

# Her Majesty's Courts Service Business Plan 2007–08



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## FOREWORD BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) remains committed to providing a first class service to the public. Our strategic goal to provide access to justice as quickly and at the lowest cost possible thereby increasing respect and confidence in the justice system underpins everything we have achieved so far and plan to do in the future.

As an organisation we are still in a transitional phase but already we have taken radical steps to modernise and improve delivery of our services. Last year we embarked on an ambitious five-year programme to transform our business, building on existing strengths as well as identifying and putting in place real and lasting changes.

A significant achievement has been streamlining our structure from 42 areas to 25 with minimal impact on our performance. Our focus on improving the court users' experience through the justice system has meant that we have also tested different and better ways of delivering services. In four magistrates' courts areas we demonstrated remarkable improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of court hearings. We piloted successfully a Small Claims Mediation Service that gave users a faster, proportionate and less costly outcome than going to court, and we started a network of Family Court Centres to handle cases involving some of the most vulnerable in our society, providing them with appropriate facilities and assistance.

These and other initiatives are being rolled out or developed further in our courts not only to put the court user at the heart of everything we do but to deliver a step change, a breakthrough in their experience of the court system.

At the same time we are putting in place improvements to the infrastructure to put the service on a sound footing. Systems and processes are being standardised and embedded; better use is being made of information technology to support back office functions and services to court users; flexible, multi-purpose courts located where there is the greatest need; and the talent and expertise of staff developed and properly rewarded. Our partnership with the judiciary and magistracy as well as other agencies continues to be a key factor in our programme of work and we will build and strengthen our relationship with them.

All this is not without its challenges. Like all public service organisations we continue to face a tight financial budget. We have set ourselves a challenge to maintain our performance and improve services while reducing our core operating costs. The Department for Constitutional Affairs has received its Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 settlement. As part of the settlement, the Department has received funding for a modernisation programme. Some of the funding will support us with delivering our key enabling programmes.

We will grasp the challenges and opportunities we face with enthusiasm and vigour to continue with our development of a service fit for the 21st century.



Sir Ron DeWitt

## SECTION I: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### I.1 DCA Strategy

I.1.1 As an executive agency of the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), HMCS will play a key role for the Department as it continues to modernise the delivery of justice, rights and democracy. The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, the Lord Chancellor, has set out clearly that the driving force behind our future reforms, policies and funding is to demonstrate a clear and unequivocal shift from responding to the needs of service providers to delivering on the priorities of the public we serve.

I.1.2 HMCS plays a key role in delivering three of the DCA priorities for the next five years, that is to:

- ensure that people feel the court system is fair, responsive, efficient and protects them from harm;
- prevent vulnerable people's problems escalating and multiplying;
- enable people to take responsibility for their obligations and to enforce their rights.

It also has a crucial role to play in the delivery of the vision for the Criminal Justice System set out in the current Criminal Justice System (CJS) Strategic Plan.

### I.2 HMCS Business Strategy

I.2.1 The HMCS Business Strategy, which was published in February last year, sets the strategic direction, goals and principles for the agency over the next five years. The strategy places the public at the centre of court operations, with services designed around their needs.

I.2.2 The HMCS strategic goal focuses on four key elements: access to justice, reducing cost, increasing speed and respect.

I.2.3 "All citizens according to their differing needs are entitled to **access to justice**, whether as victims of crime, defendants accused of crimes, consumers in debt, children in need of care, or business people in commercial disputes. Our aim is to ensure that access is provided **as quickly as possible** and at the **lowest cost** consistent with open justice and that citizens have greater confidence in, and **respect for, the system of justice.**"

I.2.4 In practical terms this means better facilities and service for those attending court, and working with the judiciary to manage cases more effectively to avoid delay, cost and inconvenience, allow easier access to our services, and deliver improvements in the effectiveness of enforcement of orders of the court.

1.2.5 We have started a Change Programme that will deliver major improvements to our operating model and our ways of working. We are developing plans and working with our stakeholders to bring significant changes in key areas. By 2010 we intend to have:

- Significantly improved the way we support the work of the courts by:
  - working with the judiciary to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the courts;
  - supporting case progression with better technology;
  - introducing more proportionate procedures for the simplest cases; and
  - diverting cases that should not come to court to other methods of resolution.
- Improved our efficiency and effectiveness by:
  - merging and amalgamating the courts and offices where it makes sense to do so;
  - consolidating the administrative functions into back offices;
  - improving electronic links with other agencies and local authorities;
  - increasing the take-up of electronic channels;
  - replacing the paper file in civil and family cases with an electronic one; and
  - automating or simplifying processes where possible, including improving the efficiency of money handling.
- Enhanced our facilities and support to court users by:
  - improving the advice and information available to those seeking to resolve disputes;
  - improving the buildings, waiting areas and customer service culture; and
  - making access to services available through more channels including internet services, electronic filing, telephone services and modern methods of payment.
- Improved outcomes by:
  - implementing specialist approaches in high priority areas such as community justice, domestic violence courts, drug courts and anti-social behaviour courts;
  - creating a National Enforcement Service that will put in place a national framework of enforcement practice, strengthen accountability for performance, and improve the targeting of offenders; and
  - improving enforcement in family cases.

