06 Implemented by 12/06	Director of Casework

* = objective directly derived from the casework processes project

Details of KPIs are on pages 14 to 16

Strategic aim ② - resources

“To ensure that the core activities of the Commission are supported by the appropriate use of available resources, and that value for money is delivered.”

The delegated resource DEL for the plan year totals £7,664k. There is no capital DEL, which means that any capital spend must be funded by diverting resource DEL. Essential capital spend in the year includes a small amount of IT project overrun from the previous year, and the updating of the telephone system.

Many of the costs of the Commission are fixed (at least for the plan period). Although economies are planned wherever possible, this means that the amount remaining to fund staff costs is dependent on how much of the budget must be used for capital and non-recurring purposes. Typical non-recurring costs in the plan year are costs associated with completing the tendering process for the IT managed service contract, the development of our next 5-year IS strategy and the procurement of a new telephone system.

During the plan year, we will be concentrating on ensuring that we have the right staff who are properly trained, motivated and rewarded. We will also be improving financial controls and consolidating the provision of appropriate IT tools.

The delivery of this strategic aim will be through the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective		Performance indicator	Ownership
Management of human resources			
1.9*	Produce a skills matrix for each casework role to assist with development and training of staff	Proposals agreed by Project Board by 10/06 Implemented by 12/06	Director of Casework
1.10*	Implement staff management and appraisal system	System agreed by 01/07 and implemented by 03/07	Director of Admin & HR
1.11	Manage staff absence	KPI9 – staff absence	Director of Admin & HR
1.12	Become a “Best Place to Work” employer of choice	Make significant progress in preparing for registering in the scheme in 2007	Director of Admin & HR
1.13	Retain staff	KPI10 – staff turnover	Director of Admin & HR
Provision of appropriate IT			
1.14	Complete the re-tendering for a managed service contract	Contract placed by 12/06	Director of Finance & IT
1.15	Prepare IS strategy for 2006-12	Strategy completed by 01/07	Director of Finance & IT
1.16	Replace telephone system	New system in place by 08/06	Director of Finance & IT
Accommodation			
1.17	Renegotiate lease for Alpha Tower offices	New lease in place by 08/06	Director of Finance & IT

Details of KPIs are on pages 14 to 16

Security			
1.18	Review of security arrangements (information and physical) and security policies	Work commenced in year; completion in 06/07	Departmental Security Officer
Finance and procurement			
1.19	Review procurement and financial authorisation procedures and implement new limits	Complete by 10/06	Director of Finance & IT
1.20	Complete the physical verification and labelling of all assets, and the adjustment where necessary to the fixed assets register	Complete by 10/06	Director of Finance & IT
1.21*	Develop financial performance indicators	Proposals agreed by Project Board by 11/06 Implemented by 01/07	Director of Finance & IT
1.22	Ensure spending is within delegated DEL levels	KPI6 – expenditure against budget	Director of Finance & IT
1.23	Actively manage cash resources	KPI7 – cash deposits held	Director of Finance & IT
1.24	Ensure suppliers are paid in accordance with terms of trade	KPI8 – prompt payment	Director of Finance & IT

* = objective directly derived from the casework processes project

Details of KPIs are on pages 14 to 16

Strategic aim ③ - corporate matters

“To ensure that the Commission’s activities are properly planned and monitored, that it achieves an appropriate public profile, and that a positive contribution to the criminal justice system is made.”

The delivery of this strategic aim will be through the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective		Performance indicator	Ownership
Planning and monitoring			
3.1	Monitor performance against the business plan objectives	Performance monitored throughout the year and appropriate action taken	Senior management team
3.2	Communicate business plan objectives to staff	Presentation by end July 06	Senior management team
3.3	Prepare a long-term forecast of capital requirements with funding strategy	Complete by 09/06	Director of Finance & IT
3.4	Develop an integrated reporting package for communicating key information to our sponsor	Package developed and in use by 03/07	Director of Finance & IT
3.5	Maintain relationship with sponsor	Schedule meetings in accordance with the established protocol	Chairman and senior management team
3.6	Complete the revision of the Business Continuity Plan	Revised plan in place by 10/06; plan tested by 01/07	Departmental Security Officer
Communications			
3.7	Develop a stakeholder relations strategy	Strategy complete and agreed by 09/06	Head of Communications
3.8	Review and revise the website and activate unused features	Complete by 01/07	Head of Communications
3.9	Review and refresh all literature to reflect changes in casework processes	Complete by 03/07	Head of Communications
3.10	Achieve an overall increase in the proportion of applicants who say it is ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to find out about the Commission.	Number of applications falling into this category in 2006/07 at least 5% greater than for 2005/06	Head of Communications
Wider contribution			
3.11	Continue to develop systems and procedures for identifying and reporting on matters of law, practice and procedure	Review of systems completed by 12/06	Director of Admin & HR
3.12	Continue to grant access for research on the Commission’s casework data	At least one new research project accepted by 03/07	Chairman

