

November 2007



## Delivering successful services for citizens





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## Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of our collection of success stories from members of the United Kingdom ACE Association.

The Association has been established to focus on operational delivery across Government organisations and to promote greater knowledge exchange, networking and peer learning between members. This third edition contains new examples drawn from 64 Government organisations. The list has grown from 18 organisations in our first edition published in February 2005 and 44 in our second.

One of our main purposes for publishing these stories is to increase awareness of effective operational delivery in Government; we firmly believe that learning from each other will lead to greater success and increase joined-up working.

The examples on the following pages illustrate how Government Executive Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Government Trading Funds are delivering successful services for the benefit of citizens across the United Kingdom. Already we are seeing more and more specific initiatives involving collaborative working between organisations which considerably improve the service experience for the customer.

An extremely wide range of activities is undertaken, from transforming the annual MOT test and the way companies submit account information to Companies House, to improving the services to witnesses in court and information to HGV drivers on the widths and heights of bridges. Organisations are helping to deliver cleaned-up land for use by the community, supporting citizens overseas in times of crisis and providing disabled people and their carers with essential allowances and benefits.

Many of the case studies contain measurable performance statistics. I list below a few examples:

Electronic Vehicle Licensing from DVLA is now one of the biggest online retail services in the UK. Nearly 100 000 customers a day use the service – 50% greater volume than Tesco Online.

Project Slam from Defence Estates is delivering single living accommodation for armed services personnel. 7 500 bed spaces have been completed since the project began – equivalent to one new bed space for every working hour.

Companies House has created the first register in the world enabling companies to submit account information as electronic data; 97% of web-filed accounts are checked automatically and require no manual examination; the equivalent paper process requires 100% examination.

Ordnance Survey makes an average of 5 000 changes to the mastermap of Great Britain each day reflecting the considerable change that is happening all around us.

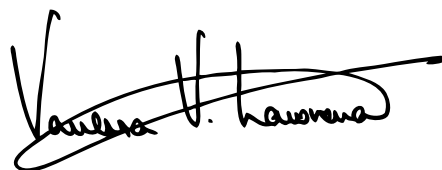
National Savings & Investments handled 500 000 calls in one month during the Premium Bond 50th Anniversary campaign.

The Natural History Museum is one of the most visited cultural attractions in the UK welcoming 3.75 million visitors in 2006.

The Scottish Court Service is working with other criminal justice bodies to reduce the time involved in moving from caution and charge to final disposal by the court. In a pilot scheme being rolled out in West Lothian, the end-to-end process for a case marked for either the Sheriff or District Court reduced from 197 to 94 days and for non-court disposal of a case from 100 to 36 days.

Contact details for each of the Government organisations are shown against their stories. If you would care for more information about the individual examples described, all the organisations have indicated that they would be very happy to be contacted.

Delivering successful services for citizens would not have been possible without an excellent collaborative team of very busy people. I should particularly like to highlight the work this year of Jane Earl, Christine Goode, Jonathan Field and of course all the Chief Executives who produced the success stories without too much badgering from Jane and me!



### **Vanessa Lawrence**

Director General and Chief Executive, Ordnance Survey  
Chair, United Kingdom ACE Association  
November 2007

## Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)

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### DIY mediation

Acas aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. We provide up-to-date information, independent advice, high-quality training and we work with employers and employees to solve problems and improve performance. Our website at [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk) offers a wealth of information on employment, including online learning packages, and our national helpline answers thousands of employment questions on a confidential basis every week.

The far-reaching nature of the reforms taking place across the public sector is having a significant impact at an organisational level. The pace and scale of the change programme, combined with wider workforce issues, can place a severe strain on relationships in the workplace and present the potential for increased levels of conflict. In recent years Acas has adopted a much more preventative, proactive approach to managing employment relations. One of these approaches involves offering organisations a suite of mediation services.

Mediation is a process where a neutral third party – the mediator – works with the parties who have a disagreement or difference, to help them find their own solution and reach an agreement that will rectify their problem. Any agreement is not usually legally binding; importantly, both parties therefore retain control over the outcome. Mediation is voluntary and it is confidential; it also presents a quicker and potentially much cheaper route for resolving disagreement in the workplace. Critically, mediation is most effective as a technique when used at the early stages of conflict because it offers a way of maintaining the employment relationship.

As well as establishing a Charged Mediation Service, Acas has gained accreditation for the Certificate in Internal Workplace Mediation (CIWM) in response to an increasing level of demand, particularly from public-sector organisations, to train and retain their own mediators. Satisfaction rates of those attending our CIWM courses are consistently very high, with 90% of delegates indicating that they were 'very satisfied' with the training delivery.

There are a number of success stories: one case study is West Midlands Police (WMP), the second largest police force in the country. As early as 2004, factors such as the increasing number of protracted grievances and employment tribunal applications had prompted WMP to consider introducing a mediation scheme. Acas was selected as a partner to develop a six-month pilot scheme for police officers, to be then rolled out across the workforce. An Acas adviser worked with the organisation to help formulate a policy, work on a communication-and-marketing strategy and identify and train a number of in-house mediators. During 2005–06 Acas continued to offer support and advice and trained more WMP staff to act as mediators. There are now 17 in-house mediators and support for the scheme has extended to trade union representatives. Since the course has been set up, there have been over 30 referrals for mediation, of which only two cases did not benefit from the process. **The number of grievances reduced from 51 to 38 in 2005–06 and the number of employment tribunal applications dropped from 17 to 12.**

Another initiative includes working with the Department of Health and the NHS Social Partnership Forum to set up CIWM pilot schemes in five NHS® Trusts in England. We look forward to the formal evaluation of these pilots and an endorsement of the use of early conflict management techniques in encouraging better employment relations.

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### Delivering services to help schools get the best from ICT

Becta leads the national drive to improve learning through technology. We do this by working with industry to ensure we have the right technology for education in place. We also work to support the education workforce to make the best use of technology to improve learning so that every learner in the UK is able to benefit from the advantages technology brings, thereby helping them achieve the best they can.

Schools up and down the country are improving their ICT capability thanks to a free service from Becta.

After conducting extensive research and sifting through the evidence from a highly successful pilot project, Becta launched the self-review framework for schools in April 2006.

The self-review framework is accessed through an online tool that enables schools to assess and benchmark their use of ICT across all their activities. It enables schools to measure their performance and shows the practical steps they can take to improve their ICT use to benefit the organisation. In many areas, it supports and enhances the work schools currently undertake for Ofsted's self-evaluation form.

The system is easy to use, as Steve Gater from the Walker Technology College discovered.

*'The framework is an online, simple-to-use process that will help to engage staff in development of ICT in order to get maximum benefit for all staff,'* he said.

The framework assists schools through the processes of self-evaluation, and guides them in steps to becoming e-mature. Ultimately, it sets a national standard, so raises expectations of what is required of schools and gives them a target to work towards.

By adopting the framework schools can make more effective use of ICT by enhancing the learning experience and ensuring that their investment is tied more closely to the achievement of organisational goals for attainment and performance.

Take-up of the self-review framework has been excellent. In its first year of operation more than

**7 200 schools** have benefited from the feedback it gives. It is **in use in every local authority in England** and – to give two examples – more than 120 schools in Kent and 78% of the schools in the Peterborough local authority are seeing the rewards it can bring.

As a result, around 10% of schools that have used the framework have achieved and been awarded the ICT accreditation mark, while many others will be hoping to receive the award in the near future.

Becta is in continuous dialogue with schools regarding their experiences of the online access, the value of the framework, and to illustrate the framework with exemplars of excellent practice to guide and inform others.

Over the last ten years **schools have received over £2 billion** to support the purchase of ICT equipment. While this investment has produced significant improvements, research has shown that a proportion of schools were still not making the most of this investment.

Becta's objective is to take technology for learning from marginal to mainstream by showing that the right kind of investment, backed by leadership and training, can contribute to higher standards, greater access, and greater efficiency right across the education system.

The self-review framework and the learning platform supplier framework, announced in November last year, are key tools in achieving this objective. They will also contribute to helping meet the Government's e-strategy expectation that by 2008 every pupil should have access to a personalised online learning space, and by 2010 every school should have integrated learning and management systems.

## Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

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Rewarding Learning

### Marked improvement – people power means CCEA leads the way for Northern Ireland public sector

CCEA is the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. It is a unique educational body in the UK, bringing together the three areas of curriculum, examinations and assessment. It works to advise government on what should be taught in Northern Ireland's schools and colleges; to monitor standards to ensure that the qualifications and examinations offered by awarding bodies in Northern Ireland are of an appropriate quality and standard; and awarding qualifications such as GCSEs and A levels.

In March 2007 Northern Ireland education body, CCEA, became the first public-sector body in Northern Ireland, and one of the few in the United Kingdom, to make the prestigious 'Sunday Times Top 100 Best Companies to Work for' list.

In October this year CCEA took their success a step further and received the most prestigious award for business excellence in the UK; The UK Excellence Award. This award is open to all public and private sector organisations throughout the UK and is given only to those deemed to be the best.

Acting Chief Executive Neil Anderson is keen to underline that these awards are evidence not only of ongoing improvement but also a determination to stay focused on delivering key services at a time of great change.

*'While winning awards is very pleasing, it's what they represent that is most important. It means we have got better at what we do and how we do it. It means we have found better ways to meet the needs and expectations of our customers: the pupils, teachers and parents of Northern Ireland.'*

*'In particular, the Sunday Times® award reflects our strongly held belief that well-motivated staff means more satisfied customers. In recent years we've put increasing emphasis on leadership skills, internal communications, staff training and family-friendly policies. This in turn has led to increased staff loyalty, low sickness absence rates, and highly motivated*

*employees who are willing to go the extra mile for the customer.*

*'At one time CCEA was regarded as a failing organisation, consistently letting our customers and stakeholders down. To survive we recognised that we had to improve demonstrably and establish ourselves as a provider of choice for both government and schools. Over the last eight years we have used a range of frameworks to instil in staff the values of quality, excellence, improvement and teamwork. Winning the UK Excellence Award is evidence of the hard work and commitment of all CCEA staff in ensuring that these improvements were made.'*

*'The Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland means that, from April 2009, CCEA will be no more. In an effort to rationalise the many educational organisations in Northern Ireland our functions will be carried into the new overarching body, the Education and Skills Authority (ESA).'*

*'I know that our staff will be keen to see the culture of improvement, innovation and customer focus, now embedded in CCEA, carried on in to that new organisation. Until the establishment of ESA we will continue our drive to improve all aspects of our business so that taxpayers get value for money and customers get the very best products and services from us.'*

## Central Office of Information (COI)

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# COI

### Measuring savings in the marketing services sector

#### Background

The Central Office of Information (COI) is a non-Ministerial department and Trading Fund, which undertakes procurement and project management in relation to the provision of marketing services for government departments and public-sector bodies. Our ambition is to be 'the centre of marketing excellence' for government.

It's a large operation to manage, with over 400 client organisations, 800 suppliers and 30 different categories of marketing services.

In our terms, 'marketing services' covers a very wide waterfront, from TV commercials to magazine inserts, from exhibition stands to field marketing, from live events to programme sponsorship, and from SMS text messaging to national door drops.

#### The challenge

Given this breadth, one of the challenges we face is to demonstrate to our clients that we can save them money (whilst maintaining specification and quality) when going to the market on their behalf. Another challenge is that the fees we charge (we are a government Trading Fund and must cover our costs) should ideally be a fraction of the savings we can secure.

So, the requirement was to benchmark prices in every area of our operation in order that we could demonstrate savings and show improvements year on year.

#### The first year of benchmarking (2003–04)

We decided to take the 2003–04 government financial year (April to March) as our foundation year.

We identified many challenges to overcome. For example:

- Markets where prices fluctuated on a daily basis.
- The total absence of industry norms in some areas of activity.

- Markets where the industry could not agree on the robustness or appropriateness of standard industry measures.
- Some activities where government specifications were resulting in price increases rather than price reductions versus the commercial sector.
- Difficulty in accessing market rates paid by clients prior to them using COI, enabling us to make comparisons.
- A lack of interest in relation to benchmarking among some of the most influential industry trade bodies.

#### The first year's results

In spite of these problems and barriers, we were able to identify 32 separate benchmarks, delivering savings in excess of £130 million in our first year.

#### Learning and development (2004–05)

As a result of our foundation year, we felt that we had learnt a lot and proposed to develop and extend our benchmarking in a number of ways:

- Wherever robust independent auditing existed we would invest in it. Standard accepted industry measures, such as station average price for television airtime, were another option. Alternatively, we could measure our performance against industry inflation in some instances or against published figures in others.
- We could also measure our performance against recognised industry-wide rate cards; examples include BT® for call minutes and Royal Mail® for business mailings.
- Another area worth consideration was to compare a typical 'basket of prices' from suppliers and then compare these to prices quoted by COI. Savings could also be made by identifying and eliminating third-party supplier mark-ups or by negotiating COI preferential daily rates for contracted personnel, such as an events project director.

- Finally, where markets were not sufficiently developed to enable realistic cost comparisons to be made, for example, interactive TV, we would continue to monitor the situation and look for opportunities when the market matures.

### **The second year's benchmarks and performance (2004–05)**

As a result of progress we made on new or improved benchmarking measures, we introduced 15 new measures in fiscal year 2004–05 and dropped one:

- As a result of the development of a robust price pool for radio airtime, this new measure was introduced by Media and Advertising Services.
- Sponsorship and PR introduced three new measures relating to BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communications, broadcast sponsorship and for some in-house services.
- New information requested as part of recent creative ad agency applications (following an OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) tender notice) had enabled Broadcast to identify the cost saving of using a COI TV producer compared to a robust basket of agency TV producer costs.
- Digital Media introduced two new measures: for ad serving and added-value media negotiations. Significant improvements were also made in prices paid for online advertising space following the introduction of centralised buying.
- Direct and Relationship Marketing introduced two new categories covering inbound call handling and door drops.
- Strategic Consultancy made two important improvements to their benchmarking measures. First, the sample whereby they compared in-house daily rates to the industry average had become much larger, with data from 44 companies now included. Secondly, Strategic Consultancy had made further comparisons by obtaining data from the Management Consulting Information Service.

Of these 15 measures, nine were considered robust enough – in terms of the financial data available – to be added to our cumulative annual savings.

### **Learning and development (2005–06)**

In this, our third year, we felt the process and our fund of knowledge were both 'maturing', and in constructing the figures for the third fiscal year we made the following observations:

- The range of measures increased significantly in the second year. However, this process had now matured and the majority of COI services, or parts thereof that can be measured, are now included.
- The new challenge is to make certain measures more robust, and in some cases this will require close cooperation with the appropriate industry body.
- Our Director of Finance would enter into discussion with the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) to ascertain which measures could be counted as part of Departments' accredited savings. One new ambition was to increase the number of such accreditations year on year.
- TV fillers (a public information message in donated airtime) appeared free in broadcast slots worth £30 million in 2005–06. The cost comparison with advertising rates is robust. However, whilst worth recording in the commentary, we cannot measure savings on a like-for-like basis with any industry benchmarks as for our other products. Therefore this £30 million of added value would not be included in the figures.
- It should be mentioned that there are certain areas of COI's work where government specifications are more complex than the commercial-sector equivalent. The recruitment of hard-to-reach research target audiences is a good example and in these circumstances savings versus the market average are unlikely to be achieved.
- In some areas of our business there remained no recognised measures. In these cases we would continue discussion with appropriate trade bodies (ISP, IVCA, MCA to name just a few) to launch benchmarking systems that the whole sector will recognise and from which the whole market can benefit.

### **The performance in the third year (2005–06)**

By the third year our performance had again improved. We were now also able to see the trend in performance over time that had resulted from our efforts and we found this aspect most encouraging.

- Total savings made and comparisons with the previous two years are summarised in the table below.

Financial year	Total COI turnover (£ million)	Number of benchmarks used	Total savings (£ million)	Average savings versus each £1 spent
2003-04	307	32	133	30 p
2004-05	343	40	156	31 p
2005-06	321	43	164	34 p

- We were pleased to be able to report to the Board that improvements had been made in each of the last two years, based on 2003-04 as the benchmark year.

### **The future?**

We will continue to publish our savings annually and will start work shortly on the 2006-07 financial year.

Directors continue to identify new benchmarking opportunities and are currently working on nine new measures.

We will continue to update OGC and the NAO (National Audit Office) on progress made, seeking their support.

## Communities Scotland

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### Delivering decent housing and strong communities across Scotland

At the end of last year Communities Scotland marked its fifth anniversary as the Scottish Executive's housing and regeneration agency.

