

GROUP PERFORMANCE REPORT

Central Services

6th November 2006



1. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

In 2006/2007 Central Services are responsible for 19 Strategic Plan, Planned Actions (previously called Key Commitments) to address priority issues. These support delivering the overarching theme “fit for purpose”. Central Services are also responsible for 17 BVPIs of which, 8 are split into more than one measure (i.e. 11a, b, c). In total there are 37 measures of performance, this includes 9 triennial Customer Satisfaction Survey BVPIs that are to be collected 2006/2007.

Action points from Qtr 1.

There are no action points to report.

2. PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC PLAN, PLANNED ACTIONS.(Appendix A)

Central Services are responsible for 19 Strategic Plan, Planned Actions, six have been achieved and ten are on target. Three are not on target to be achieved within the timescale set but of those two will be achieved within the financial year. The remaining Planned Action: **FP 1 – The timetable for phase II of job evaluation to be implemented by March 2007**, the timescale has been now been revised to be completed by December 2007.

See Appendix A for details.

3. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS MEETING TARGET (Appendix B)

Central services are responsible for 37 measures of performance, of which 12 are not reported this quarter. Of the 25 reported, 15 (60%) are on target to achieve the year end target. **See Appendix B for details.**

4. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS NOT MEETING TARGET (Appendix C)

Of the 25 measures of performance reported this quarter, 10 (40%) are not meeting target. Action plans are to be implemented to improve performance for each indicator and more detail shown in Appendix C.

The areas of concerns are **BVPI 12 Sickness absence** and **BVPI 9 and 10 Council Tax and Business Rates**. Appendix E explains in more detail performance improvement activities for Council Tax and Business Rate collections

BVPI 12 Sickness absence, Although sickness absence has improved since 2003/2004 from 15.2 to 11.8 in 2004/2005 Middlesbrough are still in the Bottom Quartile and out of 40 Unitary Authorities that were ranked without any qualification or “doubts expressed” on data provided, Middlesbrough were in 39th position. Middlesbrough has set a target of 9.5 for 2006/2007 but year-end projections indicate that this will not be met, although for the half-year we have improved from 5.35 in 2005/2006 to 4.63. . Action Plans to sustain/improve performance are shown on page 11.

5. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS NOT REPORTED THIS QUARTER (Appendix D)

Of the 37 measures of performance 12 (32.4%) were not reported this quarter. 9 relate to the triennial surveys that are to be carried out this year and results will be reported in the third quarter Performance Clinics. Strategic Resources are unable to report quarterly BVPI 79b(i) due to the amount recovered also including recovery against old debt prior to 1 April 2006. The remaining 2 Human Resources BVPIs are only reported annually. **Full details see Appendix D**

6. COUNCIL TAX - INCREASE IN COLLECTION UPDATE (Appendix E)

Summary of action plans to improve performance

Carolyn Gledhill
Corporate Performance Officer

CENTRAL SERVICES – PLANNED ACTIONS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX A

Ref	Planned Actions	On Target	Progress in 2006/2007	Key Issues/Comments
Provide strategic support and guidance to the Council on areas of corporate significance.				
FP 1	The timetable for phase II of job evaluation implemented by March 2007	NO	Work proceeding - date now agreed as 31/12/2007	
FP 2	Ensure all queries from phase I of job evaluation are addressed by September 2006	COMPLETE		
FP 3	Ensure that all Workforce plans for all service areas are agreed by December 2006	YES	On target	
FP 4	Integrate all Workforce planning into service planning by March 2007	YES	On target	
FP 5	A Managers Competency framework implemented by June 2006	COMPLETE	Skill framework approved by CMT June 2006. Communicated to Managers July 2006	Skills framework will be a key element of liP recognition process. Further communication activities planned to reinforce managers understanding
FP 6	Revised Risk Management Policy agreed by September 2006	COMPLETE	Agreed by CMT 21 September 2006 and by Single Member Executive On 3 rd October 2006.	
FP 7	A Risk Manual available by September 2006	YES	Electronic manual available by September 2006. Hard copies circulated to all relevant staff October 2006.	
Promote high standards in performance management, including communications, human resources, probity, fairness and the implementation of Council values across the authority.				
FP 8	A Revised Carers' leave Policy implemented by March 2007	COMPLETE		
FP 9	Agree a disability equality scheme by December 2006	YES	DES on target to be published on the website and promoted via Middlesbrough News and Middlesbrough Matters from December 2006	
FP 10	Produce a draft e-government and ICT Strategy by September 2006	NO	Revised date of January 07 for this. The prioritisation exercise is complete and a draft Capital Programme and Desktop Strategy will be taken to CMT in November.	

