

**Rural Payments Agency**  
**Strategic Plan 2008/09 – 2010/11**



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# Foreword

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Over the next three years the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will continue to change as it focuses on its core business of paying subsidy and working closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to deliver its Departmental Strategic Objectives and contribute to the Government's Service Transformation Agenda; bringing services together for business and citizens. The last two years have been challenging. The next three will test our resolve as we build on the foundations laid and press on with plans to improve how we operate and deliver improved services while absorbing significant policy changes and addressing weaknesses identified by the European Auditors.

This strategic plan sets out what the Agency plans to achieve over the period of 2008/09 – 2010/11. It presents our strategy for the future of the Agency and focuses on the needs of our customers:

farmers, farming agents, traders and stakeholders, Defra, other government departments and international governments. It places particular emphasis on the services provided and the plans to develop further our strengths as a Paying Agency.

Particular challenges are:

- Improving the accuracy of the payments made by the Agency;
- Delivering more effective services to all recipients;
- Further strengthening control of scheme expenditure;
- Building our capability to implement change;



- Being responsive to issues raised by our customers, stakeholders and auditors, and;
- Demonstrating a continuing reduction in administration costs.

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Achieving our plan is dependent on resources being available under the latest Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The plan will help our customers and stakeholders understand the importance of our work in helping them to achieve profitable, well informed, sustainable and well managed businesses as described in the Defra Strategy.

Good progress has been made over the last 18 months and the Agency is now in a position to move forward into a period of continuous improvement. With this in mind we are seeking to make permanent appointments to the Agency Board over the next few months to help ensure the commitments outlined in this plan are met and that the organisation enters a period of sustained development.

Our first priority is, of course, to sustain the Agency's ability to strive towards meeting its targets across all of the services provided to our customers. We recognise there are considerable improvements required in how we operate and in particular how the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) is administered. Key activities on SPS over the next three years will include implementing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Health Check changes expected to be agreed by the European Council towards the end of 2008 and upgrading the Rural Land Register.

By delivering this plan over the next three years, we will enhance our position as a reliable and stable Payment Agency that achieves full engagement with stakeholders and customers. Our success will be dependent on strong and forward looking leadership, cultural change at all levels, active engagement and sustained effort from all our staff.



TONY COOPER  
Interim Chief Executive

# Summary of Strategy and Priorities

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Over the period of the plan we are committed to achieving the seven strategic objectives set out on page 9.

Our priorities over the planning period will continue to fall, broadly, into three areas. These are summarised below, and set out in more detail on pages 15 to 21.

## Customer service

RPA will be a customer focused organisation that meets targets and the expectations of our customers and stakeholders. Customers will be confident that they will receive services and payments quickly and accurately.

We are progressively working towards a system of whole case working that will enable individual customers to communicate with one member of SPS staff from the start of their claim through to payment. We will provide communication through multiple channels and we will explore with customers and stakeholders further service improvements.



Taking a customer call at RPA Workington

## Improving organisational performance

Our core business will be to make CAP payments and administer related schemes. Effectively managing our customer, entitlement and land registration information and inspections capability will be fundamental to that. Delivering services outside SPS will be given enhanced priority. Payments will be timely and accurate and the risk of overall disallowance will reduce.

Better business and financial planning will enable RPA to respond to the 2008 CAP Health Check changes and other Government initiatives. We will regularly and publicly report on performance progress throughout the period of the plan and provide effective communication through a wide range of channels.

## Efficiency

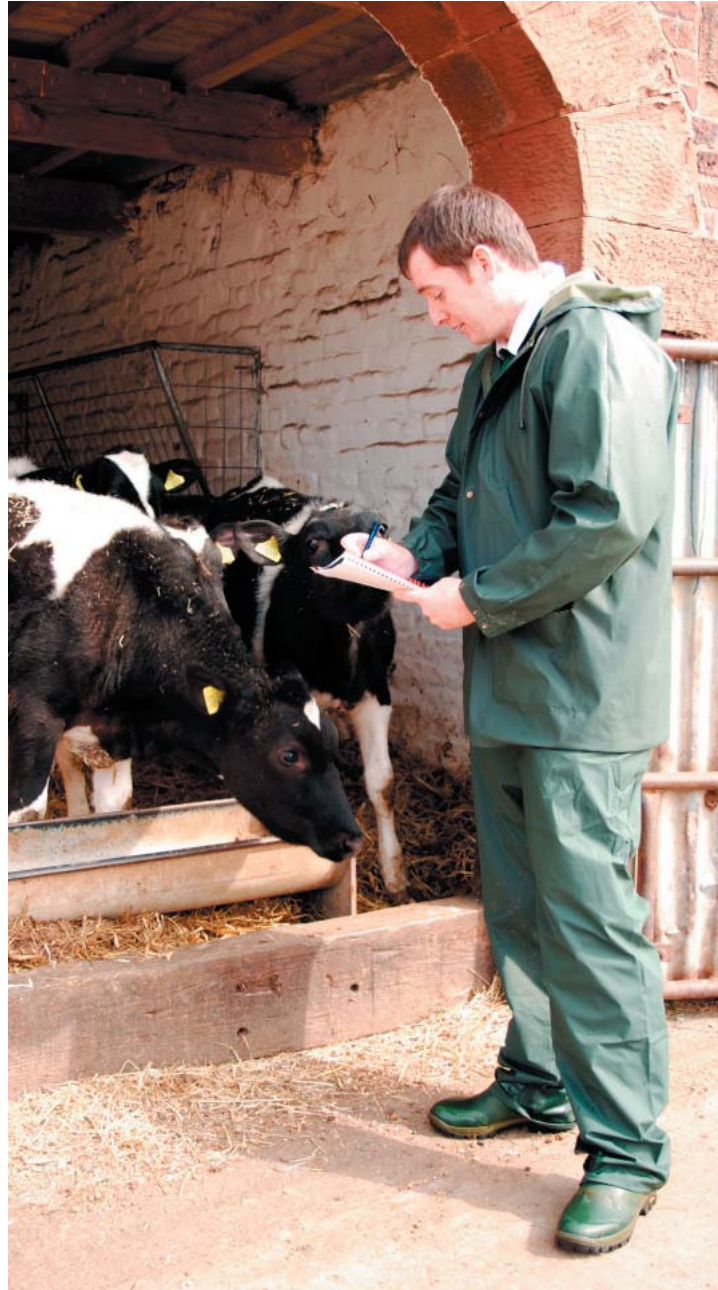
We will play our part in the efficiency savings Government expects of us and will seek reductions in running costs, headcount and disallowance risk and realise the benefits from the investment in the recovery campaign.