The agency was created in 2001, not long after devolution. Since then our roles and responsibilities have expanded – reflected in a budget for 2006–07 of over £900 million. We manage this significant budget on behalf of Scottish Ministers, who set us annual and longer-term targets, covering social housing, regeneration, community learning, and adult literacy and numeracy. We also inspect all of Scotland's social housing. We have a unique role as funder, facilitator, adviser, partner and regulator.

Our aim is to work with others to ensure decent housing and strong communities across Scotland. Focused on bringing more long-term and sustainable opportunities to disadvantaged communities, we are involved in thousands of developments and projects around the country with public, private and not-for-profit organisations. Our network of local offices helps ensure that we are in touch with local communities.

We measure success in terms of making a real difference in people's lives, working with our many partners in local authorities, housing associations, voluntary organisations, the social economy and tenant groups.

During our first five years, we have helped significantly increase the supply of housing investment in areas where it is most needed. More than **25 000 affordable homes have been built**: that represents an investment of more than £1.4 billion. And in addition, over **£880 million of private funding** has been levered in to help fund those homes.

We are not just focused on new homes, however. Our work to improve the quality of existing houses has included installing **70 000 central heating systems** and ensuring that over **240 000 homes** have so far been insulated under the Warm Deal scheme. We have also been closely involved in the community ownership programme in Scotland – after tenant ballots, more than 100 000 homes have so far transferred from councils to registered social landlords with more than £2 billion of investment for tenants.

Our community regeneration remit is wide too. It includes a significant role in adult literacy and numeracy, where we have **supported learning provision** for some **100 000 people across Scotland**. We have also played a key role in the Big Plus campaign, encouraging more adults to improve their reading and number skills.

The social economy is an area we are closely involved with. It is made up of voluntary and community organisations that use a businesslike approach to delivering goods or services. Our **£18 million Futurebuilders** Scotland programme has helped create more jobs and services for the public and we continue to support the wider role of housing organisations.

It is Futurebuilders' funding that has helped one pioneering organisation in Paisley provide support and training for young people with a mix of social, emotional, educational and behavioural needs. One of those young people is Kevin. He came to the **Kibble Care and Education Centre** having been unhappy at school. Kevin has been working in the centre's social enterprise and training arm, Kibbleworks, while continuing with his education. He gets paid to work in the warehouse and, best of all, drives a forklift truck. Kibble includes a dozen social enterprises, ranging from warehousing to catering and picture framing. Kibbleworks' commercial success has accelerated with a turnover in 2005–06 of just under £11 million, and a brighter future for young people like Kevin.

Meanwhile, in Inverness, community nurse Janet MacMillan is one of the first people in the city to benefit from our **Homestake scheme**. Homestake is the successful shared-equity scheme that is helping people on low incomes to own their own homes. Janet had previously been living in overcrowded accommodation with her family but has now been able to buy a two-bedroom flat at a new development by Cairn Housing Association.

There are many other examples of how we are helping individuals and communities to lead better, more productive and fulfilling lives. Our vision is of communities across Scotland that are places where people want to live and work – communities that will stand the test of time and set a positive example to others.

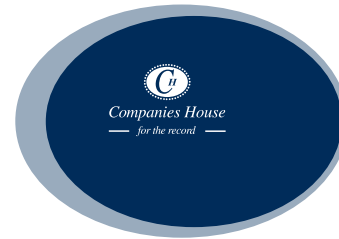
## Companies House

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### Companies House eAccounts project

#### Delivering better services to companies electronically

Companies House receives over 7 500 000 documents each year from the 2 500 000 limited companies in the UK. Over recent years we have made great strides to move to electronic submission of information, and now 90% of all companies are formed electronically and 60% of all annual returns are electronic. However, a company must file a set of accounts each year. This document, although combining the information required by the Companies Act, can be presented in a 'free format'. Developing a filing system that enabled electronic data to be submitted posed some problems.

In March 2006 Companies House became the **first company registry in the world** to launch a service so that companies could submit account information as electronic data. Companies House has worked with a number of partners to develop the use of XBRL (eXtensible Business Reporting Language) for the electronic filing of accounts and has become established as a world leader in the use of XBRL technology.

The adoption of the XBRL standard provides a sound basis for interoperability. It will ensure that data is received using a combination of XML/XBRL that will provide well-founded integration platforms to other systems (both government and Companies House customers). The provision of the eAccounts service was driven by customer need to deliver accounts to Companies House by electronic means rather than on paper. The implementation of the eAccounts project reflects a response by Companies House to this customer requirement, as well as a readiness to collaborate with others in business and government

Electronically enabling paper-based services has led to a considerable reduction in paper handling and storage at Companies House. Processing efficiency has also improved significantly as fewer examiners are needed to process accounts filed electronically. For example, **97% of web-filed accounts are checked automatically and require no manual examination**. The equivalent paper process requires 100% examination check. The system helps

customers to get it 'right first time' and rejects are 70% lower than on paper.

Customers also benefit from efficiency gains, cost savings in terms of time and opportunity, and reductions in costs associated with postage, paper handling and filing. Additionally, customers who have presented accounts electronically have the peace of mind of knowing that their accounts have been delivered safely, as all electronically filed documents are acknowledged by an email receipt. This is followed by a confirmation email once documents have been accepted, often within a matter of hours. This helps to avoid any late filing penalties.

One of the key benefits of filing accounts online has been the speed with which electronic documents are processed by Companies House and how quickly company records are then updated, making the accounts available to be viewed by the public.

The eAccounts project won the top award at the British Computer Society Awards in December 2006. This is a highly coveted award in the computer industry across Europe. In the first year almost **100 000 sets of accounts** have been filed electronically using this service.

## Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

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### Delivering better services to witnesses

Witness Care Units (WCUs) were created under the No Witness, No Justice initiative to provide an enhanced level of care for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales in cases where a charge has been brought.

The effective involvement of witnesses is a key part of securing successful prosecutions – ensuring that cases do not fail at court. The aim is to make, what is for most people a difficult experience, as straightforward as possible. The establishment of WCUs has helped the CPS/Police, Prosecution Team partnership make a substantial contribution towards achieving the **CJS (Criminal Justice System) target of narrowing the justice gap**.

During 2006 there were continued improvements in reducing the number of unsuccessful cases. Unsuccessful outcomes in magistrates' courts represented 16.1% of the total caseload compared with 17.5% in the preceding year. Crown Court unsuccessful outcomes represented 22.7% of the total caseload compared with 23% in 2005.

Although there are a number of factors contributing to these improved figures, **results so far indicate that the activities of WCUs have increased the average number of witnesses attending court from 77% to 84%**, while the number of trials that did not go ahead as planned on the day because a witness failed to attend fell by nearly 50%.

Staffed by CPS and police personnel, there are now WCUs in every CJS area. Each victim or witness is allocated a WCU officer to guide them through the process. This officer updates them on court dates, answers any questions they have about the criminal justice system and reassures them about all aspects of their court appearance.

A pre-court visit to see the witness facilities and a walk around the court can be arranged. If a victim or witness requires special treatment in the courtroom, the CPS can apply for special measures on their behalf. Likewise, if a victim or witness has dependants, which makes attending court difficult, the WCU can arrange a registered childminder or other carer.

Some of the special measures that can be used to protect victims and witnesses include:

- screens being made available to shield a witness from a defendant;
- arrangements to give evidence via a live TV link;
- judges and lawyers removing wigs and gowns; and
- the public gallery being cleared.

The aim is to take the stress out of attending court and keep victims and witnesses up to date with any news in a way that is convenient to them. This can be in writing, by email, or even via a text message.

For example, at Maidstone WCU, when witness care officer Louise found herself dealing with a very reluctant witness, she came up with an innovative but simple solution to ensure his attendance at court.

The witness admitted to Louise that he was an alcoholic and that he found it extremely difficult to handle appearances in public. In particular, he was embarrassed that other people would notice that his hands shook as a result of DTs (delirium tremens).

Louise asked for an application to be made to allow the witness to deliver his evidence sitting down. The application was granted, enabling him to sit on his hands and avoid any embarrassment caused by his illness. He phoned after the trial to thank Louise for her help and the respect she had shown him.

In CPS Thames Valley a crime victim who has multiple sclerosis was able to give evidence from her home via a live TV link with Oxford Crown Court. She commented: *'I felt as though I was being put first for the first time in my life'*.