1.2.6 The Change Programme will co-ordinate the implementation of key enablers including:

- the implementation of new IT applications to support the work of the courts; the magistrates' court case management system will roll out to all magistrates' courts from 2007 to 2008, and the improved civil and family case management system will be implemented in the High Court, county courts and family proceedings courts by 2009;
- Criminal Justice IT projects will support case progression, through the Progress system, and further enhancements to data sharing through the Criminal Justice System Exchange;
- upgraded infrastructure networks will be implemented by the new Departmental Innovation and Support Contracts Programme (DISC) supplier, Atos Origin from 2008.

1.2.7 Risk management is a technique that enables HMCS to identify the key business risks we face in achieving our business objectives, and to develop a strategy to ensure that those key risks are effectively managed. It is a process of clearly defined steps, which supports better decision-making, giving a greater insight into the impact that those decisions will have.

Risk management will be co-ordinated and reviewed centrally by HMCS Corporate Governance, supported by Governance Officers based within each Directorate and Region. This co-ordination and integration will ensure that business units' activities combine effectively to serve the overall interests of the agency. It also enables HMCS to compare and contrast its various functions and pinpoint where it has to improve. This will also help embed and accept responsibility for managing risk in an efficient and effective manner with the goal of achieving the objectives and targets set out in the business plan.

All business activities are subjected to the same structured and focused approach to risk management. These may include risks to the business plan, Public Service Agreement targets, group, divisional, or branch level business plan targets, project and programme objectives, or specific business processes.

The resulting system forms a central element of support to the annual statement on internal control (SIC) in line with other issues relating to corporate governance and is subject to audit review by both our Internal Audit Department (IAD) and the National Audit Office (NAO). The application of the risk management framework will be subject to regular review and quality assurance, at least annually, in line with the business planning cycle.



### 1.3 Improving the Public's Experience: Delivering a Breakthrough

1.3.1 The improvements we intend to make by 2010 and progress that has already been made, outlined below, will deliver a palpably different and improved court system. But we cannot wait until 2010 to make a difference and our more immediate aim is to ensure that the levels of service offered by all courts are consistently the best.

1.3.2 This does not mean thinking up new initiatives. As this Business Plan demonstrates we already have a clear direction of travel that when delivered we are confident will substantially improve the service to our court users.

1.3.3 However, we need a starting point. We need to deliver a small number of achievable improvements that we already know do make a difference. In turn, building up the critical momentum that will deliver a breakthrough in the public's experience of the court system as a whole. We know these improvements are achievable because they are already happening in some courts. The challenge is to deliver them in all our courts.

1.3.4 We propose to do this by concentrating on raising the standards of service in each of the following areas.

1.3.5 By the end of 2008 HMCS will:

- **give greater priority and urgency to public law cases** often involving issues such as whether children should be taken into care, with a view to ensuring that the matter is resolved in less than 40 weeks or such later time as the judge or magistrate deems appropriate;
- **simplify and speed up criminal cases in the magistrates' courts so that:** most guilty plea cases are dealt with at the first hearing; most contested cases have no more than two hearings; the majority of simple charged cases take from a day to 6 weeks (on average) from charge to disposal;
- **embed the underlying principles behind community justice in all magistrates' courts**, ensuring local courts improve their awareness and take account of local issues, particularly when dealing with low-level crime;
- **encourage more families to resolve issues themselves** through providing in-court conciliation or directing parties to mediation where it is appropriate and safe to do so;
- put in place the systems and incentives to **ensure that the vast majority of civil business is initiated online**;
- **provide a simpler and quicker service in the county courts** through introducing a presumption that all but the most complex small claims are dealt with by way of mediation;
- **reduce the time taken to deal with cases in the Crown Court**, so that the majority of cases are commenced and concluded within 16 weeks;

- **provide a knowledgeable, personalised and readily accessible service,** keeping users informed about the progress of their case.

In relation to the targets on crime, civil and family we are working with the judiciary, criminal justice and other agencies to achieve these.

- I.3.6 Delivering these changes is not only about prioritising the things that will make a difference but also embedding a cultural change in delivering improved services. This will require not just a step change for the courts but also a change by other delivery partners and agencies, working with the magistracy and the judiciary. The step change needed, especially in the criminal and the family courts, cannot happen without this.
- I.3.7 These changes will not happen overnight. Some courts are closer to delivering these levels of service than others and where this is happening those efforts need to be recognised and the good practice shared. Where they are not yet being delivered, it will require commitment from all parts of the justice system to work together to achieve them, in order to deliver the service the public expects and demands.

