



REPORTER

The e-magazine of the UK Association of Chief Executives



- Cover
- Contents
- News
- Briefing
- Feedback
- About ACE



Go

Green light



Go

Cutting edge



Go

Facing change

Park politics

Olympic disagreement... [Go](#)



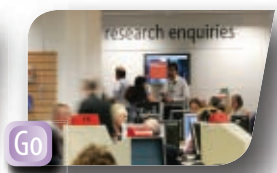


REPORTER

The e-magazine of the UK Association of Chief Executives



Go **Green light**



Go **Cutting edge**



Go **Facing change**

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Contents

News:

ACE Matters

Critical friends

When is a park not a park?

Briefing

Facing up to change –
Networking is as important as technology

Changing ahead of the game –
Moving from regional to a national model

Cuts should not be ‘salami-sliced’ –
Cut what you should not what you could

What is the point of a park? –
Radio 4’s Today puts parks on the spot

Linking people and performance –
Explaining the reasons for change

Government cars set the standard –
On the road to sustainability

Trial of the Pyx has a very modern role –
Checking on the coins in our pocket

[Click here to visit the ACE website](#)

We are being heard in Whitehall

Welcome to this pre-election issue of ACE Reporter. As Jane Platt's update explains, this has been a busy and exciting time for ACE and the next few weeks and months offer few opportunities for any let-up.

We all face our own particular issues in terms of handling sensitivities during purdah and, of course, preparing for a new Government once the result of the election is known. One thing is clear. Whatever political party wins and however big a majority they secure, we all face a future where resources are scarce.

Efficiencies within and across organisations will be more important than ever. Scarce resources will be directed where they are most needed, ie to frontline services. It is clear that some of our members are feeling more vulnerable than at any time in the recent past. There has been much talk of reducing numbers of arm's-length bodies and this has inevitably left some of our colleagues wondering about the future of their organisations; and for some, their jobs too.

But all those I have spoken to have made it abundantly clear that their principal concern is for the continuation of the excellent services they currently provide. Their message to the new Government is likely to be that, whatever is decided in terms

of a landscape for arm's-length bodies, let's work together with our parent Departments to ensure we don't do anything which puts those services at risk.

My message to all of you facing a challenging and uncertain future is that ACE is here to help. We are not all the same, but we are a like-minded group of colleagues who offer a friendly and empathetic ear to those who are sometimes feeling a bit isolated and alone.

The ACE network is a really valuable resource which can provide support and experience, especially at difficult times; and we are increasingly a network which is listened to at the heart of Whitehall. The more use we all make of it, the more useful it will become.

I hope you enjoy this issue of ACE Reporter and that, as I have suggested, you all think what further use you can make of your ACE membership as we enter another interesting and challenging time for us all.



Guest Editor
Gareth Jones
Chief Executive
& Registrar
Companies House

ACE Matters - *endorsed by Sir Gus!*

It has been a busy first quarter for ACE. From the HM Treasury workshops on their review of Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) in January to the workshop with the Cabinet Office on the extension of the Capability Review concept to ALBs in March.

'It has been busy but encouraging,' said ACE chair Jane Platt. 'ACE has been engaging in the key debates and it has not just been the Board who have been involved – these workshops have been open to all CEO members – the only limiting factor has been space!'

The workshops with HM Treasury, held in January, culminated in the publication of *Reforming Arm's Length Bodies* at the time of the budget. Platt said she was pleased to see ACE's contribution acknowledged in the Review.

'It shows we are making progress in being recognised as the credible and valuable organisation we are. There are clearly a large number of proposals in *Reforming Arm's Length Bodies* and a number of members have expressed an interest in ACE organising a discussion forum to share thoughts on the issues,' she said.

'We are actively seeking responses from ACE members and are working to include it on the agenda of our next ACE discussion forum and drinks on 9 June at One Great George Street, Westminster. We will circulate the

Cabinet Office readout of the Capability Review when we receive it.'

Another success is that Sir Gus O'Donnell, who spoke before the ACE Annual Dinner, has agreed to sign the latest ACE membership drive letter. Platt said: 'He wants to endorse the concept of ACE and raise our profile by increasing our penetration of the ALB community.'

'It would be great if all members could recruit another ALB CEO or senior manager to our ranks. ACE membership is – of course – recognised by NAO as an appropriate use of public funds which means that ALBs can cover membership costs.'

Key points to come out of recent ACE sessions with Sir Gus O'Donnell, Sir Michael Bichard and the Cabinet Office include:

- ALBs need to be ready to flex their plans to the manifesto commitments of the general election winner and be prepared to cope with the issues that a hung parliament might bring
- Reaction to *Reforming Arm's Length Bodies* from ACE members is actively sought
- Financial pressures will require solutions that go well beyond 'doing more for less'
- ALBs will need exceptional leadership skills to maintain high staff engagement and delivery through the period

- There are a very small number of large ALBs that have scale in terms of staff numbers/ expenditure/ public interest
- Capability reviews could take many forms, the key issue is getting the benefit cost effectively and credibly
- ALBs are encouraged to take part in the pan civil service staff survey please email kate.jarman@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Work has now started on planning the ACE Annual Conference that will take place on 25-26 November at the National School of Government, Sunningdale Park, Ascot. Sir Michael, now Lord Bichard, will follow on from his pre-election assessment of the likely outlook for ALBs and update his views in the light of the election result. Sir Gus will talk a year on from *Smarter Government*. Government Ministers will be invited to share their vision for ALBs. A discussion session will look at the practical implications of the changing political landscape.