Budget & projections

① Casework

2005/06 actual

Cases in Progress at 31 Mar 2005			Twelve-month Intake to Stage	Cases in Progress at 31 Mar 2006			Twelve-month Decisions at Stage						GCW Effort Cases	
Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review		Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review	Total	Progress to next Stage No	Progress to next Stage %	Refer No	Refer %	Not Refer No		Not Refer %
Stage 1														
87	11	76	1,017	98	30	68	1,006	547	54.4			459	45.6	1,002
Stage 2 Screen														
359	224	135	547	267	66	201	639	122	19.1	15	2.3	502	78.6	672
Stage 2														
306	133	173	122	312	151	161	116	3	2.6	30	25.9	83	71.5	107
Stage 3														
8		8	3	9		9	2			2	100.0	0	0.0	3
Totals:														
760	368	392	1,017	686	247	439	1,091			47		1,044		

2006/07 - A

Cases in Progress at 31 Mar 2006			Twelve-month Intake to Stage	Cases in Progress at 30 Sep 2006			Twelve-month Decisions at Stage						GCW Effort Cases	
Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review		Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review	Total	Progress to next Stage No	Progress to next Stage %	Refer No	Refer %	Not Refer No		Not Refer %
Stage 1														
98	30	68	430	95	25	70	433	235	54.4			198	45.6	434
Stage 2 Screen														
267	66	201	235	275	80	195	227	43	19.1	5	2.3	178	78.6	224
Stage 2														
312	151	161	43	292	139	153	63	2	2.6	17	25.9	45	71.5	58
Stage 3														
9		9	2	9		9	2			2	100.0	0	0.0	2
Totals:														
686	247	439	430	671	244	427	445			24		421		

2006/07 - B

Cases in Progress at 30 Sep 2006			Twelve-month Intake to Stage	Cases in Progress at 31 Mar 2007			Twelve-month Decisions at Stage						GCW Effort Cases	
Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review		Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review	Total	Progress to next Stage No	Progress to next Stage %	Refer No	Refer %	Not Refer No		Not Refer %
Stage 1														
98	30	68	570	51	1	50	617	335	54.4			282	45.6	608
Categorisation														
0	0	0	335	100	50	50	235	235	100.0					260
							Total		Receive from Catgn %					
Category A														
206	60	146	127	210	60	150	123		54.0%	3	2.3	120	97.7	125
Category B														
264	113	151	71	208	88	120	127		30.0%	15	12.0	111	88.0	111
Category C														
106	46	60	38	114	64	50	30		16.0%	8	26.5	22	73.5	25
Totals:														
674	249	425	570	683	263	420	561			26		535		

Intake for 2005/06 adjusted to include refused re-applications

Casework projections are based on the number of available caseworking staff. It is assumed that the change to the classification of cases will take place at the beginning of October 2006, and consequently the projections are contained in two tables covering each period. The proportion of cases that will be dealt with in each category has been estimated using data available and the proposed criteria to be used to categorise cases.

The strategy during the year will be to maintain the number of Screen cases waiting at an operational minimum. Once the new system of classifying cases is brought into effect, the same will continue for Category A cases. Resources will be allocated to Category B cases so as to try and reduce the numbers waiting, with the ultimate objective of achieving an operational minimum at some point beyond the plan period. This will be done subject to also achieving a moderate reduction in the number of Category C cases waiting.

Progress against these projections will be monitored through **KPI1 – caseflow balance** and **KPI2 – cases waiting**.

A measure of our performance in relation to how well we have handled cases from the viewpoint of our applicants is the number of upheld complaints and successful judicial reviews. These are monitored through **KPI4 – number of upheld complaints** and **KPI5 – number of judicial reviews**.