## **SECTION 2: PROGRESS IN 2006–07**

### **2.1 HMCS**

- 2.1.1 HMCS has successfully completed its second year as an executive agency of the DCA. Internally, the transition to a streamlined structure of 25 Areas within 7 Regions is substantially complete. Externally, we have continued to perform our role as a key service-delivery arm of the DCA and deliver progress against the majority of our Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets.
- 2.1.2 This has been achieved within the constraints of a budget allocation that has been reduced from the previous year, and during a time of substantial changes in the way we do our business. Those changes are designed to improve the provision of services to court users, including the upgrading of facilities, and more effective case management to avoid delay, cost and inconvenience and to improve the effectiveness of enforcement of orders of the courts.
- 2.1.3 The Change Programme we embarked on as part of the HMCS Business Strategy has been progressed during the year and the specific activities by Directorate are set out in detail within this section.

### **2.2 Crime and Enforcement**

- 2.2.1 We worked with colleagues in the Office for Criminal Justice Reform and the other criminal justice agencies to ensure publication of “Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy and Summary” (CJSSS) in July 2006.
- 2.2.2 In response to the CJSSS paper, working with the judiciary, we then successfully piloted ways in which to improve efficiency and effectiveness in four magistrates’ courts areas. We are now seeking to roll this out nationally, aiming to complete the rollout by the end of 2007.
- 2.2.3 We have continued to develop the Liverpool and Salford community justice initiatives as testbeds for community justice principles. The evaluation of the two initiatives will be fed into future community justice development.
- 2.2.4 We worked with the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and other partners to develop community justice initiatives in Birmingham, Bradford, Devon and Cornwall, Hull, Leicester, London, Merthyr Tydfil, Middlesbrough and Nottingham. Each will be developed further in 2007–08.
- 2.2.5 We worked with the Legal Services Commission (LSC) to implement means testing of legal aid in the magistrates’ courts from 2 October 2006. Ministers have kept this implementation under regular review leading to a number of policy changes, which we have implemented in magistrates’ courts.
- 2.2.6 The National Enforcement Service pathfinder in the North West was successfully implemented. Regional Confiscation Centres of Excellence are now operating in the North East, South East, North West and London.

- 2.2.7 The continued commitment to deliver an effective enforcement process has taken a significant step forward with the introduction of the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Bill in the House of Lords on 16 November 2006.
- 2.2.8 We have continued to support initiatives designed to deliver further improvements to fine enforcement performance and as a result a national payment rate of 91% (April to December 2006) has been achieved against the target of 83%. In the year to date (April–December 2006) compared to the same period in 2005, the courts have collected £7.7 million more in cash.
- 2.2.9 A DVD “Going to Court – Witnesses” was piloted in Nottinghamshire during February to July 2006. The DVD was produced to improve victims and witnesses’ understanding of their responsibilities, their attendance to court, and their confidence and satisfaction in the Criminal Justice System.
- 2.2.10 The expansion of the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) programme continued. By April 2007 the total number of SDVCs has risen from 25 to 64.
- 2.2.11 The Dedicated Drugs Court (DDC) pilots continued at West London and Leeds Magistrates’ courts. This tests the impact on drug addicted offenders who persistently commit low-level crime. Evaluation of the pilots will be completed and advice provided to ministers on the way forward by October 2007.
- 2.2.12 A cost-benefit analysis of a system of bulk processing recommended that a bulk processing centre within the existing legislative framework did not provide value for money. Ministers therefore commissioned a second phase of work to develop proposals to deliver the principles of bulk processing using legislative change. This second phase of work is being taken forward in collaboration with the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) as part of the broader CJS Pre-Court Diversions Strategy.
- 2.2.13 We have implemented delegated powers for Justices’ Clerks and worked with OCJR and the judiciary to improve defendant attendance at court, interpreter services, and to ensure there is court capacity for terrorism trials.
- 2.2.14 We have added or upgraded witness and prison video links in 68 courts and provided many others with the facilities to play DVDs in court. We are working with OCJR to install an IT programme to support the work of case progression officers and to improve Criminal Justice Organisation access to the Xhibit Portal. This helps us to provide a better service to our customers and ensures well managed and timely cases run through the system.

## **2.3 Civil and Family**

- 2.3.1 We have run successfully a Small Claims Mediation Service in Manchester. The service has now been rolled out to a further nine areas, and will be available across England and Wales by March 2008.
- 2.3.2 We have implemented Family Court Centres at Birmingham, Barnet and Ipswich County Court and run a pilot workshop to share experiences, best practice and develop plans for future implementation of Family Court Centres.

