



Scrutiny Unit Presentation

Departmental Reports 2006

Introduction

1. The following slides and notes formed the basis of a presentation by the Scrutiny Unit to officials from several government departments, following our cross-cutting review of Departmental Reports published in 2006.
2. Our earlier report, *Review of Departmental Annual Reports 2005*, from November 2005 (<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/CSUdeptReviewReport.doc>), made a number of recommendations aimed at improving reporting in Departmental Reports. This presentation focuses on the role of the Scrutiny Unit in the Parliamentary scrutiny of Departmental Reports and looks at the progress made towards implementing our earlier recommendations.
3. A selection of good practice examples from Departmental Reports in 2006 was used to illustrate points made in the presentation. These examples are included below, from page 14 onwards.
4. The presentation was made on 7 February 2007 at a workshop hosted by Defra and attended by officials from a range of Government departments, including the Treasury..

Departmental Reports – the Scrutiny Unit’s role

**Matthew Hamlyn
Head of the Scrutiny Unit**

**House of Commons Committee Office
7 February 2007**

Role of the Scrutiny Unit

- **Established in 2002**
- **18 staff provide support to a variety of committees**
- **Main focus of work is legislative scrutiny and financial/performance scrutiny**
- **More information on our website:
[http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/scrutiny
unit/about_us.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/scrutiny_unit/about_us.cfm)**

Review of Departmental Reports 2006

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Overview

- **Role of the Scrutiny Unit in the Departmental Report process**
- **Progress in 2006 against the key recommendations of the 2005 review**
- **Good practice examples from 2006**
- **Areas for improvement in 2007**

Role of the Scrutiny Unit in the Departmental Report process

- Assist departmental select committees
- Check for compliance with Treasury guidance
- Analyse financial information
- Probe reported performance against PSA targets
- Draft written questions to departments
- Brief MPs for oral evidence sessions
- Review departmental responses and contribute to committee reports

Review of 2005 Reports

- Scrutiny Unit analysed 21 Departmental Reports in 2005
- Produced overarching report, including:
 - recommendations for improvements to reporting formats
 - examples of best practice
- Presented findings at Treasury seminar
- Report available on our website:
[http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/scrutiny
unit/pubs.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/scrutiny_unit/pubs.cfm)

Key recommendations from 2005 (1)

Future Departmental Reports should include:

- **Notes accompanying core financial tables to explain trends and unusual movements**
- **Direct linking of expenditure/resources to targets/outcomes**
- **Comprehensive discussion of progress on efficiency programme**
- **Consistently expressed assessments which follow logically from information provided**

Key recommendations from 2005 (2)

Future Departmental Reports should include:

- **Full information on quality of data used to assess targets, clearly setting out limitations**
- **Full commentary on past performance, with explanations for failures to meet targets and discussions of future initiatives**
- **Reconciliation of current objectives and targets, and of showing performance over time**

Progress in 2006 against 2005 recommendations (1)

- Few departments provided adequate commentary to explain core tables
- More departments were linking resources to objectives, but not to targets or outcomes
- No Departmental Report fully met the Treasury requirements for reporting efficiencies
- Still some examples of illogical assessments of PSA performance drawn from evidence provided.

Notes accompanying core tables

5. About half of all departments included some explanation of the core tables in footnotes, although the explanations varied widely in their depth of analysis. Most still required further information to be sought by the committees.

6. Several departments just repeated the Treasury's suggested commentary provided to accompany the regional analysis tables and four departments provided no explanation or commentary at all to support the core tables.

7. DfID provided more of a commentary to set the tables in context and make them more accessible to the lay person. But the most comprehensive commentary was found in the DEFRA Departmental Report – included in the good practice examples [2].

Linking resources to objectives/targets/outcomes

8. Last year we identified that it was difficult to determine how resources were attributed to departmental performance. It is important for the reader to be able to

make an assessment of the costs associated with meeting specific targets or achieving certain outcomes.

9. About half the reports we looked at now report expenditure by objectives, mostly in the core tables themselves. But none of the reports were able to link resources to specific PSA targets.

10. The Home Office, DfT and DfES are all good examples of reporting by objective in the core tables. They all provide a more detailed breakdown of the headline figures too.

11. DTI has gone one step further to report detailed expenditure by objective within the main body of the report and expenditure by Estimate sub-head in the core tables – included in the good practice examples [4].

Efficiency reporting

12. There was still a general lack of substance and detail when it comes to efficiency reporting in Departmental Reports. It is often not possible to reconcile reported progress back to Efficiency Technical Notes. Some departments only provided a headline figure for their efficiency achievements, or gave a selective breakdown by workstream which did not sum to the headline figure.

13. In our report last year, we recommended that departments include a summary table setting out their efficiencies, which reconciled to the planned savings set out in the Efficiency Technical Note. The tables found in the reports from DTI and FCO are good examples of how this could be set out [5].

