

**Commission quarterly performance report  
for the period ending 30 September 2007**

**Other Corporate activities**

(IT, Health & Safety, Energy & Environment, FOIA, Role & Influence activity, Customer complaints)

**Progress against business goals (not covered by the HR  
and Communications reports)**

	Relevant development project/activity	Target	Progress
<b>BG1:</b> To make decisions that are sound and justified	Comebacks	Number of comebacks which conclude our performance was unsatisfactory is less than 1% of total decisions	See monthly PIs, Table 9
	LGO and AO file sampling	Maintain a 5% sampling	
	Judicial reviews	No target set	Reported on annually in Corporate Plan
	Compliance with report recommendations	100% compliance	Reported on annually in Corporate Plan
<b>BG 2:</b> To provide customers with a service that meets their needs	Access and Advice Service	Establish new service by April 2008	See project board minutes/updates from TR
	Integrated investigation and case management of complaints which fall within LGO and PHSO jurisdiction	Service to be operational immediately the RRO comes into effect	Report to be put to Commission? (to be decided)
	Conduct another large scale survey of customer satisfaction	Conduct in 2007/08	Survey undertaken July/August. Commission to note draft report on 23 Oct.
	Customer complaints	No target set	See this report, pages 8/9
	Time taken to decide	Maintain current	See monthly PIs, table

	Relevant development project/activity	Target	Progress
	complaints	levels of performance over 2006/7, 2007/08, 2008/09	6
	Carry forward of cases between years	Carry forward less than 20% between years	Reported on annually in Corporate Plan
<b>BG 5:</b> To increase efficient use of resources	Electronic transmission of documents by councils	25% of councils use this method by March 2008	London already using desktop scanners. York began in June. Installed in Coventry but awaits procedure/training
	Environment Strategy - review purchasing practices to ensure we/contractors use environmentally friendly goods wherever possible	Review during 2007/08.	Ongoing commitment and stated aspiration by A & A programme Board Environmental Policy being reviewed to reflect this.
	Revise Environmental Policy	Autumn 2007	Draft currently in progress.
	Improve Energy procurement	Late summer 2007 to Spring 2008	Currently gathering consumption trends
	Average cost per complaint	Annual efficiency saving of 2% per annum	Star Chamber 2 completed. Results fed through to the 3 year budgets for approval by Commission on 23 Oct

## Overview (including research activity)

### MORI customer satisfaction survey

- The draft report on the survey is due to be noted by the Commission at the 23 October meeting.
- Mori will give a 'debrief' on the results at the 1/2 November management conference.

### AO monitoring forms

Work is in progress on how the information recorded on these forms might be turned into a report.

## Performance information

### IT developments

Please note that this report does not cover the bulk of the IT Team's activities, two thirds of which are related to supporting the use of existing systems and equipment.

Key Activity	Target Date	Progress
COIN Project and Access & Advice	March 2008	COIN server hardware now installed in York and system software has been loaded and demonstrated ready for testing out work block 1.
Comtrac development	January 2008	Incorporates work on alterations to Comtrac to work with new COIN system. Not started yet
Replace Inter-office network	December 2007	New managed WAN from Mts/Global Crossing went into service in June. The last piece of the jigsaw is the new internet connection which will replace the current individual office internet connections in December
Upgrade of Exchange Servers	November 2007	Being provisionally planned for last weekend in October.
Increase use of scanners	October 2007	Scanners in place in Coventry but still need to finalise procedure and training. Other two offices have been working for some time.

### Health and safety

#### OBJECTIVES 2007/2008

- To monitor the effectiveness of the 'IDENTISAFE' system as part of the safe working policy.
- To review policy, information and procedures for staff driving for business purposes.
- Review and update induction general and on going fire training media.
- To complete significant health and safety processes for the year as laid down in the Health and Safety policy.

## **IDENTISAFE**

There has been a delay in implementing the system due to:

- Coordination of contact numbers on the suppliers database.
- Provision of training material.

However we now have five devices in each office associated to dedicated cell phones. Staff training will be conducted during the November round of investigator team meetings ready for full implementation as of December 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **TRAINING**

We have now procured the 'Comply Wise' safety training and record management system after comparison with a similar product. This offered no perceptible added value and was several times the cost of the 'Complywise Option'.