Platt said: 'It should be a very topical and focused event as well as giving us all a chance to get the benefit of each other's post election experience. Book early to avoid disappointment!'

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Critical friends

To make dialogue between the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS) and its partner organisations stronger and more strategic, ACE member John Alty, new CEO of the Intellectual Property Office, has been asked to establish a group of critical friends from a selection of CEOs and Chairs of partner organisations.



The request comes from BIS Permanent

Secretary Simon Fraser and is aimed at developing a closer working relationships between BIS and its 70 plus partner organisations (what BIS calls ALBs).

Alty, former DG of Fair Markets at BIS, said: 'We envisage a much closer working relationship between centre and partners in order to make the most of the whole BIS family, which will be even more important in the light of the spending squeeze. Asking me to lead this is a signal that it will not be purely centrally driven.'

Issues likely to be considered include:

implications for BIS and its partners of significant public expenditure cuts; BIS' approach to some of the issues set out in the Smarter Government White Paper; development of a clear business model that allows BIS and its partners to explain and justify the allocation of roles within the delivery landscape; and how BIS HQ and its partner organisations can work together to achieve maximum impact in delivering objectives.

The group aims hold its first meeting on Wednesday 5 May. It is expected it will meet between four and six times a year.

When is a park not a park?

ACE member Mark Camley, CEX Royal Parks, has been in the headlines regarding the use of the Royal Parks. The furore follows an outcry by residents and Guardian columnist Simon Jenkins after planning permission was granted for Olympic horse riding facilities to be built in Greenwich Park. In a robust defence of the Royal Parks, Camley took on Jenkins in a radio debate on the *Today* programme.

Jenkins said: 'Part of the problem with the Royal Parks today is that they are being

used as public entertainment spaces. The whole point of a park is to walk on grass among trees in open space contemplating calm and quiet in a big city. If you put thundering great Olympic events there that cost £40m for a week it ain't a park.'

Camley defended the right to use parks in different ways. He said: 'The Parks are used by 37m visitors every year in very different ways. There are people who enjoy a quiet walk, people who play football and people who

come to be entertained in other ways. The satisfaction levels of people who come to the Royal Parks are more than 95%.'

[Read what Camley has to say in full here.](#)



Facing up to change

Networking is just as important as technology, says new report

The best way to confront uncertainty is to be armed with as much information as possible. That is the belief at The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEIIICC) and that is why the Centre got involved in the major international research project Convention 2020 that is looking at how meetings and events will change over the coming decade.

Initial survey responses suggest demand for live events will remain strong in 10 years time, but clients will expect innovation in meeting formats, business models and use of technology.

Around 74% of respondents predict their organisation will maintain investment in live events, with 76% citing the opportunity of networking as the biggest single factor that would encourage delegates to attend.

At the same time, the survey highlights the increasing role of technology, with 75% expecting live video streaming to remote participants to become commonplace and 64% expecting all event content to be available to download on to mobile phones.



The idea now that technology will complement, rather than take the place of, live events, is interesting - Vincent

Ernest Vincent, chief executive of The QEIIICC, said: 'In a difficult period when organisations were cutting back on spending and advances in technology opened up new alternatives to the tried and trusted tradition of gathering people together in a conference room, the value of face-to-face communication came under scrutiny. The idea now that technology will complement, rather than take the place of, live events, is interesting.'

'It certainly supports the £1.2m that has been invested in technology at The QEIIICC in recent years. This is now one of the most IT intelligent buildings in the UK, with a built-in wireless network, an in-house audiovisual service including live broadcast and webcasting, plus a resident IT team and an online conference service.'

An executive agency of the Department

for Communities and Local Government, The QEIIICC, has built on its reputation as the most prestigious conference venue of its kind in London by consistently investing in enhanced facilities. It recently began accepting bookings for its public inquiry suite, which was unveiled last year and immediately put into action to host the Iraq Inquiry.

Designed to ensure The QEIIICC becomes the venue of choice for public inquiries, the self-contained suite comprises an inquiry room that can seat up to 100 theatre style, a media room suitable for 50 journalists, a witness lounge and two offices.

Vincent said: 'In addition to enhancements like this, we have also had to be sensitive to price concerns in the market. Not only did we introduce a 15% discount on room hire in the first four months of 2010, but we will soon be announcing a series of packages specially created for government organisations, which bring cost-effectiveness at the forefront.'