RPA systems and processes will be fully developed to ensure payments can be made faster, and with greater accuracy.

Recruitment will be regularised and our people will be well trained and knowledgeable about farming. Leaders will lead, and RPA's competence and performance will improve.

We will proactively contribute to the Government's Service Transformation Agenda through presenting services to customers in a way that makes it easier for them to do business with us. We will seek opportunities to share data, and to utilise common infrastructure, processes and systems that will help RPA and the Defra Network to improve customer services.

Collective effectiveness and efficiency will improve our customers' experience with Government as a whole.



An RPA Inspector checks livestock

# Purpose, Strategic Framework and Values

## Our purpose

RPA is an Executive Agency of Defra. We are a major, customer facing delivery Agency for Defra providing a range of services including: claim processing, making payments, collecting receipts, accounting for financial transactions, carrying out inspections, recording animal movements and maintaining information on land, livestock and customers. RPA contributes to Defra's Departmental Strategic Objectives and targets, particularly the promotion of sustainable, diverse, modern and adaptable farming.

RPA is the accredited Paying Agency for the CAP within England. For direct subsidy payments, such as SPS, our role includes both processing claims and making payments. For schemes under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which are aimed at supporting rural communities to develop and diversify, while delivering environmental and sustainability benefits; claim processing is mainly carried out by other bodies such as Natural England, the Forestry Commission and Regional Development Agencies. We make and account for all payments within European Union (EU) rules and regulations.

For the CAP trader schemes we have Paying Agency responsibility across the whole of the United Kingdom (UK). RPA is also responsible for some animal tracing activities on behalf of Defra and its network of agencies, including the issuing of cattle passports and the recording of cattle movements.

Our inspectors support our customers to comply with regulations.

We also work on joint initiatives with Defra and with other Defra Network organisations on central initiatives.

## A strategic framework

We have a strategic planning framework which enables us to realise our purpose. It consists of:

- A set of strategic objectives through which our aspirations will be realised.
- A set of specific targets and measures that will enable the objectives to be monitored.
- A set of values which will guide everything we do.



An RPA Inspector at work



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## Strategic Objectives

The seven strategic objectives are the means through which our aspirations will be implemented. They form the basis of, and provide a framework for, our key activity areas:

1. To make SPS payments accurately and to progressively reduce the time from claim to payment.
2. To provide services allowing greater direct access for customers and improve our customer satisfaction results.
3. To administer and regulate agricultural subsidy, rural development, trader and livestock schemes.
4. To work closely and constructively with Defra and the Defra Network, including providing accurate and timely delivery input into policy development.
5. To develop leadership and learning so that RPA improves the competence and performance of its people.
6. To minimise disallowance, particularly around SPS.
7. To increase operating efficiency by managing resources better, utilising technology, and sharing Government services.

## Annual Targets and other measures to achieve the strategic objectives.

Targets are agreed with Ministers annually and are measured through agreed performance measures detailed in supporting internal technical notes. The Strategic Plan is underpinned by our Operating Plan, from which our annual Business Plan is derived. This in turn drive more detailed plans for Directorates (including Customer, Information Systems, Human Resource, Finance, Estate and the Inspectorate) and the work plans of teams and of individual members of staff.

## Our Values

We have identified four organisational values, applicable across the Agency, which will guide everything we do.

- Our customers and stakeholders matter:  
We will pursue excellence in all that we do, and work towards providing a high quality service.
- Our people matter:  
We are committed to enabling our employees to realise their full potential and will invest in their training and development to achieve this.
- Collaboration matters:  
We are committed to working in partnership with other agencies, other organisations and our stakeholders, to realise the full potential of our work as a key Paying Agency.
- Performance matters:  
We will encourage innovation, and support the continual improvement of our services.