14. There were often very brief lists or only limited descriptions of programmes and plans to deliver efficiency. And there was an almost complete lack of evidence provided to demonstrate that efficiencies had not affected the quality of service delivery. It is not enough to assert that service quality has been maintained, or simply list ways in which it will be monitored. Without providing evidence, departments risk

reducing the credibility of any actual achievements and invite further committee probing.

15. Reporting on relocations and headcount reductions was generally sufficient, but committees are interested to hear how they have been achieved and what the impact has been, at what cost.

16. No report was an overall example of good practice in efficiency reporting, but different elements from several departments are picked out in our good practice handout.

17. In its report on the 2006 Pre-Budget Report the Treasury Select Committee recommended that departments should, in their Departmental and Autumn Performance Reports, “provide consistent and comprehensive information on progress against efficiency targets, including by “work stream” in each case, and to classify all reported gains as preliminary, interim or final.” (<http://pubs1.tso.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmtreasy/115/115.pdf>). The Government has yet to respond to the report.

Assessments of progress against PSA targets

18. There were still some examples of illogical or unconvincing assessments of PSA performance drawn from evidence provided. This was for a variety of reasons:

- insufficiently balanced or honest reporting
- not using the standard terminology of ‘on course’, ‘met’, ‘slippage’, etc.
- when challenged by committees, departments admitted making errors
- assessment based on information not relevant to the target
- not reporting against all indicators
- not clear to what extent each sub-target contributed to overall performance

- nothing to support trajectories of future expected performance.

19. Some PSA targets did not even receive an overall assessment. Readers were left to draw their own conclusions from the assessment of individual sub-targets.

20. Reporting of joint targets was generally consistent, although it was not always clear what each individual department had contributed to a joint target, because the wording was generally agreed between them.

Progress in 2006 against 2005 recommendations (2)

- Reporting of data quality remained patchy and a small amount of data was old or out of date
- Few departments mapped targets to objectives and tracked targets over time
- Reports not setting out action to be taken where targets are slipping, and insufficiently forward-looking

Data quality

21. Five departmental reports made no reference to the quality of the data systems used to measure performance against PSA targets. Such a reference is a requirement of Treasury guidance and warns the readers to interpret results with care, taking into account any limitations in the underlying data systems.

22. Other departments made only passing reference to their PSA technical notes or the NAO validation work, without giving any indication as to what the reader might find there.

23. Three departments included comments on data quality throughout their PSA reporting, but they were not specifically identified to the reader by use of a separate heading.

24. Four other departments included sections on data quality in a consistent way for each PSA target, usually in a table format, but the information contained in those sections was not generally sufficient to explain the data limitations.

25. The DfID Annual Report contains a detailed Annex on the data quality of PSA targets relating to Africa and Asia. But the best all-round reporting of quality of data systems can be seen in the DTI's Departmental Report – included in the good practice examples [1].

26. The old and out of date data were sometimes provided in error because new information had not been taken into account, but often information from 2002, for example, was still the most recent information available. Departments should provide explanations where data cannot be provided on a more timely basis.

Mapping targets to objectives, and tracking targets over time

27. Only three departments had mapped BOTH their PSA targets to their current objectives AND their SR04 PSA targets to their SR02 PSA targets in an accessible manner. Most departments had done either one or the other, but they were not always well-presented in a single place.

28. The easiest way to show which PSA targets contribute to each objective is through the summary table, used for example by the DfES and Home Office.

29. DCLG presented all the necessary information in a useful Annex to their report. The most comprehensive comparison of SR02 and SR04 PSA targets was provided by DfID – included in the good practice examples [3].

Explanations for failing to meet targets and discussions of future performance

30. The tone and presentation in some Departmental Reports still shows reluctance to explain poor performance against targets.

31. Where performance has slipped the immediate questions are: 'Why has this happened and what is the department doing about it?'. Departments should aim to pre-empt these questions in an attempt to provide a balanced view of performance, not just achievements.

32. DWP tries to do this in their Departmental Report. After setting out performance against each PSA target they then have a section headed either 'Reasons for Progress' or 'Improving Performance', depending on whether the progress is on course or behind schedule. – included in the good practice examples [6].

33. More generally, Departmental Reports are not often sufficiently forward-looking, perhaps because the Treasury guidance is not prescriptive on how this should be achieved. The Northern Ireland Office Report includes sections on 'Looking Back in 2005/06' and 'Looking Forward' in an attempt to achieve more balanced reporting – included in the good practice examples [7].