- 2.3.3 We have launched the Family Mediation Line with a supporting website; implemented a framework for delivering low cost civil mediation services to court users in Fast and Multi track claims; and held a “Mediation Week” for a second year running, with over 100 events taking place and receiving extensive and positive media coverage.
- 2.3.4 We have completed the Children and Adoption Act legislation, including provisions aimed at securing better outcomes for children in contact cases.
- 2.3.5 We set up a pilot of Integrated Domestic Violence Courts (IDVC), integrating criminal and family handling of domestic violence cases.
- 2.3.6 We have undertaken comprehensive reviews of the structure of court fees in relation to exemptions and remissions at the point at which fees are charged. The outcome of those reviews formed the basis of a consultation paper to enable implementation by September 2007. This is part of ongoing work being undertaken under our fee strategy to develop and reform the court fee system.
- 2.3.7 We have rolled out Possession Claims On Line (PCOL) nationally, providing electronic access to the courts for possession claims. We are continuing to work with major national issuers to assist them and promote use of the service.
- 2.3.8 We have implemented a national scheme for telephone hearings for shorter civil applications.

## 2.4 Customer Service

- 2.4.1 We have issued new Courts’ Charters for the Crown Court, the civil courts, the Royal Courts of Justice (RCJ), the magistrates’ courts, the family courts and the Probate Service.
- 2.4.2 We have undertaken the first collective national user survey encompassing Crown, county, RCJ and magistrates’ courts customers.
- 2.4.3 We have issued new HMCS customer service standards for counter and telephone services, written correspondence and complaint handling.
- 2.4.4 We have reviewed and improved our display of performance information at courts, issuing new noticeboard standards at courts.
- 2.4.5 We have extended our complaint handling targets across all HMCS jurisdictions. Overall performance of 88% (target – 85%) of complaints are dealt with within:
- 5 working days (at court level)
  - 10 working days (Area Directors level)
  - Customer Service Unit performance of 97% achieved (in 15 working days) against a target of 94%.

- 2.4.6 We have updated and reissued our complaint handling guidance to courts. We have held complaint handling roadshows across HMCS.
- 2.4.7 A Film Unit website has been launched to offer courtrooms and other facilities for hire out of hours to generate revenue under the Wider Markets Initiative (WMI) – 14 locations now on stream.
- 2.4.8 We have collected a database of evidence to support Charter Mark applications across HMCS.

## 2.5 Estates

### Court Building Programme

- 2.5.1 We have completed the Liverpool Civil and Family Justice Centre at City Square providing 27 hearing rooms, which became operational on 28 April 2006.
- 2.5.2 The provision of services under the Avon and Somerset PFI contract delivered a new courthouse in Worle (Weston-super-Mare), which became operational on 4 May 2006. The courthouse provides five magistrates' courtrooms.

We have completed the courts at Gee Street, London providing six civil/six family courts and office accommodation to replace the existing county courts at Shoreditch/Clerkenwell and to assist the RCJ (Family Division). The civil courts became operational on 11 July 2006 and the family courts on 20 October 2006.

### Estate Integration Programme

- 2.5.3 Two integration opportunities have been delivered namely:
  - the courts at Gee Street, London as mentioned above; and
  - Northwich County Court became operational in Northwich Magistrates' Court on 3 October 2006.

### Buildings at Risk

- 2.5.4 HMCS has used Resource and Modernisation Programme (RAMP) funding to take forward works to mitigate against the risk of courts having to close due to building or operational failure. An allocation of £29 million for 2006–07 for works is due to be completed by the end of the financial year.

### Sustainable Development and Energy

- 2.5.5 The sustainable development strategy was published in November 2005. It is now in limited paper format as well as available to be downloaded from the internet.
- 2.5.6 A strategy and an action plan for reducing waste is on target for completion by the end of March 2007.
- 2.5.7 A migration plan for the remainder of the magistrates' courts onto the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) contract for gas is now in place and a schedule for electricity will be in place by the end of March 2007.

## **SECTION 3: KEY OUTCOMES FOR 2007–08 – OUR BALANCED SCORECARD**

### **3.1 Balanced Scorecard**

- 3.1.1 HMCS adopts a Balanced Scorecard approach to measuring its performance. This reflects the fact that, whilst our contributions to the DCA's PSA and financial targets are very important, to build for the future we need to focus on more than just the current performance targets. We need to build our reputation with our customers and the wider community, we need to develop improved ways of working and we need to invest in our staff and their development.
- 3.1.2 The summary sheet overleaf sets out the key indicators against which we will judge our success in the year ahead. The sections that follow it describe further deliverables for 2007–08 in each of the four areas of the Balanced Scorecard. This gives an overview of the scope of what we plan to do this year but it is not an exhaustive list and neither does it give detail about how we will do it. That detail is to be found in the operational business plans for the HMCS Areas and the programme plans being managed by HMCS central teams.