## Effectiveness

We achieved all targets including those for SPS and the level of error was within our 2% materiality target. We have made progress towards an operation based around case working, automating data checks and bringing previous manual processes into the core IT system. Management information and reporting have been improved. Staffing and costs have been brought under control.

We have participated with Defra in discussions with the European Commission and others. We have contributed to development of policy changes including cross compliance and animal identification. We have improved our accuracy in the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) and have worked with Animal Health on their Livestock Partnership Programme.

All our non-SPS subsidy activities were kept stable and on target. We maintained performance on all these schemes including licensing activities and milk quotas. We completed necessary inspections and increased work with other organisations to improve the inspection process. We will continue that improvement work during this plan.



## Customer service

We have made progress towards enabling SPS claims to be submitted electronically.

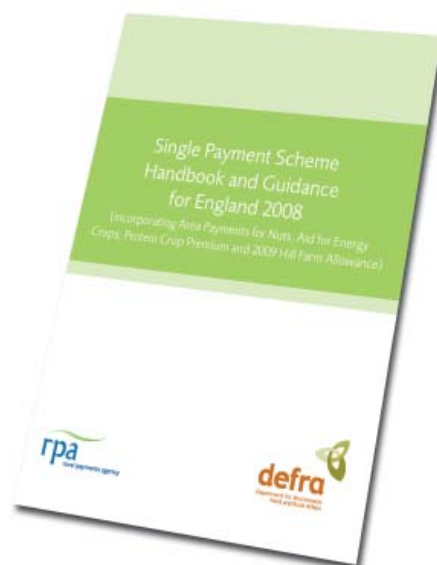
We strengthened corporate leadership and communication through revised internal governance arrangements and have made internal changes to become more efficient and customer focused.

We have improved pre-population of SPS claim forms and simplified the claim form for SPS 2008.

We have introduced revised SPS Claim Statements and improved the format of Entitlements Statements.

Our customers have told us we are improving delivery of clear and accurate information and improving our response times to queries.

We have started simplifying the payment process implementing the first stages of automation for the processing of SPS claims, reducing the manual work. Over 50% of SPS staff involved in the front line processing of claims have undertaken the first stage of SPS training programme.



## Efficiency

An Information Services (IS) strategy has been implemented and development of flexible core IS systems with migration plans for legacy systems has taken place. IS processes have been improved such as the risk management database and performance management information.

A workforce plan was implemented to reduce our overheads and improve the quality of service provided by our staff. Full time equivalent numbers have reduced and the number of temporary staff has also reduced. All senior managers undertook the first phase of a leadership and development programme.

We implemented the first stage of a finance project that delivers better financial management and information throughout the Agency.

# The Planning Environment

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This section sets out the external strategic context for this plan. It also sets out the key principles which will drive our developments through the period.

## Spending Review Period (covering 2008/09 – 2010/11)

On 9 October 2007, the Government published the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (covering the period 2008/09 – 2010/11). As well as spending settlements for all departments, it contained a new set of cross government priorities or Public Service Agreements (PSAs). Defra will lead two cross Government PSA targets:

- Secure a healthy, natural environment for today and the future.
- Lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change.

Defra's mission is 'Living within our environmental means'. For the 2007 spending review period we will contribute directly to Defra's Departmental Strategic Objectives and intermediate outcomes as detailed in Table 1 on page 13.

Central to this will be our support to meet the challenge of improving the contribution that a profitable and competitive farming industry in this country can make to our environment.

This plan's three year timeframe will enable us to set a strategic direction and to deliver on this in the medium and long term. This strategic plan covers the Comprehensive Spending Review period 2008/11. Clearly if there are changes to Ministerial priorities and Defra resources for this period we will need to reorder our priorities to accommodate them.

## Using resources efficiently and effectively

Working with Defra, we are improving our customer services and over the period of the plan will seek to achieve economies and efficiencies.

CAP reform is likely to force more changes and impact on the schemes we administer. The additional work will be challenging and new funding will be needed to implement it.

## Better Regulation

The EU Better Regulation initiative was launched in 2005 as part of the renewed Lisbon Strategy on growth and jobs, focusing on strengthened institutional arrangements, impact assessments for all new policy proposals, simplification of existing legislative stock, and administrative burden reductions. The target for a 25% reduction by 2012 was based on the work already carried out by Member States, who had undertaken administrative burden measurements at national level.

RPA is a key contributor to Defra's Simplification Plan including: better pre-populated forms, improved Entitlements Statements and new Claim Statements and clearer guidance. RPA is working with other Defra Network members to reduce the burden of inspections on farmers.