Four modules have been obtained covering, Fire, Driving, Display Screen use and Display Screen Assessment. Additional modules covering Stress and General Health & Safety are also available if we feel we wish to enhance this provision at a later date.

The Health & Safety Committee wish to pilot the system before it is available to all staff and it was also decided by the Committee to cover all units over a two rather than one year period.

The software awaits loading onto an SQL server prior to configuration, piloting and final implementation early in the new year.

## **Energy and Environmental**

### **Energy Consumption**

OGC have been contacted and registration information has been supplied by them to progress the transfer of accounts. Some delay will occur due to current contracts needing to run their course but there will be a rolling programme of switching as they come up for renewal.

### **Environmental developments**

#### **Environmental Policy**

The first draft was circulated for consideration by Environmental Representatives and Deputies. The general consensus was that it was too long and in some areas repetitive. A revised version with the aim of eliminating these shortcomings is being progressed.

## Waste Management

York have recently changed their waste contractor and can now recycle all cardboard, which was earlier identified as the second largest waste stream produced by the office. This has allowed the office to reduce the landfill receptacle by some 50%. Paper, the largest waste stream, is already recycled via the confidential waste provision.

## Freedom of Information requests

### Quarterly data: April – June 2007

Some figures were missed from the last report due to early compilation. Here is the updated table.

Team	No. of requests	No of requests met in full	No. of full refusals	No. of partial refusals	Comps upheld (full or part)	Comps not upheld	No. referred to Info Comm'r	No. not meeting 20-day deadline
A	9	2	5	2	1	0	0	0
B	8	3	1	2	0	0	0	3
C	13	7	4	2	0	0	0	1
CS	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

### Quarterly data: July – September 2007

Team	No. of requests	No of requests met in full	No. of full refusals	No. of partial refusals	Comps upheld (full or part)	Comps not upheld	No. referred to Info Comm'r	No. not meeting 20-day deadline
A	11	4	3	4	1	0	0	0
B	15	1	2	9	0	0	0	1
C	14	5	2	6	0	1	0	0
CS	10	6	4	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

- All refusals in Team A were S.44 except one partial refusal which was because the information is not held. One request was from someone who had made a request before.
- All refusals in Team B were S.44 except one partial refusal which was because the information is not held. Two requests were from Mr M (see below) who also made a request in the previous quarter. One request missed the 20-day deadline because

the request was quite vague and included in the complainant's response to the provisional view letter. A decision was taken to complete the final decision on the complaint before dealing with the FOI request. Two further requests appear not to have been responded to within the 20-day deadline, but no reason has been given.

- All refusals in Team C were S.44 except one partial refusal which has no reason given. Three requests were from the same person (Mr B – who had also made requests in the previous two quarters). Another two requests were from one person.
- Refusals in Corporate Services were: 2 x S.44, 1 x. S.21 (information accessible by other means), and 1 where the information is not held. Two requests were from the same person, and one request was from someone who has made repeated requests before, both to Corporate Services and to Team B (Mr M).

### Year-to-date figures (2007/08)

Team	No. of requests	No. of complete replies	No. of full refusals	No. of partial refusals	Comps upheld (full or partial)	Comps not upheld	No. referred to Info Comm'r	No. not meeting 20-day deadline
A	20	6	8	6	2	0	0	0
B	23	4	3	11	0	0	0	5
C	26	12	6	8	0	1	0	1
CS	21	17	4	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

A complaint on a Team C request (first quarter), and a complaint on a Corporate Services request (second quarter) are still outstanding.

### Decision notices from the Information Commissioner

#### Year to date

Date	Appellant	Office	Decision
April	French	Coventry	Not upheld
April	Sullivan	London	Not upheld
May	Thompson	York	Breached FOIA by misapplying s.44, and breached EIR by not applying. Told to disclose three items.
May	Gilbert	York	Some material improperly withheld – told to disclose some items
May	Feld	London	Some material improperly withheld – told to disclose some items

Date	Appellant	Office	Decision
July	Legerton	Coventry	Some material improperly withheld – told to disclose some items
Sept	Francis	London	Not upheld, except breached s.17 by not responding within 20 working days.