### **3.2 Public Service Agreements and Key Performance Results**

- 3.2.1 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) set out the Department's aims and objectives and describe how the targets will be achieved and how performance against the targets will be measured.
- 3.2.2 See Annex A for our PSA targets.
- 3.2.3 See Annex B for our Resources.

## HMCS Balanced Scorecard

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Key Performance Results</b></p> <p>We will maintain performance against the PSA targets set in 2004 and where required work with LCJBs to achieve this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice</li> <li>• Building confidence in the Criminal Justice System</li> <li>• Increasing the proportion of care cases being completed in the courts within 40 weeks by 10% by 2009–10</li> <li>• Achieving earlier and more proportionate resolution of legal problems and disputes</li> <li>• Reducing the proportion of disputed claims in the courts that are resolved by a hearing to 38.5%</li> <li>• Increasing the proportion of small claims hearings that take place within target time to 81.5%.</li> </ul> <p>We are developing plans within HMCS to deliver up to 750 job reductions in 2007–08, aligned to the deployment of our strategic enabling change projects. We will continue the Estates Integration Programme (up to 10 integrations). We will further reduce our operating costs in order to remain within our budget allocation and meet efficiency targets.</p> | <p><b>Customers and the community</b></p> <p>We will extend the community justice principles to 10 new areas to deliver a service more connected to the community.</p> <p>We will deliver a more personalised service for victims and witnesses.</p> <p>We will evaluate the Victims' Advocate Scheme.</p> <p>We will improve the way that family courts deal with victims of domestic violence by strengthening the links between family and criminal courts.</p> <p>We will carry out a National Courts-User Survey across our full range of customers and use the results to inform national and local policy.</p> <p>We will continue to develop the corporate evidence for Charter Mark in readiness for the corporate application.</p> <p>We will promote knowledge of rights and responsibilities and how to protect and exercise them through leaflets, website, partnership with the voluntary sector and targeted information campaigns.</p> <p>We will ensure that HMCS service provision in Wales is available through the medium of Welsh or English, according to personal choice.</p> <p>We will publicise monthly information on local courts' performance.</p> |
| <p><b>Improving the way we work</b></p> <p>Through the HMCS Change Programme we will ensure that all project and change work is aligned with and directed towards delivery of the HMCS Business Strategy through the Blueprint, roadmap and co-ordinated deployment of projects into the courts and administrative areas.</p> <p>We will deliver CJSSS in the magistrates' courts and Crown Courts.</p> <p>We will continue to develop plans to roll out specialist courts.</p> <p>We will develop plans for establishing back offices to improve the efficiency of the courts.</p> <p>We will commence national rollout of elements of the National Enforcement Service to ensure improved performance.</p> <p>We will work with LSC to deliver effective and efficient processes for legal aid decisions.</p> <p>We will extend in-house mediation services for people with small claims; and facilitate the effective, early resolution of higher value and commercial disputes.</p>   | <p><b>People and learning</b></p> <p>We will successfully implement a new pay and grading structure.</p> <p>We will work towards reducing sick absence to an average of 7.5 days or less per annum.</p> <p>We will deliver the HMCS contribution to the DCA diversity objectives, including the representation of women, people from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities in senior roles within the organisation.</p> <p>We will ensure all staff have objectives in line with the organisation's performance management system.</p> <p>We will respond to the key action areas identified in the 2006 staff opinion survey.</p> <p>We will ensure that staff are given adequate training to support the business change and equip them to deliver a more efficient service to our customers.</p>   |



### 3.3 Improving the Way we Work

- 3.3.1 The HMCS Change Programme will co-ordinate strategic projects in criminal, civil and family justice and the IT modernisation programme to ensure that all project and change work is aligned and directed towards delivery of the HMCS Business Strategy.
- 3.3.2 A key focus of the Change Programme this year will be to ensure that processes are re-engineered to improve service by delivering benefits from improved technology through an enhanced case management system in the magistrates' courts and also in the civil and family courts, at the same time as achieving sustainable efficiencies. The Change Programme will also provide assurance on the governance of all HMCS medium and low risk projects supporting the business to manage its change capacity.
- 3.3.3 Specific deliverables are detailed below, categorised by Directorate. In addition, HMCS will continue with the development of its cross-directorate Modernising Money Handling (MMH) Programme. This programme will provide standard methods of payment for courts and offices and modernise the accounting processes for fees and fines. The programme is due to be completed in 2010.