An additional trend identified by the survey was the move towards smaller meetings, with 79% anticipating growth in the number of smaller, specialist meetings. Vincent said: 'While large events are our core business, we are actively encouraging smaller meetings

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Facing up to change

and adapting our offering to become even more attractive in that sector. After all, events for fewer than 200 delegates represent the largest slice of the market.'

Convention 2020, founded by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), the industry trade show IMEX and Fast Future Research, is supported by global destination groups including VisitLondon and a small number of elite convention centres around the world. Vincent said: 'As the only UK venue sponsoring the study, we were proud to see the initial findings of Convention 2020 announced at The QEIIICC in March.'

He concluded: 'There are welcome signs the meetings and events industry is beginning to recover. We are glad that occupancy and profitability at The QEIIICC are both looking far healthier than we predicted around this time in 2009. But that doesn't mean the challenges are all behind us. For the industry as a whole, questions remain about where we go from here.'

'Times of uncertainty tend to raise questions and we are striving to answer those questions to ensure our wonderful venue meets the needs of professional meeting and conference organisers today and for many years to come.'



■ *The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre is a government asset that is scheduled for disposal under the government's Operational Efficiency Programme*

[Cover](#)
[Contents](#)
[News](#)
[Briefing](#)
[Feedback](#)
[About ACE](#)

Changing ahead of the game

Communicating with staff is at the heart of major change

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is probably ahead of the game in delivering the kind of change now sweeping government agencies and departments. The high demand on its limited services identified the need to reform even in the then rosier financial climate. The resultant down-turn only added to this.

A major change programme was begun in 2008 against a backdrop of demand consistently outstripping resources. The Agency often started more than 100 investigations when optimum capacity was 70 and referrals from police forces were rising by 11%.

Discussing the change programme, IPCC Chief Executive Jane Furniss said: 'The need to increase efficiency and reduce cost throughout the organisation was driven by the recognition that even before the economic downturn extra funding for frontline services was unlikely.'

'The major change to free up resources took place last year when we moved from a regional structure to a national functional model. This meant we reduced the number of directorates and directors from ten to five.'

Since the beginning of the programme IPCC has re-let its IT contract and substantially reduced accommodation costs, creating savings of approximately £3million so far.



Major change inevitably results in uncertainty for staff, both individually and collectively. This can be fuelled by not knowing what's going on and not being involved. How we communicate with staff is vital and we need their input, otherwise morale and performance could be affected, thereby risking delivery - Furniss

By 2013, it is expected savings will rise to around £10million.

'Major change inevitably results in uncertainty for staff, both individually and collectively. This can be fuelled by not knowing what's going on and not being involved,' said Furniss. 'How we communicate with staff is vital and we need their input, otherwise morale and performance could be affected, thereby risking delivery.'

Communication with staff was at heart

of the programme, known as Connect, that was developed to identify the principles and processes that would be adopted to move the change through the Agency. Key factors were:

- Develop its own staff's capability to manage the programme. For example all current project managers, apart from one, are seconded appointments trained and supported by a small central programme team.

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Changing ahead of the game

- Ensure staff are heavily engaged in process redesign work and any resulting structural changes. So far some 25% of the workforce have actively contributed to the programme.
- Communicate face to face. Although dispersed nationally, IPCC is a fairly small organisation – just over 420 employees. Face-to-face updates are offered at least once a month, alongside the use of intranet, staff magazine, weekly news round -ups.
- Develop a clear picture of where IPCC is going and how it's going to get there to give staff a greater sense of security and direction. As well as the big picture, it's important to communicate on a more personal level, so there is also communication on a 'My job, My Office, My Manager' level.

It's important to communicate on a more personal level

Furniss said: 'Alongside the structural changes we have been busy developing a revised guidance for the complaints system – how the system should run. This goes live in April and will help make the system quicker and less bureaucratic, benefiting all involved in the complaint process.'



Cuts should not be 'salami-sliced'

It's important to cut what you should, not just the easy option of what you could

Last summer The National Archives (TNA), the UK government's official archive that contains over 1,000 years of history, had to consider the very real risk of having insufficient funds to cover costs within the next three years. This came at the time the Board was considering strategic options for the long-term future of the organisation. Like others, TNA faced these challenges against a backdrop of an uncertain economic, political and cultural climate.

From the outset management adopted a 'cut what you should, not what you could' approach. 'Non-negotiables' were service quality; specialist records resource; and retention of a platform on which future investment could be made. With flat cash funding, rising inflationary costs and an inability to carry forward funds, the Board announced a programme of changes to reduce operating costs by 10%, or £4.2m in real terms.

Strategic options for the long-term involved dichotomies such as achieving CO2 targets while maintaining archival environmental standards; meeting the disparate needs of a shifting online user base while continuing to provide onsite access to original records; and dealing with a site, not ideally located in Kew, that requires significant investment to be fit for purpose. It was a time for difficult decisions to be taken.