Good practice examples from 2006

Data quality	DTI
Notes accompanying core tables	DEFRA
Linking objectives to targets and targets over time	DfID
Linking resources to objectives, targets and outcomes	DTI
Efficiency reporting	DfID FCO/DCA
Action to address poor performance	DWP
Looking forward	NIO

Areas for improvement in 2007

- **Adherence to Treasury guidance as a minimum requirement – note changes to the guidance for 2007**
- **Timeliness**
- **Accessibility of the report to the layperson**
- **Continued implementation of Scrutiny Unit recommendations from 2005**

Timeliness

34. Select Committees often schedule sessions on the Departmental Reports well in advance, based on the publication deadline given in the Treasury guidance, and would ideally send written questions to departments for response ahead of those sessions. Late publication can be particularly inconvenient to all concerned.

Accessibility of the report

35. Considerations:

- Length of document
- prioritise key issues using headings, text boxes, summary tables and colour
- include illustrative examples that people can relate to
- structure/cross-referencing/indexing
- avoid excessive use of jargon and technical terminology (glossary)
- traffic lights
- consistent formatting

- large blocks of dense/small text
- columnar format to avoid difficulty of reading overly long lines of text
- use of illustrations/photographs/colour
- Using appropriate graphics, especially to show time-series data.

36. Graphics should be easily understood and not open to mis-interpretation by the layperson. Is the title, design and data presentation conveying a clear message? Are you using the best format to present data?

37. Large numbers of figures included in blocks of text would be better brought out in tables, charts or lists.

Review of Departmental Reports 2006

Good Practice Examples

Contents

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These good practice examples are provided in addition to those already reported in the Scrutiny Unit's earlier report 'Review of Departmental Annual Reports 2005' (November 2005), available on our website:

http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/scrutinyunit/pubs.cfm

1. Data Quality

The Department for Trade and Industry makes comments on the quality of data systems related to each PSA target throughout its Departmental Report. One example is given here:

Quality of data systems used

- 2.5** The ONS provide the data on labour productivity. The data on labour productivity, on both the output per worker and the output per hour worked bases, are classified as 'national statistics'. National statistics is a term applied by the ONS to a data series when it is deemed sufficiently reliable.
- 2.6** Both versions of the productivity data may be subject to future revisions and are affected by the economic cycle. Therefore attempts are made to take out the effect of the economic cycle by choosing an appropriate base year for comparison, and changes are only deemed to be significant if they exceed 5% of the UK productivity level.
- 2.7** The sources of data used in the indicators of productivity were selected following an extensive consultation undertaken in 1999, and again following Budget 2004. The data for the indicators are derived from a variety of sources, including national statistical agencies, the OECD and the World Bank, each of which is subject to peer review processes.

Source: Department of Trade and Industry Departmental Report 2006 (Cm 6826), page 25, with further examples throughout the DTI's report.

2. Notes accompanying core tables

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs includes a comprehensive commentary to support the core tables in its Departmental Report.

Table 1 – Total public spending

Background

Total public spending is the sum of the resource budget and capital budget less depreciation (excluded so as to avoid double counting). Both the resource and capital budgets are split into DEL and AME elements for control purposes.

DEL budgets are negotiated with Treasury via Spending Reviews (SRs) that cover three years. The most recent (SR2004) covers 2005-06 to 2007-08. DEL includes the accruals-based consumption of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) that the Department sponsors, which is not voted by Parliament as Parliament votes the cash required to fund the NDPB consumption on an annual basis.

AME budgets are usually demand led and not easily controllable by departments so are set each year via the Parliamentary Main Estimate at the beginning of the year. They can be updated during the year via the Winter and Spring Supplementary Estimates subject to approval by Parliament.

As a result of the reclassification changes, Defra has very little residual AME budget. It is now limited to the impact of changes to provisions against closed pension funds (£50 million per annum) and the expenditure of the Levy Funded Bodies (LFBs) that the Department sponsors (£72 million per annum). The levy income of the LFBs is classified as non-Budget.

As this table is a summary of tables 2 and 3, only commentary on the overall totals is added here.

Comparisons – forward looking

The estimated outturn for 2005-06 is very close to the budget made available via the Spring Supplementary Estimate, after allowing for the impact of the classification changes referred to in this commentary. The plans for 2006-07 agree to the 2006-07 draft Main Estimate (draft Estimates are now drawn from the same COINS system as the core tables).

The resource DEL for the current and next two years has fallen compared to the figures published last year again because of the classification changes. The impact of reclassifying the capital grants is more marked for the later years as it includes the

additional £45 million/ £95 million for Warm Front provided for those years by the 2004 Spending Review (SR2004). C

ore Tables

The capital DEL for the current and next two years has increased by £315 million/£433 million/£468 million compared to the figures published last year largely because of:

- the reclassification of capital grants (£248 million/£293 million/£343 million – including the additional funding in SR2004 for Warm Front);
- the additional funding for Warm Front (£20 million/£125 million/£105 million) and Carbon Trust (£0/£15 million/£20 million) announced in the Pre-budget Report in December 2005; and
- drawing down £40 million of prior year's unspent budget as End Year Flexibility (EYF) to fund IT investment (for example, Whole Farm Approach, erdpIT and Livestock ID projects).