## Role and Influence

### Summary of consultation activity

Subject	Consultation by	Summary	Closing date	Lead	Progress
Planning for a sustainable future	DCLG	Seeks views on key proposals in White paper which sets out ambitious programme of reforms to planning system	17/08/07	Richard Shaw	Response sent on planning appeals proposals 17/08/07
Housing: Proportionate dispute resolution – the role of tribunals	Law Commission	Preceded by Issues paper. Central question posed is whether there should be a specialist body for housing disputes? Paper agrees with suggestion for more flexibility between ombudsmen and the courts	28/09/07	Peter MacMahon	Response sent 13/09/07
Making experiences count: A new approach to responding to complaints	DoH	Proposes new arrangements for handling health and social care complaints, with the aim of making it easier for people to complain. Role of the ombudsmen would remain unchanged.	17/10/07	Peter MacMahon (for LGOs)	Draft response circulated for comment 5/10/07
Delivering Housing and Regeneration - Communities England and the future of social housing regulation	DCLG	Government's response to Cave Review of social housing regulation. Recommends a single Housing Ombudsman for the whole of social housing.	10/09/07	Tony Redmond/ David Connolly	Response sent 10/09/07
Permitted development rights for householders	DCLG	Consultation on Government's proposals to reform the system governing what householders can do to their own property without needing to apply for planning permission	17/08/07	Richard Shaw	Response sent 15/08/07
Encouraging Responsible Letting	Law Commission	Consultation on ways in which the management of property in the private rented sector can be improved	12/10/07	Peter MacMahon /David Connolly	Response sent 10/10/07

Subject	Consultation by	Summary	Closing date	Lead	Progress
Parking policy & enforcement	DfT	Consultation on draft operational guidance which supports new Regulations under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004	31/10/07	Tony Redmond/ Chris Upjohn	Ongoing

### LGO participation in Government working groups

Name	LGO participants	Purpose
DoH IVI ('Individual Voices for Improvement') project	Peter MacMahon Barbara Hedley	Produce revised complaints system for combined complaint handling in social services for adults, Adult Care Trusts and other health environments.

### Customer complaints

#### Analysis of customer complaints: 1 July to 30 September 2007

	London	Coventry	York	Corp services	Commission	Sept 06 quarter
<b>Total</b>	13	8	4	0	25	29
<b>Not upheld</b>	9	5	3	0	17	17
<b>Upheld</b>	0	1	1	0	2	3
<b>Upheld in part</b>	4	2	0	0	6	9
<b>d/w within 20 wkg days</b>	61%	50%	100%	n/a	70%	69%

#### Reasons for delay where complaints took longer than 20 working days

<b>London</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 1 day as a result of AO's delay in referring the matter to the Deputy</li> <li>Delay in examining correspondence as a further complaint occurred on 5/7/07 which was also examined.</li> <li>By three days. This was due to delay identifying the complainant's letter as an internal complaint (the main thrust of that letter was a challenge to the PV).</li> <li>Delays in passing internal complaints to LGO/DO</li> <li>Delays in submitting internal complaint for investigator/decision to LGO</li> </ol>
<b>Coventry</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DO out of office and need for mtg with Inv. Comp also wrote in again on 11 June raising further issues</li> <li>Delay of over 3 weeks by Inv answering DO's questions</li> <li>Delay by DO</li> <li>DO on leave for two weeks</li> </ol>
<b>York</b>	n/a
<b>Corp services</b>	n/a

## General lessons learnt as a result of considering the complaints

<b>London</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Internal complaints should be sent to the Deputy's PA for registration and acknowledgement as soon as they are identified.</li><li>2. We may want to consider whether we 'signpost' the non-recording of conversations consequent to the call to the switchboard</li><li>3. There are some general exemptions from Council Tax Liability eg in certain cases of 'severe mental impairment'. All staff need to be aware of these exemptions when handling CT/CTB complaints.</li><li>4. Attention must be paid to the transitional stage whereby an investigator moves from one role to another to avoid disadvantaging the complainant.</li></ol>
<b>Coventry</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Need to ensure that voicemail messages are clear about availability and kept up to date.</li><li>2. Need to ensure that complaints are brought to Deputy's attention as quickly as possible.</li></ol>
<b>York</b>	None
<b>Corp services</b>	n/a

**Nigel Karney**  
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**17 October 2007**