Main proposals for change were:



- Moving to a five-day week from a six-day week
- Reducing management and administration roles
- Focusing advice and expertise where and when it was most needed
- Ceasing or improving unprofitable / inefficient services

The £4.2m divided fairly equally into staff and non-staff savings. In total 65 posts were involved in the savings, 10% of the establishment. Half these posts were achieved

through careful management of natural turnover but the remainder did require severance. The focus was on preserving specialist roles in favour of a reduction in management hierarchy and back-office administration.

With a business case supported by Treasury, Cabinet Office and Ministers, approval was granted for a voluntary redundancy exercise under the Civil Service Compensation Scheme. A project team was established and

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Cuts should not be 'salami-sliced'

for two-three months this team worked with the business in finalising the proposals; pulling together consultation documentation and a stakeholder communications strategy.

Final proposals were approved by Ministers and on one day last June, The National Archives closed to the public for management to meet with local Trade Union Officials (PCS, Prospect and FDA) to begin the formal one-month consultation period. Later that day, the CEO and the Executive Team met with all staff.

Three days later the first of several open public consultation meetings took place, followed soon after by meetings with key stakeholders. The public consultation closed in September 2009 and management fed back the outcome(s) of the consultation at an open meeting in December 2009.

Jeff James, TNA Director of Operations & Services, said the change programme achieved the savings within the prescribed timeframes and, despite some opposition, changes had been delivered or were on schedule to be delivered. The change in opening times came into effect in January, and resulted in no decline in customer satisfaction.

He said consultation with the public, staff and unions had gone well and industrial relations were better than might have been



These were difficult decisions but also the right ones, however unpalatable - James

expected. The process to place staff into new roles was successful, as was the wider redeployment exercise (a dedicated Redeployment Manager was appointed). The voluntary redundancy exercise was delivered on schedule and under budget.

James summed up key lessons learnt:

- Cost savings should be strategic, not 'salami-sliced'
- Make the timescale as short as possible
- Involve managers at all levels
- Start stakeholder engagement early – ideally, at a high level
- Involve trade unions earlier, and start with co-operation in mind
- Placement guidelines and processes should be a model of clarity

James said: 'These were difficult decisions but also the right ones, however unpalatable. Ultimately, the changes have been successful and the savings targets have been achieved. They have also allowed The National Archives a unique chance to invest significantly in its infrastructure and technology in the year to come.'

- *The National Archives is a non-ministerial government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice. It employs approximately 600 staff, the majority at its site in Kew, Surrey. For more information, contact Jeff James at Jeff.james@nationalarchives.gov.uk*

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

What is the point of a park?

The Royal Parks has been in the news following an outcry after planning permission was granted for Olympic horse riding facilities to be built in Greenwich Park. Mark Camley, CEX Royal Parks, found himself on the Today programme pitted against newspaper columnist Simon Jenkins, who claimed the whole point of a park was to walk on the grass among trees. 'If you put thundering great Olympic events there that cost £40m for a week,' he said, 'it ain't a park!' Here Camley sets out why he believes a park is much more

The Royal Parks mean different things to different people at different times. I never cease to be amazed at the number of reasons why people enjoy the parks – whether for relaxation, retreat or recreation. One visitor regularly walks his ferret in Hyde Park.

Our challenge as custodian of 5,000 acres of treasured green space across London is to balance the many needs of our 37 million visitors a year, while protecting the parks for future generations. Despite the potential for conflict, over 95% percent of visitors describe their visit to the Royal Parks as excellent or good.

I suspect we may be one of the few Government organisations that has a 500-year planning horizon – the time it takes an oak to mature and reach old age. Getting this right means that we take our guardianship seriously. But land management does not mean the parks are set in aspic.

Parks by their very nature are living and evolving places, and we manage them accordingly. We manage them to increase habitat and prevent them growing too wild. There is greater diversity of grassland in Hyde



Greenwich Park: location for some of the Equestrian events at the 2012 Olympics.

Park and Kensington Gardens now than 30 years ago. The areas of longer grass we have introduced are managed for wildlife. And mean we now have hay cutting in central London!

Over the years, the eight parks have

moved from being Royal hunting grounds to places of public congregation. London doesn't have the piazzas of Rome or the boulevards of

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

What is the point of a park?

Paris – the Royal Parks are the great public realm of the capital. Do you know the displays in front of Buckingham Palace use flowers with the same shade of red as the Guards' tunics?

Balancing the needs of so many visitors is one of the real skills of public land managers. Inevitably, there will be some conflict – but this is not new. I recently uncovered a letter to one of my predecessors, dated 15 April 1869, complaining about a velocipede (bicycle) being ridden in Hyde Park. Over 140 years later my postbag still has the odd letter about the behaviour of cyclists!

London's Royal Parks must be for everyone – from picnickers to footballers and dog walkers and cyclists. And we must also maintain them as the backdrop for our great ceremonial occasions – Changing the Guard, Trooping the Colour.

Parks play a major role in health and wellbeing. The benefits of quality green spaces on blood pressure are well documented, and in Regent's Park we have developed a GP referral scheme for people suffering Coronary Heart Disease. We provide education programmes (school visits, talks and guided walks) for 23,000 people each year and run an award-winning apprenticeship scheme.