Additional support for victims comes through The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which came into full effect on 4 April 2006. The Code gives victims rights to minimum standards of service from the CJS. This includes notifying vulnerable or intimidated victims within one working day if there is insufficient evidence to charge a defendant, and within five working days for all other victims, as well as identifying any special measures that may be appropriate.

## Culture Northwest

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### Delivering services to culture in partnership across sectors

**Culture Northwest is a thinking, networking and advocacy organisation.** We work strategically through collaboration to champion the role of culture across our region.

We are the cultural consortium for England's north-west, established in 1999 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Our core funding comes predominantly from DCMS and the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). Our remit from DCMS is to drive the regional cultural strategy: to do this we work with tourism, sport and physical activity, the creative industries, arts, heritage, museums, libraries and archives.

Culture Northwest and the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) developed an innovative partnership in 2005 to launch a national programme, **Café RSA, supported by the University of Manchester®**.

Café RSA is a forum for debating topical cultural issues, which engages with the people of Manchester and the north-west region. Events take place in the informal setting of Café Muse at the University, offering lively debate for the price of a glass of wine or a cup of coffee.

Launched as a pilot programme in 2005, this informal approach to cultural discussion has engaged **in excess of 250 people**, capturing an audience that crosses social, demographic and age barriers. The RSA is now planning a national roll-out for Café RSA across the UK.

A series of six 'round-table' events have been run since the launch, with discussions covering issues ranging from 'Faith, Culture and Community' to 'Creativity across Disciplines' to 'Your Share of the Air: Personal Carbon Allowances'.

Culture Northwest, the RSA and the University of Manchester are delighted with the success of this pilot programme. Libby Raper, Chief Executive, Culture Northwest, says: *'The first series of Café RSA was a huge success and attendance grew significantly throughout the series. One of the aims that we and the University of Manchester had for the series was to*

*provide the sort of intelligent, cultural events in the area that would make graduates want to stay in the region. We attract a diverse cross section of people to the events, which is conducive to a good debate. The debates so far have been really engaging and emotionally charged.'*

The new series of Café RSA is well underway, with the next event, entitled *'Yo Blair: Globalisation and the threats of personalised learning'*, taking place in May, followed by *'Tolstoy + Tea = Community Glue'* in June, while *Café Bollywood* will kick off the autumn series. Look out for more events across the country as the RSA roll out the Café RSA programme nationally.

## Defence Communications Services Agency

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### The Information Technology /Information Systems (IT/IS) Category Team

In the last two years the IT/IS Category Team in Swindon has achieved significant successes with reverse auctions for electronic office supplies (EOS) and audio-visual and video conferencing equipment and services.

January 2005 saw the first of the IT/IS Category Management Team reverse auctions take place at the Cheltenham premises of Group Supplies, the external auction service provider. After an exciting four-hour auction, contracts for the supply of printer consumables were awarded to: Orion Media Marketing Ltd (Lexmark® and Epson®), Banner Business Supplies Ltd (Brother® and OKI®) and ISA Trading Ltd (known as Supplies Team) (HP® and miscellaneous), **achieving savings of 33%** against previous contract prices.

Acting IT/IS Team Leader Dick Reeve commented: 'The prices achieved are a significant reduction over existing MoD catalogue sources, therefore customers are encouraged to check and validate all printer-consumable requirements to achieve the lowest possible prices and thus gain best value for money for defence'.

Following on from the EOS success, the Audio Visual Category Team held an auction on 29 November 2005 for the supply and installation of audio-visual equipment, including video teleconferencing, projectors and electronic whiteboards. The auction was run to select three suppliers, from four compliant tenders. It was fiercely competitive from the outset, resulting in a record 1 700 bids on 200 line items, closing after a running time of 10 hours with a **significant saving, equal to 41% against historic costs of £24 million over two years**. This was a tremendous result with a record saving in the largest and most complex auction the MoD Auctions Team had run to date. The successful outcome was due to the joint efforts of the Audio Visual Category Team, the MoD Auctions Team and Group Supplies.

In May of this year the MoD's Office Solutions Category Team, assisted by members of the IT/IS Category Team, will run a reverse auction for the provision of stationery, EOS, paper and magnetic media. This procurement is being run as a

**collaborative venture** between MoD, Office of Government Commerce, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Home Office, HM Prison Service, HM Revenue & Customs, Metropolitan Police, Department of Constitutional Affairs and HM Treasury. It is hoped to repeat the success of the previous auction for EOS and **deliver substantial savings Pan-government**.

## Defence Estates

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### Project SLAM (single living accommodation modernisation)

#### Delivering homes for service people

SLAM is a tri-service project that is delivering modern, high-quality, single living accommodation (SLA) for our armed forces personnel across England, Wales and, to a lesser extent, Scotland. The project is a demonstration of the high value the Ministry of Defence (MoD) places on its service personnel and its commitment to significantly improving living standards.

The process was started by the Secretary of State for Defence in his speech to industry on 14 March 2001, when he announced a new programme of SLA improvements, which would be delivered by 'Smart Procurement', developed to acquire defence infrastructure faster, cheaper, better and more effectively integrated.

The project is being delivered by Defence Estates (DE) in conjunction with Debut Services Ltd (DSL) a consortium led by Bovis Lend Lease® and Babcock Support Services Ltd, acting as the prime contractor responsible for design, construction and initial seven-year maintenance of the new facilities.

The project is now entering the final year of the first phase five-year contract and is a clear example of the DE's Prime Contracting Initiative producing better value through collaborative working between the construction industry and MoD.

#### Outputs

SLAM's objective to help service personnel feel valued has influenced its design philosophy. 'Model standard' designs have been developed for a range of accommodation types. The emphasis is on producing a homely environment, with most accommodation in a 'flatlet format', comprising six or eight en-suite bedrooms sharing utility and common room facilities.

#### Progress

Construction work commenced in April 2003 and delivery momentum has built up considerably over the first four years of the contract as the integrated working team has developed strong relationships, refined delivery processes and improved the product. Since contract award **44 individual projects**

**delivering over 7 500 bed spaces have been completed**, equating to the provision of more than one new bed space for every working hour. In addition, **a further 40 projects that will deliver some 7 000 bed spaces** are in the construction or design phases.

#### Performance

Key Performance Indicators have been developed to ensure maintenance of quality and quantity of output, whilst achieving cost savings. The projects delivered to date have generally been completed to programme, **out-turn costs are on average 1% lower than the prices agreed** at contract award and health-and-safety statistics are better than industry norms.

The scale of the project, the repeat nature of the work and use of standard designs has generated efficiency improvements and the opportunity to streamline processes. As a result, in the first phase of the project **a 9% saving in the cost of the SLAM model** has been achieved. A **further 9%** is targeted **over the next four years of the project**.

#### Customer satisfaction

SLAM has developed a highly sophisticated and effective liaison with the defence-customer community.

A user's questionnaire that enables the integrated project team (IPT) to gauge whether the actual experience of occupation is consistent with the original requirements and drivers identified during the initial phase of the project has been developed. To date there has been excellent feedback from users' questionnaires and, significantly, over 37% of junior ranks and 23% of SNCOs and junior officers have confirmed that SLAM accommodation has increased their likelihood of remaining in military service.

User feedback is also a vital part of SLAM's continuous improvement process and has resulted in refinements to the 'model standard' designs. Project improvements have resulted in better functionality and aesthetic enhancements amongst other improvements, all supporting the UK Government's drive for 'better public buildings'. In addition, the construction methodology has been improved, resulting in safer working practices and programme efficiencies.

**Sustainability and quality**

SLAM aims to minimise any adverse effects of its projects and operations. Some 20% of products are from recycled sources and waste management processes are implemented across SLAM sites to ensure responsible disposal of waste and recycling where possible. SLAM aims to minimise the consumption of energy and water and the discharge of substances harmful to the environment. Every SLAM project is assessed using the Building Research Establishments Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM®).

To ensure that quality is measurable and is consistent across the SLAM programme the project team has developed a design excellence evaluation process. This is applied to all SLAM projects to ensure optimal functionality and that buildings successfully sit within their environment and that materials are of the appropriate quality and robustness.

**The future**

The Phase 1 approval anticipated the potential to contract with DSL for a further five years (Phase 2) subject to satisfactory performance and at the sole discretion of MoD. DSL was also required to submit formal proposals for Phase 2, which were evaluated in a similar way to a competitive tender against a predetermined evaluation methodology and criteria. This submission and DSL's Phase 1 performance supported the award of the Phase 2 contract. The Phase 2 contract was awarded on 11 January 2007 and will take us through to the end of 2012.