Table 1: contribute directly to Defra's Departmental Strategic Objectives and intermediate outcomes

<b>Defra's Departmental Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Defra Outcomes</b>	<b>Priority RPA actions</b>
A healthy, resilient, productive and diverse natural environment.	Land and soils managed sustainably. Sustainably, living landscapes with best features conserved.	Land registration services offered to Defra Network members. Payments made and inspections carried out on behalf of other Defra Network members to agreed targets.
Economy and society resilient to environmental risk and adapted to the impacts of climate change.	Public health and the economy protected from animal diseases.	Continue to register cattle births, movements and deaths to agreed targets. Work closely with Defra on animal tracing, cattle, goat and sheep identification and cross compliance inspections.
A thriving farming and food sector, with an improving net environmental impact.	Farming has an improving net environmental impact. Profitable and competitive farm based businesses. CAP reform vision delivered.	Earlier SPS payments and a reduced 'claim to pay' cycle. Payments made and inspections carried out on behalf of other Defra Network members to agreed targets. Implementation of CAP Health Check changes when agreed, subject to additional funding being made available.
Sustainable development championed across government, across UK, and internationally.	Sustainable development successfully championed across government.	Deliver the commitments through the requirements of the environmental standard ISO14001 to have an environmental policy.
Strong rural communities.	Economic growth supported in rural areas with the lowest levels of performance. The evidenced needs of rural people and communities are addressed through mainstream public policy and delivery.	Earlier SPS payments and a reduced 'claim to pay' cycle. Payments made and inspections carried out on behalf of other Defra Network members to agreed targets.
A respected Department delivering efficient and high quality services and outcomes which meet the needs of customers.	Stakeholders, partners and customers have a clear understanding of what the Department is seeking to achieve. Defra shaped to deliver effectively, with resources flexibly deployed and aligned to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skills, capabilities and resources aligned to priorities;</li> <li>• delivering effectively through partners; and</li> <li>• effective and well evidenced policy development and implementation.</li> </ul>	Whole case working for SPS claims, providing customers with quick and direct access to their case worker, resulting in errors being quickly resolved and prevented. Greater contribution to Defra Service Transformation Agenda and other corporate Network activities. Delivery by 2010/11 of promised faster SPS payments, headcount reductions, reduced costs, and reduced disallowance risk.

# The Planning Environment

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## Collaboration and Partnerships

The Government's Service Transformation Agenda focuses on the provision of better services to customers. We will also seek to build on existing collaboration arrangements and seek new opportunities for working collaboratively with Defra Network partners to improve services to customers.

## Sustainability

Central to achieving sustainability will be reducing the environmental impact of the lifestyles we lead, the products that the country's economy produces and consumes, and the waste we produce. In contributing to Defra's Departmental Strategic Objectives ('Strong rural communities' and 'Sustainable consumption and production') we will deliver the commitments in our environmental standard ISO14001, through revised policy and processes as appropriate. A sustainable environmental group has been set up to ensure that we will make the most economical use of energy and other resources and that we move, on a planned and measurable basis, to a more sustainable use of resources across our operations.



## Changing delivery

We will continue to develop as a Payment Agency looking at opportunities within our core activities to do more of what we are good at. We will continue our investment in the senior managers and extend the programme to middle managers, to ensure there is the skill and confidence which we need to deliver across the Agency.



# Strategic Objectives 2008/09 – 2010/11

## Strategic Objective 1

To make SPS payments accurately and to progressively reduce the time from claim to payment.

### Our aspiration

We will have met agreed external and internal targets for paying claims by value within a year and achieved a 98% accuracy rate on all payments made. Customers and stakeholders will have easy access to SPS via multiple channels with particular emphasis in the longer term for online services. Whole case workers will manage a claim from start to finish. Storage of all elements of the information we hold will meet agreed standards and allow shared, secure and effective data management that will ensure optimum benefits. The medium term development of SPS will be guided by the CAP Health Check, clear policies and regulation that acknowledges the long term cost of administering SPS.

### Outcomes

- Earlier and accurate SPS payments made.
- Increased customer satisfaction.
- CAP Health Check changes implemented to the agreed timetable (subject to funding being available).
- All inspections completed to agreed targets.
- Agricultural land well managed.
- Positive image of RPA.



Living the Values campaign

### Success factors

To have:

- Reduced the time from claim to payment so that 95% by value of valid SPS claims are paid by 31 March 2011 for the 2010 scheme year.
- Implemented CAP changes in a way that has not put at risk the delivery of subsidy payments.
- Completed the five phase release IT project underpinning whole case working.
- Fully implemented whole case working through multi channel communication.
- Increased submission of claim forms online.

### 2008/09 Target

To have paid 75% by value of valid 2008 SPS claims by 31 January 2009 and 90% by value of valid 2008 SPS claims by 31 March 2009.

## Strategic Objective 2

To provide services allowing greater direct access for customers and improve our customer satisfaction results.

### Our aspiration

Our service will meet customer expectations and the Agency will develop a sustainable position as the UK's payment and rural land registration service. Customers will value accurate and knowledgeable communication with quick response times. Complaints will be reduced. We will work closely with customers to ensure that reasonable expectations are met. Levels of customer and stakeholder satisfaction will be significantly improved.

There will be wide recognition across the agricultural sector of our developments, achievements and role. We will be visible and have created a reputation for integrity, knowledge and quality customer service. Our services and contribution will be understood internally and externally.