We hold a wide range of events in the parks – from bandstand recitals to sporting events, from pop concerts to the Proms. We

have an award-winning Events Team, who ensure that the events are as safe and green as possible. For Live8 we had 240,000 in Hyde Park, a helicopter pad in Kensington Gardens and more celebs than a copy of OK magazine.

As Bob Geldolf and Sir Paul McCartney belted out the last chorus of 'Hey Jude' at midnight, the clean up teams were standing ready to clear the park. It re-opened early the next morning, and by 10am dragonflies were

a Thai festival annually. Our Winter Wonderland programme brings 1.6 million visitors over a six-month period that was relatively fallow.

Over the course of 2012, we will have nine Olympic and Paralympic events in the Royal Parks, including beach volley ball on Horse Guards Parade Ground, open water swimming in the Serpentine, and three-day eventing in Greenwich Park.

This will be a major challenge for our



Over the course of 2012, we will have nine Olympic and Paralympic events in the Royal Parks, including beach volley ball on Horse Guards Parade Ground, open water swimming in the Serpentine, and three-day eventing in Greenwich Park - *Camley*

spotted hovering in the Hyde Park meadow – oblivious to the previous day's coming and goings.

One function of holding events is to raise income – and in the last five years we have doubled self-generated income to over £15m. We hold different events to attract different audiences – we hold the Camden Mela, elements of the Notting Hill Carnival and

120 staff. However, in the recent Civil Service survey, Royal Parks staff scored the third highest employee engagement index. They love the parks – whether they are landscape designers, ecologists or deer managers. That is why I am confident the parks are in safe hands.

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

New ways to link people and performance

Changes to Investors in People are helping public service organisations meet their own unique challenges. CEO Jane Jones explains how

Investors in People has always been about making the link between people and performance. And that is just what has opened a fresh chapter in our history. Customer feedback showed organisations wanted greater choice in the way they use the Investors in People framework. And that is just what they have got.

Through the new approach, the framework can be used in a flexible way to examine the areas of performance in which management is most interested. Assessors will plan the assessment around the organisation's goals and ambitions and will then provide subsequent feedback relevant to their needs.

Throughout the public sector, managers and employees are striving to deliver excellent service while getting to grips with a changing economic environment. Many organisations are facing their most difficult challenges, so the time is right to maximise the benefit that can be derived from the framework.

Managers need to be responsive to changing conditions and adjust their strategies. But they also need to acknowledge what this means to their people. The way leaders and managers talk to and engage with their employees is vital in gaining support for the organisation's strategy. Many organisations have used the new approach to evaluate the way they engage with their people.

What this means in practice is being able to explain to employees both the reason for change and the effect it will have on them; creating a culture where feedback is given on a regular basis and acted upon; one where people are encouraged to give their ideas for working smarter and take responsibility for their objectives. The role of inspirational leadership and effective communication is vital.

Investors in People recently carried out research to gauge how employees would like their managers to behave during periods of change and found that open and honest dialogue is their main concern. They understand that managers need to take tough decisions but wanted to hear about changes through one-to-one meetings rather than more impersonal channels such as newsletters, emails and intranet updates.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the flexible nature of the Investors in People framework is through example. Central Motorway Police Group used the framework as a tool to achieve excellence across its region. The aim of the group is to provide safe and secure transport throughout the central region, seeking to deny criminals the use of the roads, and to reduce the number of casualties among legitimate road users.

The CMPG draws its officers from a

number of different organisations, so its mantra of 'One Team, One Direction' requires careful planning and delivery, and the instigation of specific processes and procedures that reflect its distinct remit and character. Investors in People have been critical in helping CMPG achieve this.

Liz Le Breuille, group personnel manager, said: 'With people seconded to CMPG from different forces, it is critical that our structures and procedures are clear and easily adapted to. As for all police forces, our service is dependent on employees being able to make the right decisions and to demonstrate clear leadership in often very challenging situations. It's my responsibility to ensure that all our officers are equipped to do this.'

Working with the Investors in People team, Liz initiated a review that assessed the abilities of all CMPG employees, and the effectiveness of the organisation's development processes. Liz was delighted with the outcome, but identified a number of areas where further progress was desirable. She instigated a Continuous Improvement Plan that included the honing of selected internal systems and the enhancement of communications.

■ To read the full CMPG case study or find out more about achieving business improvement through people visit www.investorsinpeople.co.uk

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Green Cars set the 'green' standard

If you need a taxi in London don't hail a black cab, call Green Cars

Praise for its 'green' fleet management has come to Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA), the organisation that keeps government on the road, in a review of Government travel by independent consultants.

The agency's pro-active drive to reduce its carbon emissions, eliminate unnecessary travel and to train drivers to drive with sustainability in mind has been praised in a report produced by specialist transport consultants JMP.

A review identified the Agency as 'recognised nationally and internationally as an example of best practice in sustainable fleet management'. JPM's report highlighted its 'smarter driving' programme and its impressive record of meeting and exceeding SOGE emissions targets ahead of schedule.