It is very much anticipated that the Phase 2 contract will build on the excellent progress made during Phase 1 and continue with a major programme of work that will make a significant contribution towards tackling recruitment and retention shortages in the UK armed services.

*'Through Project SLAM Defence Estates has embraced the spirit of partnering with the formation of a truly integrated project team that is delivering the benefits identified by the Egan and Latham reports. We are delighted with the opportunity to continue our collaboration with Defence Estates and to the ongoing success of Project SLAM delivering first-class accommodation to this country's service personnel.'*  
Geoff Minshell, Programme Director, Debut Services Ltd

## Design Council

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### The Design Council's Designing Demand Programme

#### Background and development

Designing Demand is a pioneering national support programme helping businesses use design to improve performance. Developed by the Design Council following extensive trialling and piloting with more than 600 companies, it was launched in 2006 and is being delivered in partnership with regional development agencies (RDAs).

Design is a proven business tool, but not enough companies are using it as well as they could. More than four out of ten don't invest in design at all and more than six out of ten give it only a limited role.

Having recognised the impact of design and creativity on business competitiveness and innovation performance, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, commissioned the Design Council's Chairman, Sir George Cox, to carry out a Review in 2005. The Review, which was fully endorsed by the Treasury, said that UK businesses must launch innovative new products and services that trigger customer demand if we are to cope with strong overseas competition. One of its key recommendations was the accelerated roll-out of Designing Demand

Designing Demand aims to help companies become more competitive, increase their profits and boost their performance through the effective use of design. It consists of a range of services – from a practical introduction to design to more in-depth packages – which are tailored to meet the demands of all firms whether they are start-ups, established businesses or commercialising new technologies.

There are four main features:

- Designing Demand Workshops: fast-paced and practical one-day workshops that provide impressive evidence of what design investment can do.
- Designing Demand Generate: a support service to help both established businesses and start-ups identify the right design project for their needs and take it forward.

- Designing Demand Innovate: an intensive support service helping early-stage technology ventures use design to commercialise new technology.
- Designing Demand Immerse: an intensive strategic service for mature businesses, helping them embed design to tackle core business issues and make a lasting impact on performance through up to 18 months of direct support.

#### Roll-out

Designing Demand is being delivered in partnership with regional development agencies. The programme is currently running in the west Midlands, the south-east and South Yorkshire. It is being rolled out in the south-west and the north-east later this year, and London and the east Midlands go live in early 2008. The Design Council is in discussions to make the programme available in the remaining regions and nations.

A delivery partner is appointed by each of the RDAs to run the programme in its region. The delivery partners – which so far include Business Links, universities and innovation centres – are chosen through a tendering process, and partners can apply from the private sector as well as the public sector. The partner chosen is supported by the central team, which is provided by the Design Council.

The Treasury has pledged to support Designing Demand in line with the Cox Review's recommendation, and each of the nine RDAs has contributed a fixed sum to help fund a central support team.

#### Impact

More than 700 companies have taken part in Designing Demand programmes since 2002. They report having increased their sales, boosted profit and turnover, launched new products and services and increased their market share.

**Our evaluation (2005) shows that for every £1 spent on design, companies taking part in Designing Demand Immerse saw an £50 increase in turnover above expected levels.**

Some benefits are specific to individual services. Technology ventures taking part in Innovate will find

out how to use design to attract investment, reduce risk, refine strategy and cut time to market. In the programme's pilot phase, 50% of technology ventures improved their ability to attract funding while 80% changed their mindset and culture.

Businesses on the Generate and Immerse services have the chance to reap the rewards of a successful design project, including increased sales, profits and market share, more efficient and cost-effective processes, new market opportunities and better competitiveness through differentiated products or services.

They also embed skills they can use into the future, including the ability to match design projects to strategic goals and resources, define project objectives based on a business case, draw up a design brief, choose the right designers, plan and manage a design project, and measure the value of design investment.

### **Economic value**

The Design Council has built up a solid body of evidence proving that design is a key driver of business growth and competitiveness that has the power to transform business strategy, decision making and practice at every level. For example, the Design Council's Design Index (2005) demonstrated that over a 10-year period design intensive companies outperformed the FTSE® by more than 200%. Our studies also demonstrate the link between design expenditure and economic performance. The Value of Design Factfinder (2005–06) found that for every £100 a design-alert business spends on design, turnover is increased by £225.

As a direct result of taking part in Designing Demand, businesses have achieved substantial sales rises, opened up overseas trading opportunities, attracted investment and shortened time to market for their technology. They have also put in place new strategies for handling competition and launched new brands.

By 2011 the programme will have transformed more than 6 500 businesses and will be available across the UK through RDAs and others.

With around £20 million of RDA investment already forecast, Designing Demand is expected to generate significant productivity, competitiveness and employment gains at regional and national level.

### **Notes**

The Design Council is the UK's national strategic body for design. It aims to strengthen and support the economy and society by demonstrating and promoting the vital role of design.

## Disability and Carers Service (DCS)

For further information:

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Disability and Carers Service (DCS) is an Executive Agency of the Department for Work and Pensions.

DCS provides financial support for disabled people and carers through the administration of the following benefits:

- Disability Living Allowance.
- Attendance Allowance.
- Carer's Allowance.
- Vaccine Damage Payments.

We have the privilege of serving more than 5 million customers nationally.

DCS currently provides support to more than 5 million people in the UK, helping to ensure disabled people and carers get the benefits they are entitled to and are able to live as independently as possible.

The agency's focus continues to be on improving the customer experience.

### Civil Service Award

Last year (2006) saw DCS achievements recognised across government with the top team accolade at the prestigious Civil Service Awards.

The award was in recognition of the transformation of the DCS Helpline, which featured in last year's 'Success stories'.

In just five months DCS tackled a five-year old problem. Customer satisfaction shot up with 95% of customers now rating the telephone service as excellent or very good. Staff have also recognised the shift in customer focus, with 93% of the contact centre staff now convinced DCS is committed to customer service.

### Community 500 scheme

But the improvements at DCS during 2006 stretch further than the Helpline.

Chief Executive, Terry Moran, explains: *'At the heart of the changes has been a focus on customer insight and understanding the complex needs of our unique customer base. As part of this we introduced the Community 500 initiative.'*

*'This is the second year of the scheme, after 2005's event exceeded all our expectations. It enables us to spend time with our customers to help us gain an understanding of their day-to-day life, and contribute to our communities. This is an extremely valuable experience for all of us, given that most of our contacts with our customers are not face to face.'*

More than 650 DCS staff took part in the scheme, spending time in their local communities over two weeks last autumn. Those taking part visited voluntary organisations, disability groups, community projects and schools. Staff got involved in everything from beach clean-ups to tree planting, working alongside customers with learning difficulties and physical disabilities or supporting staff caring for disabled children.

Although the scheme took place across just two weeks in September, the impact has been evident throughout the year. Many of the staff that took part have shared their experiences with others in the organisation, and some have even committed themselves to volunteering on a permanent basis.

Feedback from staff so far has been extremely positive. Fran Dale spent his placement at St. Mary's Hospice in Birmingham and now plans to continue to help out at the Hospice on a regular basis. Others, like Janet Greenwood, who visited a day hospice in Leeds, have said they will consider volunteering in the future.

Jane Andrews, from Blackpool, visited Highfurlong School. She said: *'I have never worked with people with disabilities before and found the whole experience very beneficial. The teachers and staff were amazing and the pupils were fantastic young people.'*

There was also positive feedback from some of the 139 organisations that took part in the scheme, many of which said they gained a clearer understanding of the work of DCS.

### Professionalism in Decision-Making and Appeals (PIDMA)

Another initiative aimed at improving the customer experience is the development of a new professional framework to support the DCS decision-making process for entitlement to Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance benefits.

Professionalism in Decision Making and Appeals (PIDMA) is a programme of continuous professional development for the agency's Decision Makers (DMs) and their Specialist Managers, leading to external accreditation.

DCS has been working in partnership with the University of Chester to develop this work-based learning, which is designed to recognise capability in this complex area of work and provide staff with nationally recognised higher education qualifications.