CENTRAL SERVICES – PLANNED ACTIONS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX A

Ref	Planned Actions	On Target	Progress in 2006/2007	Key Issues/Comments
FP 11	Phase II of the website completed by March 2007	COMPLETE	Phase 2 is now complete and a PID for Phase 3 has been drafted. The most significant deliverables in Phase 2 were e-Payments and e-Forms.	The development of the Council's website is an ongoing process. The appointment of a Website Manager will be made in 06/07 to help drive it forward.
FP 12	The Customer Contact strategy agreed by June 2006	NO	Draft strategy developed. Draft action programme being finalised.	Will be agreed before end of 2006.
FP 13	Customer Contact training programme in place by July 2006	COMPLETE	Programme in place.	Additional work around training needs about to commence
Ensure effective community engagement to strengthen community partnership working, promote diversity and community cohesion and underpin neighbourhood renewal and management				
FP 17	Ensure the Council is prepared to respond to Government consultation on the future of Local Strategic Partnerships by having Briefing available for members and officers within 4 weeks of final guidance from Government	YES	Final guidance not yet issued by Central Government	
FP 18	Local Area Agreement available by March 2007	YES	Draft LAA submitted to GONE end of September 2006.	
Ensure that the Council achieves, manages and improves value for money				
FP 19	Ensure the Council continues to achieve a 3 for its Use of Resources block	YES	Resources self-assessment completed. Review by the District Auditor will be completed early October 2006.	
FP 20	Ensure that the Council achieves at least a 3 for value for Money element of Use of resources:	YES	Resources self-assessment completed. Review by the District Auditor will be completed early October 2006.	

CENTRAL SERVICES – PLANNED ACTIONS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX A

Ref	Planned Actions	On Target	Progress in 2006/2007	Key Issues/Comments
FP 21	Delivering action plans set out in the statement of internal control by September 2006	YES	<p>Regeneration Service – Housing Bureau 1. The Housing Bureau was closed from the 1st April 2006 2. The service has made arrangements for all trainees to complete their training. 3. Discussions are ongoing with the relevant funding body about possible grant claw back. Waiting for GONE to contact to arrange an audit of the Scheme.</p> <p>Home improvement Grants 1. The service has initiated an independent review to assist with the introduction of a more robust control environment. 2. Increased frequency of monitoring by senior managers</p> <p>Goods Receipting Control Account 1. New arrangements for regular reconciliation & monitoring are to be put in place by the Councils Strategic Partner. The Deputy Director of Finance will monitor the reconciliation's. Improved guidance and instructions are to be issued to staff together with appropriate training to ensure orders and goods receipting are dealt with correctly.</p>	
FP 22	Achieve the 2006/2007 Gershon efficiency savings by March 2007	YES	Progress up to 30 th June was reported by services during the 1 st quarters budget clinic in August. Most of the proposed savings are on target and the Council will achieve the 2006/2007 savings.	

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX B – On Target

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles	2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments	
Performance & Policy									
BV 2b	The duty to promote race equality.	Top Median Bottom	72 58 42	95% (Top)	100% (Top)	100%	100%	100% (Top)	The standards established they meet the duty to promote racial equality will be maintained through the management of established systems and best practice
BV 174	The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	82.01	89.92	125	19	45	The impact of in-house training has heightened awareness within the Council and has resulted in a decrease in reported incidents. The added impact of the True Vision community reporting system and the work of the Racial Harassment Theme and Case groups has created a cautious projection for the year.
BV 175 (CPA – Housing)	The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Mechanisms are established to ensure that any confirmed racial incident results in follow-up action to minimise the chance of recurrence.
Human Resources									
BV 11c	The percentage of the top 5% with a disability.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	New	3%	3.1%	3.42%	3.42%	
BV 14	The percentage of early retirements (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce.	Top Median Bottom	0.16 0.41 0.84	0.54% (Lower median)	0.31% (Upper median)	0.28	0.26%	0.28% (Upper median)	