The report calls on government departments to take advantage of GCDA expertise, pointing out that the Agency, as part of the government establishment, is well-placed to assist the Office of Government Commerce in building consistent best-practice fleet management and driver training across all government departments and establishments.

As part of its 'smart driver' initiative, the Agency insists all its drivers have the Institute of Advanced Motorists qualification, and fuel consumption is monitored so that drivers using more fuel than they should can be identified

and retrained. GCDA has been closely involved in the development of an NVQ-based driver-training programme that encourages safety and fuel economy.

GCDA's performance is impressive and has won national and international awards, including the coveted Carbon Trust Standard. Four years ago, 90% of the ministerial fleet's

43% from 2005 to 2009, compared with the official target of a 15% cut by 2011. Average tailpipe emissions of new vehicles are already below the proposed 2012 European Commission target – four years early.

Paul Markwick, GCDA Chief Executive, said: 'A decision was made six years ago to transform GCDA into a modern, efficient and sustainable organisation fit to serve all its clients in the 21st Century. This independent recognition of the work that has consistently been going on behind the scenes is a vindication of all we've done since then.'

'We are able and willing to share all the expertise we've gathered during that process, and we look forward to working closely with OGC and any government agency that wants to benefit from the lessons we've learned.'

The Review of Government Travel was commissioned jointly by the SDC and the Centre of Expertise in Sustainable Procurement in the Office of Government Commerce. The overview it provides forms part of the SDC's STEPS programme (Sustainable Travel: Engaging the Public Sector), mapping out the key issues for developing sustainable travel in central government departments and their executive agencies within England.

But GCDA is not resting on its laurels, and efforts to reduce the Agency's carbon



This independent recognition of the work that has consistently been going on behind the scenes is a vindication of all we've done - *Markwick*

vehicles ran on conventional fuels. By the end of last year, 66% were low-emission hybrid/LPG vehicles.

Tailpipe emissions have been cut by

[Cover](#)
[Contents](#)
[News](#)
[Briefing](#)
[Feedback](#)
[About ACE](#)

Green Cars set the 'green' standard

footprint further continue. It has been running an electric van for over a year and is eagerly awaiting six new plug-in Toyota Prius.

GCD A Director of Government Cars Simon Cranfield-Thompson said: 'We are enthusiastic about every step, large or small, that we take towards meeting, and even exceeding, our "green" targets swiftly – even though official deadlines may be some years away.

'We now see sustainability as a permanent part of our management processes – it's not just about meeting targets. We constantly monitor our performance and we keep an eye on the progress of any technology that can help us improve our sustainability.'

Now anyone with a role in helping a government department reduce its carbon emissions can benefit from what the Cabinet Office referred to as 'one of the most environmentally friendly vehicle fleets anywhere in the UK'. So, if you need a taxi in London don't hail a black cab, call Green Cars, the low emission taxi service and halve your emissions instantly.

And, if you need advice on making the quantum leap towards a cleaner fleet, look no further than the Agency that has not only been awarded public sector fleet of the year in the UK and Europe but also the coveted Carbon Trust Standard in recognition of its ability to



On the road to sustainability

measure, manage and reduce carbon emissions.

To receive the award GCD A had to provide evidence to satisfy the Trust that measures are embedded in a number of areas including policy, reporting, monitoring, reduction programmes, investments and training. It confirmed that between 2007 and 2009 its absolute footprint (tCO₂e) had reduced by 15%.

- If you would like to open a Green Cars account, contact carsinfo@gcda.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 020 7217 3801
- For information on how GCD A can help your Agency with its fleet management needs, contact fleetinfo@gcda.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 020 7217 3849

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Trial of the Pyx has a very modern role

Keeping a check on the coins in our pockets

An ancient procedure known as the Trial of the Pyx still plays a key role in keeping a check on the coins that jingle in our pockets and purses. It is an examination by an independent jury to ascertain that the coins struck by the Royal Mint are of the proper weight, composition and diameter.

The Trial has its origins in the Crown's need to protect itself against fraud. In Anglo-Saxon times moneyers, the people contracted

At Christmas the heads of the various mints were summoned to Winchester, where the loss of their right hands was only one of the mutilations they endured!

to strike the King's coins – and evidently less bound in their conceptions of probity than the employees of today's Royal Mint! – found endless opportunities to defraud the Crown in mints scattered throughout the country.

By the time of the Domesday survey, coins received at the Royal Treasury in payment of taxes were tested by weight; but this limited form of check was not enough. So serious was

the position in 1125 that Henry I, then fighting in Normandy, commanded Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, into whose care he had entrusted all England, to punish the guilty men. At Christmas the heads of the various mints were summoned to Winchester, where the loss of their right hands was only one of the mutilations they endured!

Today, every February the services of both the Royal Mint and the National Measurement Office are called upon for the Trial of the Pyx, now one of the longest established judicial procedures in the country. It is presided over by the Queen's Remembrancer and the jury consists of Liverymen of the Goldsmiths' Company.