At a recent ceremony held as part of the agency's Senior Managers' Conference, Professor Tim Wheeler, Vice Chancellor of the University of Chester, presented certificates to the first set of accredited decision-making staff from the PIDMA programme – 27 in all. Professor Wheeler told the successful students: *'You have been instrumental in shaping what will follow, thanks to your enthusiasm, effort and energy, and sharing what you have learnt'*.

Newly accredited Associate Tutor Pauline Thompson who received a 'Certificate of Recognition' from the University, said: *'PIDMA recognises professionalism in decision making and is a real investment in staff who make decisions every day which directly impact on disabled people's lives'*.

The PIDMA programme is due to be rolled out across the agency.

Over the past few years DCS has worked hard to improve its performance and offer its customers a better service. With so many success stories to tell, it seems all that hard work is beginning to pay off.

## Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

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### DVLA's electronic successes

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) continues to transform its business by moving from paper to an electronic approach. The Agency's customer-facing achievements include enhancements to both driver and vehicle services and are mirrored by significant internal changes such as the provision and use of shared services and the adoption of non-territorial working. The Agency's transformation process is set to continue for a number of years yet – indeed it has long-term plans extending out to 2010 – but the initial benefits are already impacting on the Agency's customers and staff.

#### Electronic Vehicle Licensing (EVL)

Launched nationally in January 2006, EVL has grown in popularity. With March 2007 licence renewals setting a new record, when over 1 million customers successfully bought their tax discs or declared a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) online or over the phone, it is estimated that over 19 million customers will have used the service by 2008.

The winner of numerous awards, EVL achieved a gold award from the Management Consultancies Association and the UK e-Government Award for Central e-Government Excellence in 2006 and was Highly Commended for Operational Delivery in the Whitehall and Westminster Civil Service Awards in February 2007.

EVL is now one of the biggest online 'retail' services in the UK – already 50% bigger than Tesco Online®. Nearly 100 000 customers a day are coming to use the service as each new monthly period of liability begins.

#### Barcoding All Relicensing Transactions (BART)

Barcodes on tax discs, V11 Renewal Reminder forms and the Harmonised Registration Certificate V5C enable DVLA to capture licensing and SORN information electronically from Post Office® branches.

This link between Post Office counter terminals and DVLA's database validates the data before a disc is issued, returns the correct rate of duty and, if the vehicle was tested using the electronic MOT test facility, an enquiry facility also checks the MOT status of the vehicle.

The improved accuracy and faster updating of the record achieved through BART helps DVLA and the police with enforcement activities and has made the process simpler and quicker and therefore easier for customers.

#### Automated First Registration and Licensing (AFRL)

AFRL is a voluntary scheme that enables dealers to register and licence new vehicles electronically at their own premises. Currently, over 90% of new vehicles are processed by this method.

A business-to-business system links DVLA's vehicle database to motor manufacturers, which allows their dealers to electronically register and license new vehicles. By allowing the allocation of a registration mark and the issue of a vehicle licence, the customer can take advantage of a 'one-stop shop' where they can view, choose and drive away a vehicle on the same day.

For DVLA it means a vehicle record is set up and a V5C issued, thus ensuring the record is accurate and up to date almost immediately.

#### Drivers Re-engineering Project (DRP)

DRP is radically transforming the Agency's drivers business. One of its main objectives is to introduce an electronic channel to allow customers to apply for a driving licence online, without the need to send additional documentation by post. Since April 2006 provisional licences have been available online and further online applications, including change of address, are expected to become available in 2007.

DRP will provide a web channel to customers 24/7. Customers will have greater transparency of their own record and faster turnaround times and service delivery as a result of the reduction in paper processing. A web enquiry service will enable government partners and commercial customers to check driver entitlements and enforcement partners will have access to the latest driver record, thereby reducing reliance on a physical licence.

#### Data access

Quick and easy access to data is required by a variety of official bodies for a variety of reasons. In 2006 a successful pilot to trial a new online driver enquiry service was held with a number of key

partner organisations, viz Essex and Gwent police forces, Driving Standards Agency®, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. The pilot service provided instant access to driver information, including photograph and signature, to these trusted partners.

Later in the year Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) joined the pilot from several locations around the UK, and their feedback has also been very positive. In some courts, the number of adjournments has fallen by 80% since access was first provided. Additionally, direct access for HMRC has enabled them to make significant savings and efficiency gains as a result of the reduction in the time it takes to complete an enquiry (typically down from 4–6 weeks to just a few seconds).

Building on this success, DVLA began trials of a new technology with North Wales Police in February 2007. Using a secure BlackBerry® mobile device, access to driver data now allows officers to identify drivers at the roadside, thereby greatly increasing their crime detection and enforcement capabilities. Roll-out to other forces is planned to continue during 2007.

#### **Non-territorial working (NTW):**

With around 6 150 staff (full-time equivalents) and an estates portfolio of 51 buildings, operating on two sites in Swansea and 40 local offices throughout the UK, non-territorial working offers significant advantages for the Agency as it strives to improve flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness.

The concept of NTW moves away from the principle of desk ownership to an environment where desks are shared and rotated by the teams of staff they support. This encourages a more flexible way of working and enables staff more easily to share knowledge and expertise.

Before introducing NTW across the estate, it was piloted in three operational areas. A comprehensive post-pilot study revealed the success of the trial and was used to establish an appropriate plan for full roll-out. Senior level sponsorship was achieved with the Chief Executive and Directors themselves moving to a fully open-plan environment. Significant efforts were made to ensure key stakeholder buy-in and the establishment of a dedicated project team was seen as an essential element in taking NTW forward, in particular to meet the inevitable challenges as staff were concerned about lack of personalised space, privacy, confidentiality and disruption.

The direct business benefit in making better use of available space results in reduced accommodation costs as well as having more meeting rooms and

breakout areas available (for holding impromptu meetings and taking rest breaks). NTW also means that managers work much closer with their teams, supporting effective team building and enabling the flexibility needed to deal with change.

NTW was first rolled out in October 2005. In 2006 the DVLA NTW project won the prestigious CoreNet Award. By March 2007 nearly 4 000 staff had adopted NTW, with the majority preferring their new way of working. By 2008 all staff in DVLA Swansea will be working in the new NTW environment.

#### **Shared Service Centre (SSC):**

Based in a new building in Swansea, the SSC is a new concept for the Department for Transport (DfT) and its agencies. It is run by DVLA but exists as an independent service provider, answerable to a customer board consisting of one director level representative from each agency within the Department, and the Shared Service Director.

The centre uses new technology designed to provide a high-quality service for customers and suppliers, both electronically and by telephone. The services ultimately expected to be provided to DfT and all of its agencies are finance, procurement, HR (people movement, recruitment and training) and payroll. The first tranche of these services became available to DVLA and the Driving Standards Agency in April 2007, with further service roll-out expected later in the year and roll-out to the rest of DfT and its agencies taking place over the next two years.

Multiple communications approaches are available, including a web-based self-service portal, which is expected to be used as the main information route, as well as telephone, email and paper channels. Within the centre itself there is a dedicated customer service manager and two customer partners, who act as a conduit between SSC operations and customers to ensure that service levels and reporting meet the required standards.

## Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI)

For further information:

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### Extension of the Post Office® network, through BART (Bar-coding All Re-licensing Transactions)

DVLNI's mission is to assist road safety and law enforcement through the provision of accurate and complete registration records and providing other integrated and value-added services. DVLNI's principal activities are:

- the registration and licensing of drivers (including taxi drivers) and road freight and passenger transport operators in Northern Ireland; and
- the registration and licensing of vehicles, together with the collection and enforcement of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) in Northern Ireland.

Through the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date registers of drivers and vehicle keepers, the Agency assists with law enforcement activities, promotes road safety and provides database services to external organisations and the public.

Unit-costing comparisons show that the unit cost of processing VED applications at the Post Office in Northern Ireland is less than completing the same transaction through a Local Vehicle Licensing Office (LVLO) in Northern Ireland or the Postal Licensing section. For example, in 2005–06 the unit cost of processing a V10 (manual renewal) at an LVLO was £5.60, in Postal Licensing £7.13, and at the Post Office £5.17.

The number of Post Offices capable of delivering the Agency's services was increased from 84 to 150, in response to public demand, and a request for additional Post Offices in the customer survey (it is currently not possible to re-license online). Initially, the Post Offices involved could only license vehicles using the renewal application form generated by the DVLNI system – that is the V11 form. Now an additional service is available in 19 of these offices using the agency's V10 re-licensing form, which is manually completed by the customer and can be used for applications where vehicle and keeper details are being changed.