### 3.4 Crime and Enforcement

| Deliverable   | Target date    |
|---|----------------|
| We will ensure CJSSS improvements in the magistrates' courts are implemented throughout England and Wales.  | December 2007  |
| We will continue to work with the judiciary on CJSSS improvements in the Crown Courts through identification of best practice.  | Ongoing        |
| We will continue to support the North Liverpool, Salford, Birmingham, Bradford, Devon and Cornwall, Hull, Leicester, London, Merthyr Tydfil, Middlesbrough and Nottingham community justice projects. | Ongoing        |
| We will ensure that courts are connected to the community.  | December 2008  |
| We will commence national rollout of elements of the National Enforcement Service such as texting, secure vehicles and tabards.   | April 2007     |
| We will implement national rollout of DVD for witnesses.  | September 2007 |
| We will evaluate the Victims' Advocates scheme.   | October 2007   |
| We will evaluate the Dedicated Drugs Court pilots.  | October 2007   |

### 3.5 Civil and Family

| <b>Deliverable</b>   | <b>Target date</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| We will implement sections 1 and 12 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.  | July 2007          |
| Including the current 25, we will establish over 60 Specialist Domestic Violence Courts by April 2007 with Independent Domestic Violence Advisors continuing to be rolled out.   | Ongoing            |
| We will implement the recommendations from the “Review of Child Care Proceedings Systems in England and Wales” to encourage early intervention and improved quality of local authority applications.   | Ongoing            |
| We will co-ordinate and work with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), DCA and LSC to deliver measures outlined in “Parental Separation: Children’s Needs and Parents’ Responsibilities, Next Steps”. This is designed to help parents reach agreement over contact arrangements for their children away from the courts where it is safe to do so. | Ongoing            |
| We will implement Section 6 and 7 of the Children and Adoption Act, enabling family assistance orders to be used more often and for longer duration, and making risk assessments mandatory in private law Children Act proceedings where there is any suspicion that the child concerned is at risk of harm.   | October 2007       |
| We will take forward proposals from the consultation on “Confidence and Confidentiality: Improving transparency and privacy in family courts” aimed at increasing public confidence in the family justice system and increasing privacy for those involved in family proceedings.  | Ongoing            |
| We will continue to support the creation of a Unified Family Service bringing together family judiciary from county courts and magistrates’ courts and combining the family administrators from these courts where possible in Family Court Centres. We will run more workshops to share experiences and best practice and also help areas develop plans for future implementation.  | Ongoing            |

| <b>Deliverable</b>   | <b>Target date</b>                                      |
|--|---|
| Following the success of the Small Claims Mediation pilots, we will roll out Small Claims Mediation Services across England and Wales.   | Mediators appointed in a further 13 areas by March 2008 |
| We will continue to pilot a community mediation service in South-West London, and test how this facility might be incorporated into the emerging plans for Community Justice Centres and Community Legal Advice Centres.                   | Interim evaluation by December 2007                     |
| We will continue to deliver the reviews and reforms envisaged in the Fees Strategy with a complete review of all family fees in 2007–08.   | Ongoing   |
| We will review and implement initiatives to streamline current processes and delegation of non-judicial functions to make case management in the courts more efficient.  | Ongoing   |
| We will continue to work closely with other government departments in developing and implementing proposals from the Government's Respect Action Plan. The proposals give groups such as landlords powers to tackle anti-social behaviour. | Ongoing   |
| We will continue to promote increased use of e-channels, such as Money Claims On Line (MCOL) and Possession Claims On Line (PCOL).   | Ongoing   |
| We will continue to plan to develop services that will allow parties in civil and family cases to file and serve documents and pay fees electronically to provide an electronic court file.  | Ongoing   |
| We will improve our website, "Strategic Website Instant Customer Help" (SWITCH) to provide information that meets the needs of our customers.  | Ongoing   |

### 3.6 Customer Service

| <b>Deliverable</b>   | <b>Target date</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| Customer Services Directorate will marshal a range of activities that will Improve the Customer Experience (ICE), particularly the “front of house” customer service delivered to HMCS customers, under the auspices of Project ICE. These activities will support the Lord Chancellor’s work on Breakthrough. | Ongoing            |
| We will co-ordinate the HMCS Charter Mark programme and encourage and support early applicants against the HMCS deadline for all courts and offices to achieve the standard by 2009.   | Ongoing            |
| We will launch refreshed Regional Good Ideas and Good Practice schemes working closely with colleagues across the regions.   | Ongoing            |
| We will use the Year 1 (2006–07) HMCS User Survey results to benchmark performance across HMCS, to elicit the key issues and concerns of court users, and produce an action plan to target areas of improvement.   | Ongoing            |
| We will launch the HMCS postal survey of jurors and complainants and develop our survey capability to measure the satisfaction levels of electronic service users (MCOJ for example).  | Ongoing            |
| We will upgrade the Customer Analysis and Feedback System (CAFE) onto a web-based platform that will improve access to data and information for court and Area Directors Office (ADO) staff.   | Ongoing            |
| We will analyse customer feedback and complaints and make further recommendations on improvement activity.   | Ongoing            |
| We will implement the recommendations made by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Court Administration (HMICA) in their 2006 inspection of feedback and complaints.  | Ongoing            |
| We will develop phase two of the HMCS Film Unit website and add a further ten locations to the site.   | Ongoing            |
| We will develop a tool-kit to help courts generate Wider Markets Initiative revenue and further explore other opportunities for developing new income.   | Ongoing            |