In 1349 the Trial moved nearer its present form when a panel of goldsmiths was sworn before the Barons' well and faithfully to make this Assay; but for a long time afterwards trials were undertaken by the King's Assay Master and regular trials by independent goldsmiths had yet to come. It was not until early in the reign of Elizabeth I that the Trial approached its modern form, with a jury of goldsmiths sworn by the Queen's Remembrancer.

In Elizabeth's reign 11 trials were held, a considerable increase as only 19 trials are known to have taken place in the preceding 280 years. Succeeding monarchs kept up this improved tempo and yearly trials

were for a time attended by the sovereign in person. Then came a long relapse; between 1660 and 1814 only 35 trials were held, when there was a change in the appointment of Master of the Mint. Or when the pyx box was over-flowing!

And this is where the 'pyx' bit comes in. Pyx comes from the Latin 'pyxis', meaning a box-wood receptacle. These are the chests used by officials from the Royal Mint to bring

The arrival of the age of the vending machine has given added significance to the need for consistency in the weights and dimensions of our coins

coins to the Goldsmiths' Hall each February. The coins, normally several thousand in total, represent one coin from every batch of each denomination minted. The National Measurement Office (formerly the National Weights & Measures Laboratory) maintains custody of the trial plates and coin standards on behalf of the Secretary of State in

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Trial of the Pyx has a very modern role

accordance with the Coinage Act.

The Coinage Act 1870 provided for the Trial to be held 'at least once in every year in which coins have been issued from the Mint' and regulations under the Act defined the proceedings. The Queen's Remembrancer was to preside and the jury was to consist of 'not less than six out of competent freemen of the mystery of Goldsmiths of the City of London or other competent persons'.

The Trial of the Pyx is not just an ornamental vestige. In its origins it met a very real need and it may be a tribute to its effectiveness that there have only rarely been adverse verdicts, and nothing comparable to the unfortunate occasion at Winchester in 1318, when the Master of the Mint went to prison and even Sir Isaac Newton was at loggerheads with the jury.

Times have changed. With gold and silver coins no longer in circulation, the Trial no longer has quite the same level of urgency as in the past. No modern legislation mentions penalties for an adverse verdict by the Pyx jury. On the other hand, the arrival of the age of the vending machine has given added significance to the need for consistency in the weights and dimensions of our coins.

When the chief executives of the Royal Mint and the National Measurement Office are summoned to appear at the commencement



Jurors from The Goldsmiths' Company carrying out initial samplings

of the Trial, they and their staff are participating in a quality control process that, underneath the centuries of tradition, would be recognised by 21st century quality professionals as having a scientific and clearly auditable basis.

So, even now, by helping to keep the Royal Mint on its toes and by supporting its international reputation for excellence in

production, the Trial continues to play an extremely important role.

- For more information, contact National Measurement Office at www.nmo.bis.gov.uk and The Royal Mint at www.royalmint.com

Cover

Contents

News

Briefing

Feedback

About ACE

Feedback

Read something that interests you? Concerns you? Annoys you? Want a chance to put across your view? Want to find out more? Whatever your view, please share it with us.

Editor ACE Reporter

Eleri Evans eleri.evans@ace.gov.uk

ACE Reporter is published by the UK ACE Association



Chair: Jane Platt
CEX National Savings
and Investment
Email: jane.platt@nsandi.com



Head of ACE Secretariat:
James Jeynes
Contact tel: 0845 652 4010
Email: james.jeynes@ace.gov.uk



More about ACE

ACE is the UK Association of Chief Executives of Arm's Length Bodies. It is an inclusive organisation open to chief executives and senior managers who report to chief executives, working in central government Executive Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, Non-Ministerial Departments and Trading Funds. Other chief executives of public sector organisations are able to apply for membership, but approval of membership will be subject to the agreement of the Board.

ACE promotes effective government and provides networking and learning opportunities for its members. ACE was formed in 2004 and exists to promote excellent working relationships throughout all aspects of government. It will seek, on an annual basis, to:

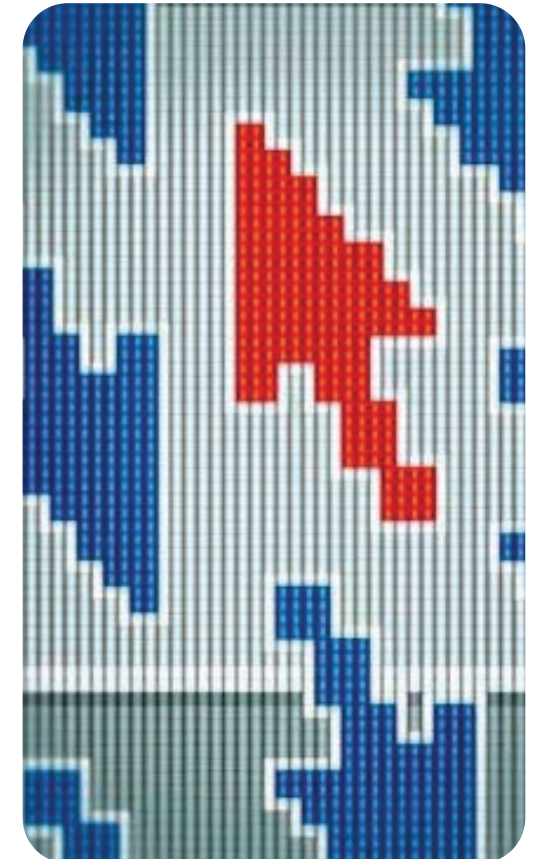
- Generate the opportunity for networking on the basis of an up-to-date database of contact details and specialisms
- Produce regular newsletters for the purpose of promoting and sharing good practice, experience and knowledge
- Organise an annual conference
- Organise two events which:
 - Highlight priority areas of action for government