### Outcomes

- Satisfied customers.
- Increased standards and access of information.
- Well informed, sustainable and well managed rural businesses.
- Positive image of RPA.

### Success factors

To have:

- Customer satisfaction at industry standard for RPA services.
- Implemented an improvement plan and customer strategy starting with SPS and latterly to all customers.
- Contributed to the Government's Service Transformation Agenda through development of electronic services.
- Contributed and implemented good service practice through lessons learnt from benchmarking.
- Simplified the payment process further.
- Improved customer knowledge about our work and information about the service we provide.

### 2008/09 Target

To demonstrate an improving trend in customer satisfaction by achieving an annual average customer satisfaction score of 6.5 out of ten as measured through surveys of external customers and demonstrating a reduction in complaints.



## Strategic Objective 3

To administer and regulate agricultural subsidy, rural development, trader and livestock schemes.

### Our aspiration

RPA will effectively and systematically manage and govern its many non-SPS services. We will have demonstrated sustainable efficiency and effectiveness by rationalising scheme management. By the end of 2011 we will have reduced our work on trader schemes. Where schemes have reduced in size or come to an end, we will use the skills and experience within the management of these in other parts of RPA. We will have realigned financial and other resources between the schemes. The importance of the RDPE will have grown and become a core payment activity. At the same time, we will be striving to reduce average inspection times.

### Outcomes

- Satisfied customers.
- Inspections completed efficiently and on time.
- Positive image of RPA.

### Success factors

To have:

- Delivered timely and effective services.
- Successfully delivered a non-SPS subsidy strategy realigning and prioritising resources between schemes.
- Supported Defra in their delivery of systems to support livestock tracing activities.

### 2008/09 Targets

To process and pay at least 90% of valid claims, by volume, for Trader and Rural Development Implementation Schemes within Ministerial guidelines and 99% within the set EU Commission deadlines or in their absence 60 days of receipt of the claim.

To record 98% of notifications of births, deaths and movements of cattle on the CTS within 14 days of their receipt.

To make 98% of all RDPE payments in accordance with agreed service level agreement targets.



## Strategic Objective 4

To work closely and constructively with Defra and the Defra Network, including providing accurate and timely delivery input into policy development.

### Our aspiration

RPA's role will be understood and recognised internally and externally. It will be consistently articulated and demonstrated through our work, service and people. We will have built our reputation and influence by working in collaboration and partnership with other organisations, including Defra, Natural England, Environment Agency, Animal Health and the Forestry Commission through the right opportunities. We will focus on collaboration and collective working where it is mutually beneficial, being productive in terms of tangible benefits. We will implement expected changes that will arise out of the CAP Health Check to the agreed timetable, subject to the appropriate funding being made available.

### Outcomes

- Increased RPA information services used by Defra Network members.
- Increased contribution to Service Transformation and other Network activities.
- Positive image of RPA.
- Increased outward focus.

### Success factors

To have:

- Implemented appropriate policy changes to agreed timescales and in collaboration with others.
- Aligned new information service activity to the Government Gateway Integration Strategy.
- Contributed and achieved measurable improvements in services and operational efficiencies as part of the Defra Network collaborative working plan.
- Delivered improvements through better regulation.

### 2008/09 Target

Improvements in the results of satisfaction surveys which will be monitored as an internal target.



Checking field margins as part of an RPA cross compliance inspection

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## Strategic Objective 5

To develop leadership and learning so that RPA improves the competence and performance of its people.

### Our aspiration

We will ensure that inclusive learning opportunities are available across the Agency and, where appropriate, to other organisations or customers. Partnerships with other organisations will inform planning and support the delivery of our customer services and the most effective training. Within partnerships we will be recognised as an innovative and effective provider of training, learning and development. Training and development will be available through direct delivery, via the intranet and as part of partnership working. The roles and contributions of our people will be understood. RPA people will have the right skills, knowledge and information. They will feel recognised, rewarded and motivated.

### Outcomes

- Well trained, outward looking and knowledgeable staff providing an outstanding customer service.
- Greater opportunities for career development.
- Recognition as a desirable place to work.
- Smarter working.
- Decisive and proactive staff at all levels.

### Success factors

To have:

- Implemented and maintained a human resource strategy that ensures our people are equipped with the skills needed to do their jobs, performance management and reward scheme, and be recognised as a good employer.
- All staff to have the opportunity to participate in a continuous, personalised learning and development plan.
- Demonstrated improvements in staff satisfaction measured through the staff survey.

### 2008/09 Target

To demonstrate improved capacity and capability to deliver services and implement change.

## Strategic Objective 6

To minimise disallowance, particularly around SPS.

### Our aspiration

We will ensure the causes of high risk areas are addressed. We will work and liaise closely with customers and respond effectively to European auditors' feedback. We will also engage with customers and stakeholders in advance to capture feedback and manage expectations. We will introduce a better planning and measurement plan to cope with expected changes and challenges and reduce disallowance risk. The key for us will be balancing efficiency against changes while achieving high performance of the schemes. Also, we are continuing to implement regular risk reviews with experienced RPA staff and undertaking good process management that deals proactively with issues raised with us.