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX B – On Target

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles		2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments
BV 15	The percentage of ill-health retirements as a percentage of the workforce.	Top Median Bottom	0.12 0.26 0.44	0.58% (Bottom)	0.33% (Lower median)	0.30%	0.06%	0.10% (Top)	
Strategic Resources									
BV 8	The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days.	Top Median Bottom	95.97 92.90 88.65	71% (Bottom)	85.8% (Bottom)	92%	89.45%	92% (Lower Median)	The reporting requirements allow disputed invoices to be excluded from reported performance levels. At present the percentage of disputed invoices is 3% therefore, subject to audit review and agreement to the level of disputed invoices, the actual reportable performance is 89.45% + 3% = 92.45%. Therefore we remain on target to achieve 92%.
BV 76a	Housing benefit security: the number of claimants visited, per 1,000 caseload.	Top Median Bottom	282.16 217.12 155.86	154 (Bottom)	225.64 (Upper median)	240	140.03	320 (Top)	A new visiting team for new claims to HB/CTB was introduced on 9 October 2006. This is the reason why the number of visits anticipated for year end has been revised.
BV 76b	Housing benefit security: the number of fraud investigators employed, per 1,000 caseload.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	0.32	0.28	0.29	0.29	0.29	

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX B – On Target

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles	2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments	
BV 76d	Housing benefit security: the number of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1,000 caseload.	Top Median Bottom	5.31 3.53 2.06	4.0 (Upper median)	4.3 (Upper median)	4.6	1.65	4.6 (Upper median)	Although behind target numerically, there are currently 16 cases with the DWP as a result of joint working, which we anticipate being counted in this return. Taking these cases into account we still anticipate this BVPI being met.
BV 78a	Speed of processing: average time for processing new claims.	Top Median Bottom	29.38 35.35 44.55	30.0 (Lower median)	27.3 (Top)	26.0	22.4	25 (Top)	Predicted performance for the full year estimated at 25 days due to the implementation of the third module of the verification framework from October 2006
BV 78b	Speed of processing: average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstances.	Top Median Bottom	7.4 9.9 14.9	8 (Upper median)	13.4 (Lower median)	8	7.4	8 (Upper Median)	As above, estimate slightly increased due to the implementation of the third module of the verification framework from October 2006
BV 79b(ii)	Percentage of recoverable overpayments (HB) in the year as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	New	32.1%	35%	16.08%	35%	Recovery to be monitored on an on-going basis to ensure effective measures undertaken to ensure debts recovered as quickly as possible
BV 79b(iii)	Housing benefits written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	New	4.2%	2.5%	0.29%	1.5%	This BVPI will fluctuate greatly during the financial year. In the last quarter, a very small amount of overpayments have been written off. This may change in the remainder of the year therefore a realistic projection has been used to account for such variances.

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX B – On Target

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles		2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments
BV 156	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	20.9%	35.8%	44.0%	37%	44.0%	One scheme complete with further five to be completed by the end of the financial year.

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX C – Not on Target

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles	2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments
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Performance & Policy

BV 2a	The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms.	Top Median Bottom	NA	1	2	3	2	2	Changes to the Equality Standard resulting from the national review require a demonstration of the embedding of good practice before achievement of level 3 can be assured. This has extended the probable date of completion to September 2007.
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Action Plan

Action Plan is baseline established. Targets built into DAPs, Quarter DAP monitoring, Level 3 toolkit model to be reviewed September 2007. An assessment of the current position of the Council indicates that the following areas need to be developed before level 3 can be declared.

- Equality Impact Assessments need to be undertaken across all service areas and the outcomes clearly embedded into policy and service delivery. Major areas for development should become part of Diversity Action Plans, as should the programme of Equality Impact Assessments.
- Performance indicators arising from EIAs should become part of the established system of performance management and appear in service plans.
- Self-assessment needs to systems established to support performance management.
- A consultation framework needs to be implemented that demonstrates engagement with relevant consultees, shows how the outcomes of the consultation have been used, and ensures that the results of the process are formally fed back to consultation groups.

Equality safeguards should be built into the procurement processes at all levels of contract management and into partnership arrangements

Human Resources

BV 11a	The percentage of the top 5% of earners that are women.	Top Median Bottom	40.23 29.63 19.63	50.8% (Top)	52.19% (Top)	52%	50.47%	51% (Top)	This figure does tend to fluctuate within a small range. It is expected to be very close to 52% by the end of the year.
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Action Plan

No Action plans see comment

BV 11b	The percentage of the top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities.	Top Median Bottom	3.48 0.79 0.00	0.78% (Lower median)	0.76% (Lower median)	1.60%	0.67%	0.70% (Lower median)	
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CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX C – Not on Target