## 3.7 Estates

### Court Building Programme

- 3.7.1 A number of new buildings are currently programmed for completion. These are:
- Hendon Magistrates' Court providing five courtrooms in the summer of 2007 (existing magistrates' court refurbished plus three-courtroom extension);
  - Manchester Civil Justice Centre in June 2007 providing 43 civil courtrooms and 4 magistrates' family courtrooms; plus accommodation for the Regional/Area Director and Regional Support offices and Probate Service;
  - Huntingdon Justice Centre in July 2007 providing new combined Crown (2), county (1) and magistrates' (2) courtrooms;
  - Loughborough Magistrates' Court in October 2007 providing four courtrooms;
  - Blackwood – a new civil and family court centre in August 2007;
  - Liverpool – relocation of 4 youth courts to the QEII Law Courts in October 2007 and improved facilities for jurors/witnesses and accommodation for the Area Director;
  - Bristol Magistrates' Court in October 2007 providing 12 courtrooms under the Avon and Somerset PFI.

### Estate Integration Programme

- 3.7.2 Subject to funding the delivery of a further 10 integration schemes. Three schemes are currently in construction at Gateshead, Rotherham and Scunthorpe. Additional opportunities will be delivered from existing opportunities.

### Buildings at Risk

- 3.7.3 A further £30 million of Resource and Modernisation Programme (RAMP) funding will be used to take forward works which will enable buildings to be taken off the critical list of buildings at risk and mitigate against the risk of building or operational failure.
- 3.7.4 The aim will be to reduce the number of buildings on the critical list from 51 to approximately 30 during the period.

### Sustainable Development and Energy

- 3.7.5 We will introduce a waste action plan.
- 3.7.6 We will include guidance on sustainability within HMCS/Tribunals and DCA induction packs.
- 3.7.7 We will conduct a pilot of corporate Environmental Management System (EMS) within the Tribunals Service overseen by Sustainable Development within Estates.
- 3.7.8 Target date for all of this is end March 2008.

## Other Estates Programmes

- 3.7.9 The existing programmes for Security and Safety, Sustainable Development and Energy and the Courts Unification Post Implementation Delivery Programme will continue.
- 3.7.10 Further initiatives to be undertaken in 2007–08 include a bid for work on the magistrates' courts estate to improve access for disabled people and to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, the sale of the Maidstone Judges' lodgings, benchmarking of cost/space/staff data within the London, Midlands, North East and South East Regions, and re-launch of the estates modelling tool in June 2007.

## 3.8 People and Learning

- 3.8.1 We will develop the HMCS Human Resources strategy to underpin the vision for our people set out in the HMCS Business Strategy.
- 3.8.2 In particular we will:
- ensure that our staff are representative and understanding of the diverse communities we serve;
  - ensure effective performance throughout HMCS where staff are clear about what is expected of them and how their performance will be assessed;
  - implement a reward system that will enable recruitment, retention and motivation of staff of the required quality to deliver our business;
  - develop strategies to support our people through a period of significant business change;
  - deliver training to equip our staff with the technical job skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs more effectively and to focus other learning and development opportunities on the key business priorities namely: customer service, performance management, leadership and organisational change;
  - implement Professional Skills for Government through the introduction of the new core competence framework which will secure the right level and mix of skills, enhancing the opportunity for our people to develop and progress and reduce the reliance on skills from the external labour market.
- 3.8.3 HMCS will be successful if we achieve our contribution to the achievement of people and learning targets and objectives for the DCA, in particular:
- sick absence – working towards an average sick absence of 7.5 days or less per annum;
  - diversity – including the representation of women, people from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities in senior roles within the organisation;
  - performance management – ensuring that all staff are performance managed effectively and receive an end of year assessment rating based on work performance and contribution.

3.8.4 To ensure success we will:

- create a people resourcing strategy which will provide us with the workforce needed to deliver excellent services to our customers;
- provide a development programme for our staff to ensure continuous learning and career enhancement, particularly to meet the demands of the HMCS change agenda;
- maintain effective mechanisms for two-way communication with our staff, especially the team briefing system;
- begin implementation of the outcome of the pay and grading review;
- act upon the findings of the 2006 staff opinion survey;
- develop a culture based on high standards of customer service and delivery;
- continue to embed a leadership culture across the organisation.