### Success factors

To have:

- Demonstrated continuous improvement of data quality.
- All internal and external audits rated as 'satisfactory' or better.
- Implemented and embedded an effective disallowance risk control framework.
- Engaged fully and proactively with customers and stakeholders.



Colleagues in discussion at RPA Reading

### Outcomes

- Reduced disallowance.
- Earlier and accurate payments made.
- Well managed risks and internal controls with few audit failures.
- Positive image of RPA.

### 2008/09 Target

To minimise disallowance risks and make payments accurate to within 2% materiality for all subsidy schemes under RPA's direct management.

## Strategic Objective 7

To increase operating efficiency by managing resources better, utilising technology, and sharing Government services.

### Our aspiration

RPA will be smaller, efficient and accessible with a longer term preference for online transactions. RPA will be effectively led and systematically managed. Its financial resources will be aligned with its aims and objectives. Infrastructure, systems and processes will support our core payment work. Performance management will support learning and continuous improvement. We will demonstrate sustainable efficiency and effectiveness across our work.

### Outcomes

- Financial systems fit for purpose.
- A sustainable Agency with efficiency savings realised.
- Increased staff awareness of efficiency measures.
- Increased environmental awareness.
- Positive image of RPA.

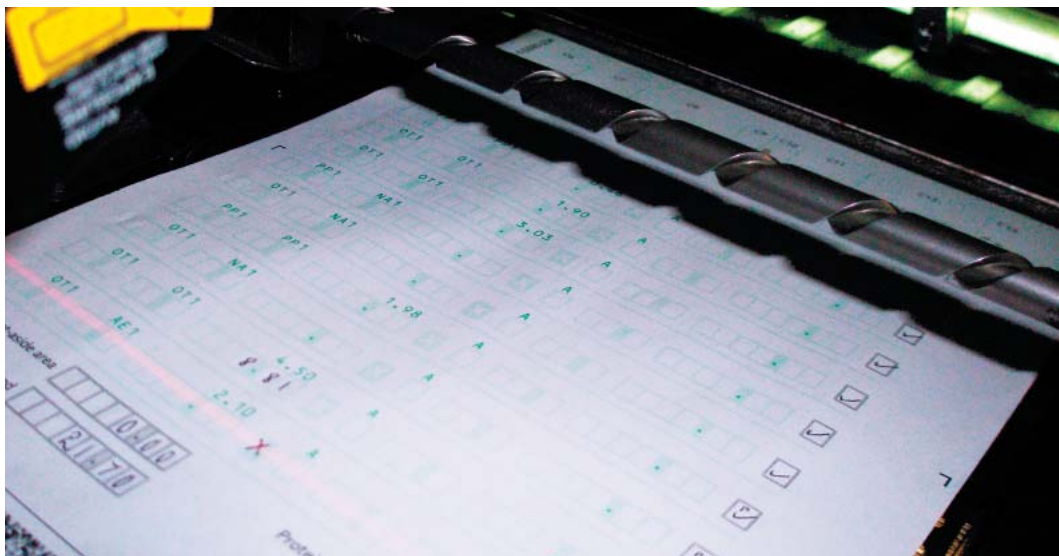
### Success factors

To have:

- Embedded corporate, business planning and performance management processes to meet RPA's needs and to bid for appropriate budget.
- Successfully delivered improvements while maintaining performance across RPA's core business activities.
- Implemented and delivered on a three year efficiency plan that realises benefits and reprioritises resource.
- Implemented appropriate systems and processes in order to apply International Financial Reporting standards from 2009/10.

### 2008/09 Target

To demonstrate a 10% reduction from the 2007/08 year in the cost of administering RPA without compromising service delivery.



A Single Payment Scheme form being scanned at RPA Newcastle

# Finance and Staffing Plan

## Financial Summary

Table 2: RPA budget submission for 2008/09

	2008/09
Total Near Cash	£204.3m
Capital	£22.0m

All financial forecasts are presented taking account of assumed inflation in the period. No funding is included here for any costs associated with changes to CAP.

## Staff

Figure 1: RPA staffing figures for 2007/08 to 2010/11



# Future Beyond 2010/11

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We will have built our reputation, by collaborating and working in partnership with other agencies, for the benefit of our customers. There will be greater expectations and opportunities to deliver best practice public services for everyone and to do so at a lower cost. Less duplication and bureaucracy throughout RPA, streamlined processes and fewer staff will be in place. Service Transformation and Better Regulation will be an integral part of our work.

We expect most of our payment work will be subject to some sort of change. While CAP reform is about changes to European agriculture, it focuses strongly on subsidy payments and is expected to influence the development of our schemes. RPA needs to anticipate and be ready for change, evaluate its consequences on our business and act or react accordingly. We will be a key player in sharing responsibility for delivering necessary change.

The EU Commission's determination to make a difference is underlined by their plans for the CAP Health Check, measures to eliminate the mandatory EU set aside scheme for arable crops, phasing out the EU intervention system for most cereals and further ways to fully decouple agriculture support from production.