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles	2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments	
Action Plan									
New Initiatives in place to improve performance Actions 1.8 and 3.7 of the People Strategy 2006 – 2007 address the need to provide support mechanisms so existing BME employees can make the most of opportunities for career progression. These actions will be implemented to complement the initiatives designed to increase general workforce representation (see BVPI 17a below).									
BV 12	The proportion of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence.	Top Median Bottom	8.40 9.56 11.10	11.8 (Bottom)	11.8 (Bottom)	9.5	4.63 (cumulative) 2.11 (Q2)	10.8 (Lower median)	Actions to sustain performance see below
Action Plan									
Special CMT Meetings and follow up meetings with Heads of Service. Improved turn round for reporting of corporate sickness stats. Spot-checks on implementation of the policy. Proposed change of Occupational Health Provider. 1 st day referral of all stress related cases to Support Officer. Exercise/relaxation classes extended to include Tai Chi. Fast track physio and MRI referrals. Healthy Living Day event held. No Smoking sessions held, more planned. Health & Fitness Drop In sessions on-going. Well-man/Well-woman clinics on monthly basis - 1 st November. Review of management training. Inclusion of management of attendance in managers' appraisals									
BV 16a	The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition.	Top Median Bottom	3.73 2.47 1.49	2.8% (Upper median)	2.6% (Upper median)	3.0%	2.55%	2.75% (Upper median)	A Staff survey to be completed by March 2007. Up-to-date information should show an improvement in performance.
Action Plan									
New Initiatives in place to improve performance An employee survey will be completed in the financial year 2006/2007 in order to re-establish the current numbers of employees declaring a disability (action 2.6 of the People Strategy). The outcome of the survey will support positive action initiatives to increase the representation of employees with a disability (actions 2.5 and 3.7 of the People Strategy)									
BV 17a	The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities.	Top Median Bottom	4.6 1.9 0.9	2.6% (Upper median)	2.5% (Upper median)	3.0%	2.35%	2.5% (upper median)	A Staff survey to be completed by March 2007.

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX C – Not on Target

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles	2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments	
Action Plan									
<p>New initiatives in place to improve performance.</p> <p>The 2006/2007 People Strategy includes initiatives to improve BME representation in the workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 2.5 – use staff focus groups to increase staff participation, to consult and to provide a support mechanism for under-represented groups Action 2.6 – use existing workforce and related data on under-represented groups to continue to develop early positive action plans <p>Action 3.7 – develop a mentoring/coaching policy to assist BME and disabled employees/trainees with development and progression</p>									
Strategic Resources									
BV 9	Proportion of council tax collected.	Top Median Bottom	98.30 97.60 96.36	91.9% (Bottom)	92.8% (Bottom)	98.0 %	54.18%	96% (Bottom)	See attached Appendix E
BV 10	The percentage of business rates which should have been received during the year that were received.	Top Median Bottom	99.14 98.60 98.00	95% (Bottom)	98.1% (Lower median)	99%	59.59%	98.6% (Median)	See attached Appendix E
BV 76c	Housing benefit security: the number of fraud investigations, per 1,000 caseload.	Top Median Bottom	53.40 36.59 24.01	60.4 (Top)	61.1 (Top)	60	21.35	45 (Upper median)	
Action Plan									
<p>A decision has been made to exclude referrals sent through from the Housing Benefit Matching Service which do not result in a full fraud investigation. This has had a dramatic effect on the projected outcome of this BVPI although it is still anticipated that this will place MBC in the top quartile for this measure</p>									
BV 79a	Accuracy of processing: the percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available.	Top Median Bottom	99.00 97.95 96.20	98.6% (Upper median)	97.4% (Lower median)	99%	97.6%	98.6% (Upper median)	
Action Plan									
<p>Training of all staff to be undertaken on areas of weakness within the coming months with the aim of improving the accuracy of claim processing</p>									

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX D – Not Reported

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles	2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments	
Human Resources									
BV 16b	The percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	19.5%	19.5%	Not required	2.35%	Annual	
BV 17b	The percentage of economically active minority ethnic population in the authority area.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	6.4%	7.8%	Not required		Annual	
Strategic Resources									
BV 79b(i)	Percentage of recoverable overpayments (HB) in the year as a percentage of HB deemed recoverable over-payments during that period.	Top Median Bottom	N/A	New	62.2%	60%	N/K	60%	This is unable to be reported on a quarterly basis as the amount recovered in the quarter also included recovery against old debt prior to 1 April 2006.
Customer satisfaction surveys									
BV 3 General	Overall satisfaction with the authority	Top Median Bottom	60 55 49	N/A	N/A	67%		Annual	
BV 4 General	Satisfaction with complaint handling	Top Median Bottom	36 33 29	N/A	N/A	27%		Annual	
BV 80a Benefit service	Satisfaction with contact with the office	Top Median Bottom	83 79 73	N/A	N/A	90%		Annual	

CENTRAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007 Quarter 2

APPENDIX D – Not Reported

Indicator	Performance Indicator	All England Quartiles		2004/2005 Result	2005/2006 Result	2006/2007 Target	2006/2007 Performance to Date	2006/2007 Projection (Year End Estimate)	Key Issues/Comments
BV 80b Benefit service	Satisfaction with service in the office	Top	85	N/A	N/A	95%			Annual
		Median	80						
		Bottom	74						
BV 80c Benefit service	Satisfaction with Telephone service	Top	77	N/A	N/A	85%			Annual
		Median	70						
		Bottom	60						
BV 80d Benefit service	Satisfaction with staff in the office	Top	85	N/A	N/A	90%			Annual
		Median	82						
		Bottom	77						
BV 80e Benefit service	Satisfaction with forms	Top	67	N/A	N/A	75%			Annual
		Median	63						
		Bottom	60						
BV 80f Benefit service	Satisfaction with speed of service	Top	76	N/A	N/A	85%			Annual
		Median	71						
		Bottom	64						
BV 80g Benefit service	Satisfaction with overall service	Top	83	N/A	N/A	90%			Annual
		Median	79						
		Bottom	74						

Council Tax – Increase in Collection Update

A number of improvement activities have already been implemented through the action plan detailed in Quarter 1 and briefly outlined below:

- The automation of the Direct Debit process and the introduction of a designated phone line.
- An automated telephone payment service (Touch-tone).
- Internet Payments.
- A change to payment dates, from 15th to 6th of the month.
- Redesigned demand notice.
- Billing between annual bill and rollover.
- Automated bailiff process.
- Automation of Write-offs.
- 90% of empty property owners identified.
- Recovery Activity – carried out in the month the payment is due.
- Payment by Credit Card - in some instances.

Although these improvements have contributed to the increase in collection, a number of additional improvements around debt management have also been implemented, which have directly resulted in an increase in cash collection.

Comparisons

The improvements, which have been developed and adopted from the last action plan, plus the improvements shown below, have resulted in an increase in cash collection for this financial year. Compared to the end of September 2005 53.82% had been collected, whereas September 2006 shows 54.18% has been collected this is an increase of 0.36%. The improvement in collection is being tracked very closely to ensure every possible effort is made to meet the current target of 98%.

Additional Improvement Activities – resulting in an increase in cash collection

In order to re-educate the customer a systematically firm and consistent approach is being applied in all cases. Although any cases falling within vulnerable groups, are still given due consideration, e.g.:

- Cases where the debtor is suffering from mental impairment.
- Cases where the debtor or debtors partner is suffering from a serious illness etc.
- Any cases considered as appropriate by the bailiffs for special consideration.
- Recent bereavements.

This list is not a comprehensive list, but does indicate areas, where extra consideration will be applied.

Examples of areas, which have undergone improvement, which have resulted in an increase in cash collection, are:

- All cases, which have reached summons stage for the current financial year, are managed by court date, rather than by enforcement stage. This provides tighter controls

with age of debt and also with the current financial years debt. It also enables fast tracking of constant defaulters and has identified those stages within the court session, which are less effective. As a direct result of this a number of stages have been removed from the recovery process.

- Customer telephone numbers are now being captured in 90% of cases where customers have contacted Revenue Services regarding recovery action. These enable staff to make outward-bound calls if cases are in default to a greater extent than previously possible. Payments are then being taken over the telephone as a direct result of this outbound call, due to facilities being available such as paye.net and the payment by credit card if necessary.
- The number of attachment of earnings has also increased. All customers contacting Revenues wishing to make arrangements to pay are asked to provide their financial circumstances. As this includes work place details any defaulted arrangements are automatically moved to attachment stage to ensure cash collection is maximised.
- Changes to the way special arrangements are monitored have also started to take effect. Cases are monitored daily, with outbound calls being made daily to customers who have defaulted. Staff are instructing the customer that any overdue payments must be brought up to date within 24 hours. Customers failing to maintain their account are advised that their case will be either sent for attachment of sent to the bailiff on a specific day, this is managed very closely to ensure we do what we say. A further process of letter drops for all defaulted customers is also being developed. This will speed up the process for monitoring arrangements by anywhere up to 2 months.
- Bailiff cases are being forwarded to the bailiff significantly earlier than previous years, due to the changes in the payment date and recovery activity. This means the bailiff can commence action earlier to secure payment.
- Bailiff activity is also being monitored closely to ensure cash collection is maximised. The increases in bailiff activity through regular discussions with account managers have lead to an increase in cash received. As an example Equita bailiffs have collected in September 06 £37,000 cash compared to £10,100 cash collected in September 2005. Furthermore the turnaround of cases has quickened to ensure where contact has not been made these cases are returned immediately, to allow further action to continue.