## ANNEX A: TABLE OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES and SUPPORTING INDICATORS 2007–08

| Relevant PSA Target | PSA Description  | Key Performance Indicators and Supporting Measures 2007–08   |
|---------------------|--|--|
| PSA1                | <p>Improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.25 million by 2007–08. Target contributing to the Criminal Justice System PSA</p> | <p><b>Crime</b></p> <p><b>Timeliness (CJSSS)</b></p> <p><b>Crown Courts</b></p> <p><b>Improve the percentage of defendants' cases that commence within a specific time in the Crown Court so that:</b></p> <p>78% committed for trial commence within 16 weeks of committal</p> <p>78% sent for trial commence within 26 weeks of sending</p> <p>Ineffective rate (Crown Court) 14%</p> <p><b>Magistrates' courts</b></p> <p><b>Simplify and speed up criminal cases in the magistrates' courts so by the end of 2008:</b> most guilty plea cases are dealt with at the first hearing; most contested cases have no more than two hearings; the majority of simple charged cases take from a day to 6 weeks (on average) from charge to disposal.</p> <p>Ineffective rate (magistrates' court) 19%</p> <p><b>Registers</b></p> <p>Produce and despatch magistrates' court registers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 95% within 3 days</li> <li>– All cases cleared within 6 days</li> </ul> |



| <b>Relevant PSA Target</b> | <b>PSA Description</b>  | <b>Key Performance Indicators and Supporting Measures 2007–08</b>  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| PSA2                       | Reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and building confidence in the Criminal Justice System without compromising fairness. Target contributing to the Criminal Justice System PSA | <p><b>Confidence (Community Justice)</b></p> <p>Confidence in the CJS – 40%</p> <p>Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Confidence – 52%</p> <p><b>Enforcement (NES)</b></p> <p><b>Payment rate</b> – 85% will remain the key performance indicator for fine enforcement.</p> <p><b>Community Penalty</b> – Average of 35 days from failure to comply to resolution of the case in the magistrates' courts.</p> <p>60% of all breaches of community penalties to be resolved within 25 working days of the relevant unacceptable absence in the magistrates' courts.</p> <p><b>Confiscation Orders</b></p> <p>To secure 3,869 confiscation orders worth £87 million in 2007–08.</p> <p>To collect £102 million (including £7 million in compensation) from the enforcement of confiscation orders in 2007–08.</p> <p>To secure 642 restraint orders in 2007–08.</p> |
| PSA4                       | By 2009–10, increase the proportion of care cases being completed in the courts within 40 weeks by 10%  | <p><b>County court</b></p> <p>48% of public law care cases to be dealt within 40 weeks.</p> <p><b>Magistrates' courts</b></p> <p>56% of public law cases to be dealt within 40 weeks.</p>  |
| PSA5                       | <p>Increasing the opportunities for people involved in court cases to settle their disputes out of court</p> <p>Reducing delays in resolving those disputes that need to be decided by the courts</p>                   | <p>Reduce the proportion of disputed civil claims in the courts that are ultimately resolved by a hearing to 38.5% (local targets will be set at area level).</p> <p>81.5% of small claims cases are heard within 15 weeks.</p>  |

## ANNEX B: HMCS RESOURCE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

| CATEGORY                                 | 2006–07<br>Forecast<br>£m | 2007–08<br>Provisional<br>Budget<br>£m |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Income</b>                            |                           |  |
| Voted Expenditure from DCA (Near Cash)   | 729.8                     | 815.1                                  |
| Voted Expenditure from DCA (Non-Cash)    | 194.7                     | 234.0                                  |
| Income from Fees, Fines and Other Income | 608.4                     | 620.0                                  |
| <b>Total Income</b>                      | <b>1,532.9</b>            | <b>1,669.1</b>                         |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                       |                           |  |
| Service Delivery                         | 1,240.4                   | 1,268.3                                |
| Change Programmes                        | 36.3                      | 110.9                                  |
| Management Overhead                      | 42.9                      | 39.1                                   |
| Central Policy                           | 18.6                      | 16.8                                   |
| Capital Charges                          | 194.7                     | 234.0                                  |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                 | <b>1,532.9</b>            | <b>1,669.1</b>                         |

### Notes

1. Provisional budget for 2007–08 is shown in real terms after allowing for inflation using the standard GDP inflator of 2.7% on 2006–07 costs.
2. Service delivery represents the day to day running costs of all Crown, county and magistrates' courts and all direct costs supporting their activity.
3. Change Programmes is the investment funding as detailed in our business plan to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts.
4. Management overhead represents costs of support functions across HMCS Regions, Areas and Headquarters.
5. Central Policy covers corporate standards, policy and legislative initiatives.
6. The 2006–07 financial forecast will vary from the original budget in last year's plans. The full year forecast may vary from actual results when they are published.