More simplification and improved service delivery benefits will be expected from us. Transparent and open working with other agencies will be expected and necessary to ensure we contribute to Government objectives in the most efficient and effective way, for instance, undertaking inspections and enforcement work. Throughout all of this, the flexibility of our systems and our people will be key to our success.

Agency performance and customer service excellence will be expected and we will work towards being in a position to deliver that.



## Strategic Objective 1

To make SPS payments accurately and to progressively reduce the time from claim to payment.

2008/09 activity	Outcome	Targets against which delivery will be measured
Introduce a further simplified customer claim form.	Fewer manual interventions leading to fewer customer contacts and errors.	To have paid 75% by value of valid 2008 SPS claims by 31 January 2009 and 90% by value of valid 2008 SPS claims by 31 March 2009.
IT enhancements and new releases.	System that allows value for money and is easy to change.	
Whole case working, automate data checks and bring manual processes into the core IT system.	Better quality data capture.	
Improve data capture, electronic data exchange with initial validation.	More visibility and accountability for cases.	
Improve Management Information and reporting.	Stronger linkage to customers.	
Improve Management Information and reporting.	Links developed with software providers.	
Begin upgrading Rural Land Register and improve data cross checking.	Improved business processes and performance on SPS payments, case working driving personal, team and site performance, and customer focus.	
Continuous business process improvement activities to remove duplication and include best practice.	Capitalise on ability to produce ad hoc management information as required.	
Complete inspections on time.	<p><b>Resulting in</b></p> <p>Accurate payments, better service to customers, claim to pay cycle reduced.</p>	



## Strategic Objective 2

To provide services allowing greater direct access for customers and improve our customer satisfaction results.

2008/09 activity	Outcome	Targets against which delivery will be measured
<p>Introduce an electronic SPS channel to be accessed by farmers through online services.</p> <p>Implement a Customer Strategy and improvement plan.</p> <p>Simplification measures.</p> <p>Quarterly customer surveys and implementation of findings.</p> <p>Improve communications with customers through whole case working.</p> <p>Stronger corporate communication.</p> <p>Monitor and maintain regular communication with stakeholders.</p>	<p>Increased choice of communication channels for our SPS claimants.</p> <p>Better quality literature.</p> <p>Reduced administrative burden on customers.</p> <p>Increased number of forms available electronically.</p> <p>Improved performance against correspondence targets.</p> <p>Improved communications to all stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Resulting in</b></p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Reduction in number of customer complaints.</p>	<p>To demonstrate an improving trend in customer satisfaction by achieving an annual average customer satisfaction score of 6.5 out of ten as measured through surveys of external customers and demonstrating a reduction in complaints.</p>

## Strategic Objective 3

To administer and regulate agricultural subsidy, rural development, trader and livestock schemes.

2008/09 activity	Outcome	Targets against which delivery will be measured
Review and implement a new service level agreement for RDPE and Structural funds.	Improved management information and reporting.	To process and pay at least 90% of valid claims, by volume, for Trader and Rural Development Implementation Schemes (TARDIS) within Ministerial guidelines and 99% within the set EU Commission deadlines or in their absence 60 days of receipt of the claim.
Agree the future of RPA livestock tracing activities with Defra.	Critical enhancements including CTS online and Infrastructure.	
Enhance the electronic CTS service through online services.	Reduced disallowance.	To record 98% of notifications of births, deaths and movements of cattle on the CTS within 14 days of their receipt.
Maintain performance on trader schemes and milk quotas.	Consolidation of trader scheme management structure.	
Rationalise non-SPS where appropriate.	<b>Resulting in</b> Continued good performance in non-SPS schemes, inspections and cattle tracing.	To make 98% of all RDPE in accordance with agreed service level agreement targets.
Complete inspections on time.	Maintenance of CTS.	
Process changes to the Hill Farm Allowance.		
Work with Defra and its network of agencies to implement policy on cattle tracing, electronic notification of sheep movements and double tagging of sheep.		

## Strategic Objective 4

To work closely and constructively with Defra and the Defra Network, including providing accurate and timely delivery input into policy development.

2008/09 activity	Outcome	Targets against which delivery will be measured
<p>To work collaboratively with other organisations and Defra. To contribute to the achievement of measurable improvements in public services and savings and operation efficiencies.</p> <p>Joint working with Defra particularly on agreeing and implementing the CAP Health Check changes.</p> <p>Work with Defra and partners through the Defra Network Delivery Group to identify opportunities for collaboration.</p> <p>Contribute to Defra projects, programmes and initiatives with operational partners.</p>	<p>Clear corporate direction.</p> <p>Focus on enhancements that improve efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Less disruption to business, fewer IT changes for amending policy.</p> <p>Better managed risks.</p> <p>Deliver efficiency savings based on collaboration.</p> <p><b>Resulting in</b></p> <p>Better managed policy for delivery through collaboration with Defra, with few surprises.</p> <p>Better customer service.</p> <p>Efficiency gains.</p> <p>Improved value for money.</p>	<p>Improvements in the results of satisfaction surveys which will be monitored as an internal target.</p>

## Strategic Objective 5

To develop leadership and learning so that RPA improves the competence and performance of its people.