As a result of the extension of the Post Office network and the introduction of the BART system, a change is evident in the proportion of DVLNI VED collected through the Post Offices:

- in 2003–04 DVLNI collected £129 million, £40 million of which was through the Post Offices;
- in 2004–05 DVLNI collected £127 million, £48 million of which was through the Post Offices; and
- in 2005–06 DVLNI collected £135 million, £56 million of which was through the Post Offices.

The BART Project was developed in DVLA and included DVLNI. The purpose of the BART Project was for use in association with the Post Office for a fully automated service. The barcode incorporated into the licence disc is scanned by the Post Office along with the Registration Mark of the appropriate V11; the amount of duty is manually keyed. This information is electronically passed from the Post Office Horizon System, via DVLA, and uploaded directly onto the NIVIS (Northern Ireland Vehicles Information System), which was adapted to facilitate the electronic upload. The implementation of BART has removed the need for manual keying in DVLNI of details onto the NIVIS system, thus saving staff time and enabling a faster, more accurate update of the system. The addition of the barcode on the licence disc has provided increased disc security.

The BART Project has made a significant contribution to the Government's aim of providing a more effective, efficient, electronic service to the public. The strategic objective of improved customer service is met through the extended Post Office network – providing more flexibility and choice for the customer. Greater value for money from the services we provide is also a DVLNI strategic objective; this is contributed to by the favourable unit costing comparisons.

The extension of the Post Office network, through the BART Project, played a part in the recent Charter Mark re-accreditation for DVLNI, and contributed significantly to four of the seven 'Best Practices' that were awarded:

- *'Consultation has a direct effect on your organisation's services'* – The extension of the Post Office network came about as a direct result of request made by customers in the Customer Survey.
- *'You have made arrangements with other providers to actively provide a coordinated service'* – The BART Project was an initiative involving DVLA, DVLNI and the Post Office Ltd.
- *'Your services are easily accessible to everyone'* – The extension of the Post Office network provides additional accessibility for the customer.
- *'You make the most of technology to improve services or value for money'* – The BART Project enables the offer of improved services to the customer, and the unit cost of a Post Office V10 transaction is better value for money than an equivalent transaction in Postal Licensing or an LVLO.

## East Midlands Development Agency

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### Avenue Coking Works

#### Delivering cleaned-up land with support from the community

The East Midlands Development Agency, *emda*, is one of nine regional development agencies in England, set up by the Government in 1999 to bring a regional focus to economic development. A business-led board leads the Agency in directing a wide range of activity, focusing on the key challenges of increasing business competitiveness, increasing skills levels, creating jobs, and regenerating local communities.

The East Midlands, which comprises the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham and Rutland, is a diverse region that includes the former coal mining areas of north-east Derbyshire and north Nottinghamshire. There is a significant legacy of environmental damage associated with this area's industrial past and *emda*'s inheritance included a number of strategic sites requiring physical regeneration and economic renewal. These include the Avenue Coking Works, one of 26 sites in the National Coalfield Programme that *emda* is bringing back into productive use.

The former Avenue Coking Works 98Ha site is amongst the most highly polluted sites in Europe, with contaminants too toxic for disposal – even in hazardous landfill sites – without prior treatment. This is the largest project within the National Coalfields Programme and the most complex on-site remediation treatment ever undertaken in the UK. Responsibility for remediation, reclamation and redevelopment to provide employment, housing, leisure and conservation areas lies with *emda*.

#### Objective

The site came into *emda*'s ownership in 1999 as part of the National Coalfields Programme delivery transfer from English Partnerships®. As owner, we inherited the site's health, safety and environmental liabilities, together with responsibility for its economic redevelopment. From the outset we adopted a holistic, fully integrated, partnership approach to regeneration. Our aim was to achieve maximum value with multifunctional design, so that wherever possible

elements of the scheme would achieve more than one purpose.

#### Impact

The project has had significant impact, both nationally and locally. It has already achieved many of its original objectives, not least to win over and gain community support for our vision for the site.

The detailed design of the final site restoration was finalised following a public consultation exercise. An exhibition was held in six surrounding communities and on site, and various options were presented for public views. As young people are typically under-represented in such exercises, all the local schools were also involved. The outcome of the exhibition provided valuable information that has influenced the design and given a mandate that should assist when securing planning consent.

The remediation of the contaminated material on site is of a scale (650 000 m<sup>3</sup>) and technical difficulty not previously undertaken in the UK; so it was important to establish a mechanism that would encourage innovation and achieve best value through the tendering process. The application of the latest technologies, undertaking remediation on site to avoid the need to transport highly contaminated materials, has attracted interest from outside the UK and the site has become a demonstration of sustainable technologies.

Achievements to date include:

- securing the site;
- controlling polluted run-off to limit impact on the River Rother; and
- demolition and clearance of the coking works and the chemical plant.

16Ha has already been restored as a local nature reserve to protect existing species and increase biodiversity. Amongst those was the endangered great crested newt, which has led to the site becoming of European significance for the species. In addition, flood defence works to protect Chesterfield will be brought forward by 15 years due to our **good working partnership** with the **Environment Agency**®.

**Future plans**

Restoration work is likely to continue until 2011, with some development work beyond that. The site will continue as an exemplar, with:

- remediation treatments used as national technology demonstrations; and
- university research programmes at a dedicated visitor and learning centre.

**Key learning points**

Early engagement with all stakeholders has benefited the project to date, particularly in terms of:

- Community involvement and extensive consultation to ensure perceived and actual prejudices against the scheme were reduced or removed.
- Early involvement of regulatory bodies, such as the Environment Agency and planning authorities, to advise as well as regulate, ensuring management liabilities were met and project design/methodologies enhanced.
- Early involvement and consultation with end-users, such as Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, wherever possible, ensuring 'fit for purpose', with particular regard to the nature reserve.

This project will now set the standard for the way future similar schemes are delivered.

## East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

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### Delivering services to support entrepreneurs and boost economic development

#### East of England Development Agency (EEDA) – Running the Gauntlet

##### Project

EEDA's Running the Gauntlet was the UK's biggest business competition and was run for the first time in 2005. EEDA worked in partnership with CREATE, a leading investor in East of England businesses, and Library House, the authority on privately held high-growth companies in the UK. The innovative and high-profile competition was designed exclusively for entrepreneurs in the East of England and provided a unique opportunity to learn how to approach investors and pitch for funding. An investment fund of up to £1 million was on offer from CREATE plus £200 000-worth of in-kind business services from sponsors.

##### The Gauntlet

The competition was based around The Gauntlet, a ground-breaking, web-based service developed by Library House and the London School of Economics™. It acts like a virtual investor and enables entrepreneurs to test their business proposition before exposing it to the make-or-break judgement of real backers. All Running the Gauntlet entrants had free access to The Gauntlet (normally charged at £199) as part of the competition.

Shortlisted entrepreneurs had to pitch their ideas to a panel of business experts and investment specialists, including Doug Richard from BBC2's Dragons' Den® and Boyd Mulvey from CREATE Partners.

##### Case Study

Short Fuze won £300 000 in venture capital funding through Running the Gauntlet. Dave Lloyd and Matt Kelland, founders of Short Fuze, are the creators of Moviestorm™, a cartoon-generating computer programme.

*'Moviestorm is a computer application that lets everyone make their own computer-generated animated movies,' said Dave. 'You can create the characters, tell them what you want them to do and say, and even design the sets. It's a bit like Microsoft® Word for making movies.'*

Even though Moviestorm is an exciting concept, Dave and Matt had exhausted all other financial possibilities of getting it up and running when they heard about the Running the Gauntlet competition.

*'Without Running the Gauntlet Moviestorm wouldn't have happened,' said Dave. 'When we entered the competition it was our last-ditch attempt to get the project off the ground before we had to get real jobs again.'*

*'When we won Running the Gauntlet there were just the two of us. Now there are eight. Having more expertise in areas like finance, marketing and sales has meant that me and Matt can focus on the product. Our productivity has risen massively thanks to the Gauntlet money,' Dave continues.*

## energywatch

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### Delivering improved customer service by working with energy suppliers

energywatch has a statutory duty to investigate complaints where the consumer has been unable to resolve the matter with their energy company. In 2006–07 energywatch will resolve approximately **65 000 investigated complaints** and respond to more than **250 000 complex enquiries**. Many of the enquiries involve the provision of advice to consumers to allow them to resolve a problem directly with their supply company. In addition, more than 200 000 answers to frequently asked questions are viewed each year on the energywatch website.