- Offer specific opportunities for networking across the public and private sector
- Provide a point of contact between the Civil Service Steering Board (CSSB) and the Association and its members

In undertaking the above, ACE will neither seek to involve itself in policy development nor representative lobbying. Neither will ACE have the power to make decisions that would bind one, any or all, of the members. ACE is funded from member subscriptions.

The ACE London headquarters is located in the heart of Westminster and provides a range of facilities for members. This quiet and private location is ideal for relaxing, reading the current journals, meeting a colleague or simply having a cuppa. You can use the dedicated computer terminal to access the internet and read your emails.

- For a location map click here: http://www.solace.org.uk/contact_hope_house_map.asp



Click here

You are reading a new e-magazine

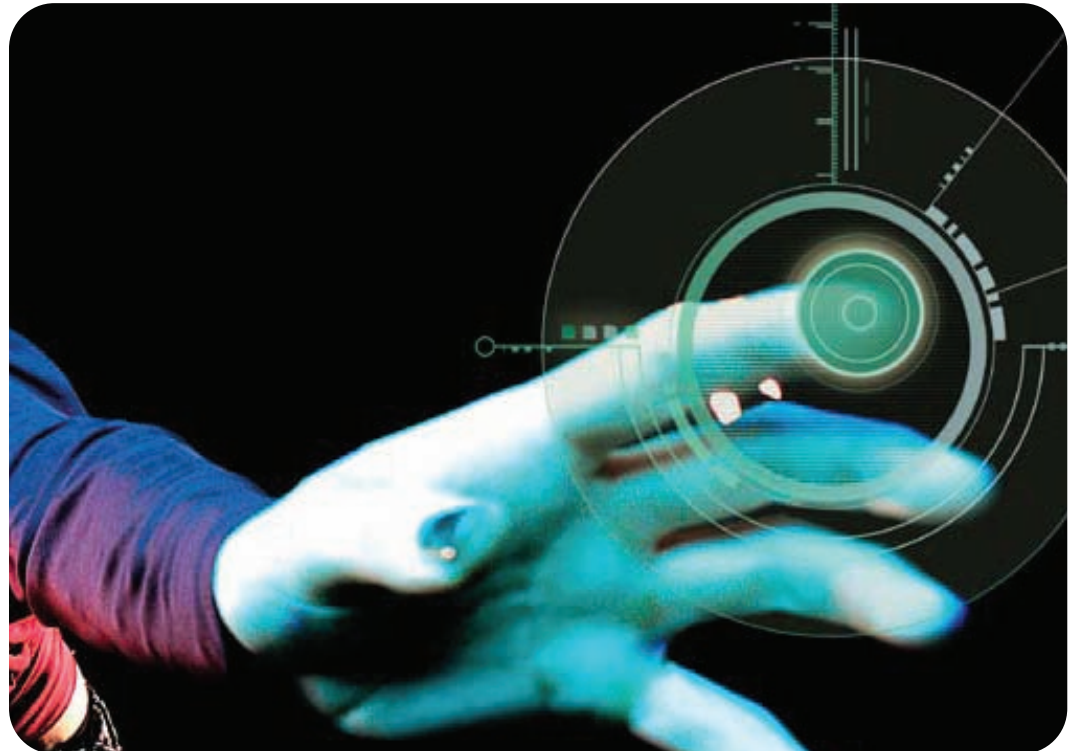
ACE Reporter is a Portable Document Format (pdf) file, which means it can be read on any personal computer which has Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. This is a free piece of software available for fast download from www.adobe.co.uk

A pdf file such as this offers screen-based information. Our contents page flags up all the stories in ACE Reporter. Just click on the story's title to go to that page. It's a fast way for busy readers to get to the information they want, as soon as they want it.

What's more, we recognise that some readers will want minute detail on certain topics while others will have different requirements.

Navigation tabs are provided on every page to guide you easily through the document.

If you want to print out a particular section, Adobe Acrobat Reader informs you at the foot of the document what page you are on, so when you hit 'print' you can produce a hard copy of just what you need, without waste.



On the contents page is an option to get to the ACE website, to find out more about the organisation. This pdf file is completely self-contained and operates on or off-line. Wherever

you see an email address, you can click on it to activate your email software to respond.