2008/09 activity	Outcome	Targets against which delivery will be measured
<p>Every senior manager will have undertaken the first phase of the leadership and development plan.</p> <p>All scheme processors will participate in continuous learning and development.</p> <p>More vacancies will be filled by the appointment of permanent staff.</p> <p>Training to raise management skills capability.</p> <p>Implement a scheme to identify, develop and manage talent.</p>	<p>Stabilised workforce delivering improved services.</p> <p>Leaders within the RPA have the appropriate skills to make the changes needed to deliver against our targets and future requirements.</p> <p>Operational staff equipped to administer our business in an effective and efficient way.</p> <p>Staff are clear about the Agency's objectives, their role in achieving them and are well motivated.</p> <p><b>Resulting in</b></p> <p>Improved performance, leadership and skills training.</p> <p>RPA recognised as a first class employer.</p>	<p>To demonstrate improved capacity and capability to deliver services and implement change.</p>

## Strategic Objective 6

To minimise disallowance, particularly around SPS.

2008/09 activity	Outcome	Targets against which delivery will be measured
Supporting Defra in discussions to manage the risk provisioned for SPS 2005 – 2008.	Improvements in data quality leading to improved information held by the Agency.	To minimise disallowance risks and make payments accurate to within 2% materiality for all subsidy schemes under RPA's direct management.
Establish and embed a Disallowance framework to help identify and remedy the risk of disallowance.	Fewer claim queries and quality control failures.	
Improve data quality.	Better managed risks and internal controls; fewer audit identified weaknesses.	
Schedule of audits based on risk.	Improved accountability.	
Improve training and guidance to staff.	<b>Resulting in</b>	
Risk analysis of non-SPS activities.	Making timely and accurate payments while minimising disallowance risks.	

# Appendix 1 Business Plan 2008/09

## Strategic Objective 7

To increase operating efficiency by managing resources better, utilising technology and sharing Government services.

2008/09 activity	Outcome	Targets against which delivery will be measured
<p>Implement Procurement and Estates strategies.</p> <p>To have in place effective and well embedded governance including business continuity planning, risk and issue management to deliver strategic direction and ensure principles of best value are incorporated into our processes and procedures.</p> <p>Deliver better financial management and information throughout the Agency.</p> <p>Deliver IT enhancements on time and to agreed budget and quality.</p> <p>Align our corporate services with the Defra Shared Services Organisation (SSO) where this is appropriate.</p> <p>Improve processes, information services and data quality to support better scheme performance.</p> <p>Seek to simplify the payment process for some of our low risk/low value claims.</p> <p>Embed risk management throughout the Agency.</p> <p>Upgrade ageing and support expiring system infrastructure and software.</p>	<p>Support functions enable the business sufficiently to increase efficiency.</p> <p>Optimised resources.</p> <p>Data quality improvement.</p> <p>Efficiency savings deliver benefits to citizens.</p> <p><b>Resulting in</b></p> <p>Improvement activity investment better placed to deliver efficiency gains in future years.</p> <p>Cost effective and environmentally sustainable RPA estate.</p> <p>Sustain our Licence to Operate and meet core strategic objectives.</p>	<p>To demonstrate a 10% reduction from the 2007/08 year in the cost of administering RPA without compromising service delivery.</p>

## Appendix 2 RPA Governance

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We are accountable to The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. For some schemes we also operate on behalf of the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, through service level and/or agency agreements. The CTS operates across Great Britain.

### Defra

#### **Strategic Advisory Board**

The Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) is chaired by Defra and meets every three months. It provides Departmental oversight and strategic direction to the RPA. It also provides the opportunity to offer shared expertise and greater collaboration between Defra and the Agency.

#### **Delivery Review Board**

The Delivery Review Board is chaired by Defra and currently meets every other month. It brings together all of RPA's customers within Defra to monitor scheme performance and discuss day to day issues.

### RPA

#### **Agency Management Board**

The Agency Management Board (AMB) is accountable for the overall performance of the Agency and specifically, its strategic direction in line with Defra's strategic positioning. It is chaired by RPA's Chief Executive.

#### **Agency Executive Group**

The Agency Executive Group (AEG) oversees RPA's day to day activities. It provides governance on tactical decisions across all Agency functions. It is chaired by the Chief Executive.

#### **Audit Committee**

The RPA Audit Committee is an advisory body to the Chief Executive. It advises the Chief Executive in relation to whether the Agency's accounts, internal control systems and internal and external audit are fully discharged. It also acts in support of the Chief Executive in his capacity as the Accounting Officer.

## Appendix 3 Glossary

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AEG	Agency Executive Group
AMB	Agency Management Board
BCMS	British Cattle Movement Service
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CTS	Cattle Tracing System
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
ERDP	England Rural Development Programme
EU	European Union
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HR	Human Resources
IS	Information Services
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
IT	Information Technology
OPT	Operational Performance Team
PSA	Public Service Agreements
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
RITA	RPA IT Applications
RPA	Rural Payments Agency
SPS	Single Payment Scheme
SSO	Shared Services Organisation
ST	Service Transformation
TARDIS	Collective title for all non-SPS schemes
UK	United Kingdom
WCW	Whole Case Working