Complaint investigation absorbs considerable resource at both energywatch and at the supply companies, so discussions were initiated with the major suppliers to develop a process that would allow more consumers to resolve their complaints directly with their supplier.

### Extended empowerment

The approach agreed with the companies allows energywatch staff to transfer calls or cases directly to specialist teams set up within the company. These dedicated teams are separate to the supplier's main call centre and consist of experienced staff, so that in many cases the consumer's complaint can be resolved whilst they are on the telephone.

Prior to the transfer, brief details of the problems are recorded on the complaints' database, so that a formal complaint can be initiated if the consumer contacts energywatch again because they have been unable to resolve the matter with their supplier. energywatch staff will also advise the consumer on the questions to ask their supplier and to any entitlement to compensation under the guaranteed standards scheme.

The suppliers are sent a daily report listing the cases transferred to them and are required to report back to energywatch on the status and actions taken to resolve the complaint. Regular customer satisfaction monitoring is also undertaken to ensure that consumer cases are being handled appropriately.

If the consumer is vulnerable, has a complex complaint or is unwilling or unable to deal directly with the

company, energywatch staff will investigate the complaint in the normal way.

This 'empowerment' approach has a number of advantages:

- 1 Faster resolution – energywatch currently resolves approximately 85% of complaints received within 35 working days, but by talking directly with an expert in the company the matter can often be resolved immediately or within a few days.
- 2 Better use of resources – by reducing the time taken to help consumers resolve straightforward matters, energywatch is able to provide further support to more vulnerable consumers.
- 3 Ownership of complaints – this approach is consistent with one of the key aims of the Government's new consumer representation proposals, to ensure that companies take more responsibility for complaint resolution.

After several successful small-scale trials, detailed procedures were developed to support a national roll-out for each supplier. The empowerment arrangements are now in place with all **six major domestic suppliers**, and up to **8 000 cases per month** are now being resolved through this route.

During 2007 it is hoped to extend these arrangements to some of the non-domestic suppliers and to establish links to allow cases to be referred directly to the specialist teams by CAB and Consumer Direct. The continuation of these arrangements will provide an important channel for complaint resolution for many consumers if, as expected, energywatch is closed when the new consumer representation arrangements are implemented in 2008.

## Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

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### Delivering better services through promoting knowledge transfer

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is the UK Government's leading funding agency for research and training in engineering and the physical sciences. We invest around £650 million a year in UK universities in a broad range of subjects – from mathematics to materials science, and from information technology to structural engineering. Our vision is for the UK to be the best place in the world in which to engage in research and innovation.

The two examples below show how we are ensuring we provide the best-quality service, as well as developing innovative new projects to meet the changing needs of the country.

#### A quality operation

As a public body, rather than a business, it can be difficult to be certain you are providing the best service to your customers and stakeholders.

To ensure that we are measuring the quality of our operations, we have put in place a quality management system, and in July 2006 our Programme Operations Directorate received the internationally recognised ISO 9001 Quality Management accreditation. The Programme Operations Directorate is responsible for the processing of grant applications and administering our peer review process. In 2005–06 we awarded 3 668 grants to researchers in 108 organisations.

The management of our **peer review system** operates in the form of an improvement cycle, where policies are implemented. The effects are measured and analysed and then reviewed for the purpose of continual improvement. These improvements create and feed into new policies, which start the improvement cycle over again.

Some specific activities that we have brought together to realise the quality management system include:

- Auditing our processes, both external and internal audits.

- Use of regular surveys of stakeholders to determine their satisfaction with the quality of the service we provide.
- Quality review meetings: senior management meet formally to identify quality-related issues over the entire remit of the system and recommend changes.
- Increased use of indicators and data on our performance and service standards to test the quality of our processes (for example, improving reviewer performance and overall time taken to process proposals).
- Identification of a quality manager who oversees the system and communicates the quality objectives externally and internally to the organisation.

#### Knowledge transfer challenge

Science and innovation make huge contributions to the quality of people's lives and are critical to the success of our economy. It is becoming increasingly important to make sure that the excellent research base we have in the UK is used to its full potential, and that ideas, skills and technology are transferred into business and society.

In 2006 we launched the Knowledge Transfer Challenge Awards in order to meet two important objectives:

- to better understand the spectrum of knowledge transfer activity that is already happening in universities; and
- to raise the profile of knowledge transfer and encourage universities to think about their strategies and what they have achieved.

Bids from 41 universities were received, providing EPSRC very quickly with a large amount of information. In order to be short listed, universities had to demonstrate a strong track record in knowledge transfer. They were then assessed on their proposals for future activities, and five were selected to go through to the final. The finalists presented their case to a judging panel from government and industry, who selected a winning university to be awarded £500 000 to use on their proposed

knowledge transfer plans. The four runners-up each received £100 000.

The awards were welcomed by universities and government, and raised the profile of knowledge transfer in the academic environment. Alistair Darling, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, presented the awards, and was impressed by the quality of the entries: *'The high calibre of the five finalists shows the tremendous strength of UK research in engineering and the physical sciences'*.

As well as raising the profile of knowledge transfer, the awards also initiated future activity. Applicants were encouraged to seek support for their plans from their Regional Development Agency before applying, so that proposals would tie in with the economic development strategy for the region. Professor John Perkins, Vice-President of the University of Manchester® – the winning university – believes the award will have a significant impact on their interactions with industry: *'The projects we are proposing will allow us to build upon the firm foundations already laid and build new bridges between the University of Manchester and the business sector'*.

EPSRC is using the information collected to inform the development of new policies for the funding of knowledge transfer, to demonstrate to government how publicly funded research is benefiting the UK, and to use in publicity material to inspire more interactions in the future.

## English Heritage®

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

### Delivering better services more cheaply by the 'Buy Smarter' procurement project

English Heritage is the government's statutory adviser on the historic environment. Our role is to champion and care for the historic environment, which we do by:

- improving understanding of the past through research and study;
  - providing conservation grants, advisory and education services;
  - identifying and helping to protect buildings and archaeological sites of national importance;
  - maintaining over 400 historic properties and making them accessible to the broadest possible public audience; and
  - maintaining the National Monuments Record as the central publicly accessible archive for the historic environment in England.
- identifying and analysing various areas or categories of expenditure in which potential improvements could be made;
  - identifying the key stakeholders who drive the need for the goods and services within this category;
  - forming teams comprising stakeholder representatives; and
  - providing the structure and procurement expertise for these teams to exploit the opportunities that exist, including developing short- and longer-term strategies for procuring the goods and services within the category.

So far savings have been achieved in a number of categories, including a **26% reduction in landline telecommunications, 13% in car hire, 15% in legal fees, 28% in stationery costs, 18% in mobile telecommunications and 10% in printing and paper costs.**

We are sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which has overall responsibility for heritage policy in England and from whom we receive around 75% of our funding. We also work closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs® and with Communities and Local Government, co-signatories to English Heritage's Funding Agreement.

By March 2008 English Heritage's Buy Smarter project will have made cash and efficiency savings amounting to at least £1.5 million since its inception in May 2005 and additional savings of £400 000 are expected.

The project was born after initial research into the organisation's expenditure found that significant opportunities existed to consolidate contracts, reduce costs and make various efficiencies, whilst maintaining or improving service levels. The initiative sat well with the general drive to improve efficiency across government and DCMS's own efforts to improve procurement throughout its sector.

Buy Smarter works by using a 'category team' approach, which involves:

A variety of procurement strategies combining short-term 'quick wins' with much longer-term approaches achieved these savings. For example, English Heritage ran a successful e-auction for its landline telecommunications, collaborated on a tendering exercise for car hire with a much larger spending government department and 'piggybacked' an existing departmental agreement for stationery whilst maintaining the same supplier. In other cases the organisation just used good old-fashioned competitive tendering to consolidate or aggregate spend with fewer suppliers for legal fees and grounds maintenance contracts.

Category teams are now focused on and already achieving results in the areas of insurance, temporary staff, utilities, reprographics and office printing, the use of consultants, and travel and subsistence. Further savings should be made after March 2008 from building maintenance and repairs, and construction project management.

Linda Poole, English Heritage's Head of Procurement, said: *'The success of Buy Smarter lies in its support from the very top in conveying the importance of efficient and innovative procurement as an essential part of normal business practice.'*







































































































