Details of KPIs are on pages 14 to 16

2 Human resources

<i>At start of period:</i>	Headcount	FTE	
Commissioners	13	10.5	
Case review managers + caseworkers	46+4	42.2+4.0	
Casework admin staff	17	17.0	
Other casework staff	11	11.0	
Total casework staff	91	84.7	83.4%
Admin & executive staff	18	16.8	16.6%
TOTAL	109	101.5	100.0%

<i>Average for period:</i>	Headcount	FTE	
Commissioners	12.6	10.3	
Case review managers + caseworkers	46.0+4.0	42.2+4.0	
Casework admin staff	17.0	17.0	
Other casework staff	11.0	11.0	
Total casework staff	90.6	84.5	83.7%
Admin & executive staff	17.6	16.4	16.3%
TOTAL	108.2	100.9	100.0%

<i>At end of period:</i>	Headcount	FTE	
Commissioners	11	9.7	
Case review managers + caseworkers	46+4	42.2+4.0	
Casework admin staff	17	17.0	
Other casework staff	11	11.0	
Total casework staff	89	83.9	84.2%
Admin & executive staff	17	15.8	15.8%
TOTAL	106	99.7	100.0%

Five Commissioners (3.8 FTE) will be retiring from the Commission at the end of 2006. Three new full-time Commissioners have been recruited. It is anticipated that two will start in November and the remaining one in January to minimise the impact of the change on caseworking. It is expected that there will be a small reduction in support staff as a result of reduced hours and natural wastage.

3 Budgets

[£k]	2006/07	2005/06 actual
Staff costs		
Salaries	3,765	3,646
Employer's NIC	320	305
Pension contributions (PCSPS)	560	482
Home to business travel	75	233
Contract staff	20	53
Total	4,740	4,719
Running costs		
Accommodation	679	560
Administration	339	459
HR	77	84
IT	763	754
External case related expenditure	132	150
Other	172	144
Total	2,162	2,151
Non-cash costs		
Depreciation	400	539
Cost of capital	(65)	(47)
BBA pension provision	328	336
Dilapidations provision	24	41
Loss on disposal of assets	5	20
Total	692	889
TOTAL RESOURCE	7,594	7,759
Capital		
Office equipt & furniture	15	14
IT software & development	35	27
IT hardware	20	111
TOTAL CAPITAL	70	152
TOTAL BUDGET	7,664	7,911

All discretionary expenditure has been reduced as far as possible to enable the maximum amount of financial resource to be applied to funding the costs of caseworking staff.

Included in the budget are certain non-recurring costs:

- IT managed service procurement:
 - Procurement costs £53k
 - Transition costs £55k
 - Vectus development licence (capital) £35k
- Casework processes project:
 - Training for group leaders £25k
 - Office moves £15k
 - Vectus workflow development £30k

Also included is the increase in rent and service charges arising from the renewal of the leases for Alpha Tower effective from August 2006.

Depreciation is much reduced as the costs of refurbishment of the offices in Alpha Tower will have been fully amortised on expiry of the current leases in August 2006.

Key performance indicators

1 Caseflow balance
<p>Purpose: A high-level measure of the time it takes to process cases efficiently is whether overall case closures exceed case intake. If they do, then backlogs will be eroded. If they do not, then cases will begin to accumulate and waiting-times will be extended.</p>
<p>Definition: The total number of cases closed at all stages minus the number of applications received. Applications include s15 directions from the Court of Appeal.</p>
<p>Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.</p>
<p>Frequency: Monthly</p>
<p>Data source: Case statistics compiled from Vectus (#630094).</p>
<p>Target: Monthly target: nil 12 month: positive</p>

2 Cases waiting
<p>Purpose: In order to provide an optimum service to applicants, the number of cases waiting should be at a level that minimises waiting times whilst allowing a small buffer to ensure that workflows can be maintained.</p>
<p>Definition: The number of applications waiting to be allocated at Screen and Stage 2/3 of the casework process [for all categories], including s15 directions from the Court of Appeal.</p>
<p>Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.</p>
<p>Frequency: Monthly</p>
<p>Data source: Case statistics compiled from Vectus (#630094).</p>
<p>Target A: Monthly/annual: screen - <85 stage 2 - <160</p>
<p>Target B: Monthly/annual: category A - <65 category B - <125 category C - <70</p>

3 Case completion times
<p>Purpose: In order to provide an optimum service to applicants, cases need to be completed within a reasonable time taking into account the circumstances of the case. The time taken to complete cases will of course vary widely.</p>
<p>Definition A: The elapsed time in months between allocation at Stage 2 and the sending of the final statement of reasons.</p>
<p>Definition B: The elapsed time in months between allocation for each category and the sending of the provisional statement of reasons. Cases involving an Investigating Officer and section 15 orders are excluded.</p>
<p>Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the year to date.</p>
<p>Frequency: Quarterly</p>
<p>Data source: Reports generated from Vectus.</p>
<p>Target A: Quarterly target: 75% of stage 2 cases completed within 18 months</p>
<p>Target B: Quarterly target: 75% of cases completed within time frame- *category A – 2 months *category B – 6 months *category C – 12 months</p>

Note: certain casework KPIs have two definitions and/or targets relating to the period before (A) and after (B) the new case categorisation comes into effect.

4	Number of upheld complaints
Purpose:	The number of complaints serves as a measure of the quality of service provided. However, the nature of the Commission's work means that applicants may complain simply because their case is not referred, rather than as a result of unsatisfactory service. The measure is therefore limited to complaints upheld.
Definition:	The absolute number of complaints resolved in the period which were upheld, and the number of complaints upheld expressed as a percentage of claims resolved.
Calculation:	Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.
Frequency:	Quarterly
Data source:	Records of official complaints maintained by the Complaints Manager.
Target:	Upheld complaints: <10 in number and <15% of resolved complaints

5	Number of judicial reviews
Purpose:	The number of judicial reviews serves as a measure of the quality of service provided. However, the nature of the Commission's work means that applicants may apply for judicial review simply because their case is not referred, rather than as a result of legal errors. The measure is therefore limited to judicial reviews which proceed beyond the leave stage.
Definition:	The absolute number of judicial reviews for which leave granted; and the number of judicial reviews for which leave granted expressed as a percentage of judicial reviews and 'pre-action protocol' letters received
Calculation:	Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.
Frequency:	Quarterly
Data source:	Records of judicial reviews maintained by the Legal Advisors #316536.
Target:	Judicial reviews for which leave granted: <10 and <15% of all judicial reviews/pre-protocol letters

6	Expenditure against budget
Purpose:	The Commission is required to operate within its delegated budget. A key indicator of financial management is the extent to which expenditure in the period is aligned with the delegated budget. Whilst overspends are not permitted, efficient use of resources requires that the budget available is fully utilised.
Definition:	Total expenditure less delegated budget, based on DEL and measured separately for resource and capital, expressed as an amount and as a percentage of budget.
Calculation:	Forecast for the year to date.
Frequency:	Monthly
Data source:	Management accounts.
Target:	Resource: $\leq \text{£}0$ and $\geq -\text{£}150\text{k}$ / ≤ 0 and $\geq -2\%$ Capital: $\leq \text{£}0$ and $\geq -\text{£}15\text{k}$ / ≤ 0 and $\geq -12.5\%$

7	Cash deposits held
Purpose:	Treasury rules provide that grant-in-aid may not be drawn in advance of need. A key indicator of financial management is the extent to which cash flow is managed to ensure that cash balances are maintained within the limits agreed with the sponsoring body.
Definition:	Total cash held at the end of each month.
Calculation:	Recorded for the current period.
Frequency:	Monthly
Data source:	Management accounts / financial statements.
Target:	$\leq \text{£}200\text{k}$

8 Prompt payment	
Purpose:	The Commission is required to comply with the Better Payment Practice Code.
Definition:	The number and value of invoices paid in the period within suppliers' payment terms, or within 30 days where these are not specified, expressed as a percentage of the total.
Calculation:	Recorded for the current period and for the year to date.
Frequency:	Monthly
Data source:	Internally generated data based on payment runs.
Target:	Target: 95%

9 Staff absence	
Purpose:	The extent to which staff are absent affects the productivity of the Commission and its ability to achieve its casework targets.
Definition:	The aggregate number of days of employee absence (other than for normal annual leave and public holidays), divided by the full time equivalent number of employees.
Calculation:	Recorded for the current period and for the year to date.
Frequency:	Monthly
Data source:	Internally generated data based on personnel records.
Target:	Target: < 9 days per annum

10 Staff turnover	
Purpose:	The recruitment and retention of high calibre staff is critical to the Commission achieving its casework targets.
Definition:	Number of employees leaving the Commission during the period, expressed as a percentage of all employees (using FTE)
Calculation:	Recorded for the current period and for the year to date.
Frequency:	Quarterly
Data source:	Internally generated data based on personnel records.
Target:	Target: < 12% and >5%