Comparisons – backward looking

The actual outturn for total public spending for 2004-05 is £2,394 million lower than the estimated outturn published in last year's Report, largely caused by the re-classification of £2,445 million of EU income from non-Budget. The remaining overspend compared to the estimate (£51 million) consists of:

- additional AME actual expenditure (£30 million) relating to the water industry closed pension fund provision not included in the estimate;
- the actual AME costs of the Intervention Board (£57 million) not included in the estimate;
- the estimated outturn including £95 million expenditure on the water industry closed pension fund surrendered to Treasury and so not included in the actual outturn; and
- an actual overspend on CAP AME expenditure (£43 million) compared to the estimate used for the 2005 Report.

The actual outturn for resource DEL for 2004-05 is £378 million lower than the estimated outturn published in last year's Report, largely caused by:

- the re-classification of capital grants referred to above (£174 million),
- the net effect of the CAP income and expenditure reclassification (£118 million); and
- the estimated outturn including £95 million for the water industry closed pension fund being surrendered to Treasury. The actual outturn for Capital DEL for 2004-05 is £157 million higher than the estimated outturn published in last year's Report, largely caused by the re-classification of capital grants referred to above (£174 million) balanced by an actual underspend that emerged after the estimate (£17 million).

Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Departmental Report 2006 (Cm 6827), page 250, with further examples on the following pages of DEFRA's report.

Also see commentary accompanying core tables by Department for International Development.

3. Linking objectives to targets and targets over time

The most comprehensive comparison of SR02 and SR04 PSA targets, both mapped to objectives, was provided by the Department for International Development.

PSA 2003/06	Key changes	PSA 2005/08
OBJECTIVE I Reduce poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa	No change	OBJECTIVE I Reduce poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa
TARGET 1 Progress towards the MDGs in 16 key countries in Africa	No change	TARGET 1 Progress towards the MDGs in 16 key countries in Africa
A sustainable reduction in the proportion of people living in poverty from 48% across the entire region	Numerical target updated	A reduction of 4 percentage points in the proportion of people living in poverty across the entire region, against the 1999 baseline
An increase in primary school enrolment from 58% to 72% and an increase in the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary from 89% to 96%	Numerical targets updated	An increase in primary school enrolment by 18 percentage points and an increase in the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school by 5 percentage points, both against their year 2000 baseline
A reduction in under-5 mortality rates for girls and boys from 158 per 1000 live births to 139 per 1000; and an increase in proportion of births assisted by skilled birth attendants from 49% to 67%	Numerical targets updated	A reduction in under-5 mortality rates for girls and boys by 8 per 1000 live births, against the year 2000 baseline; and an increase in proportion of births assisted by skilled birth attendants by 11 percentage points, against the year 2000 baseline
A reduction in the proportion of 15-24 year old pregnant women with HIV from 16%	Baseline removed from headline of target	A reduction in the proportion of 15-24 year old pregnant women with HIV

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Source: Department for International Development Departmental Report 2006 (Cm 6824), page 264.

Also see Annex F in Department for Communities and Local Government Departmental Report.

4. Linking resources to objectives, targets and outcomes

The Department for Trade and Industry has reports detailed expenditure by objective within the main body of the report and expenditure by Estimate sub-head in the core tables.

Figure 3.2		Expenditure on Enterprise, Growth and Business Investment (£ million)				
Outturn	2002-03 Outturn	2003-04 Outturn	2004-05 Outturn	2005-06 Working Provision	2006-07 Plans	2007-08 Plans
Total (excluding Launch Investment)	141.4	190.6	231.9	266.9	208.8	215.6
<i>of which:</i>						
Access to support to implement best practice products	0.0	11.0	12.0	11.0	4.0	3.0
BLU	1.5	1.9	2.4	1.9	1.0	1.0
Business.gov	8.9	15.0	10.5	20.0	17.8	17.8
Gateway-Capital Grants	5.1	8.0	4.8	8.0	0.0	0.0
Gateway-Resource	3.7	3.3	3.0	4.3	3.3	3.3
Design Council	6.9	7.1	6.2	7.0	6.3	6.3
Enterprise Fund. Including Enterprise Capital Fund	83.8	108.6	138.9	120.3	145.7	160.7
<i>of which:</i>						
Programme including Small Firms Loan Guarantee	60.7	74.0	97.8	97.3	93.7	99.7
Capital	23.1	34.6	41.1	23.0	52.0	61.0
Manufacturing Advisory Service	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
National Business Link Marketing	3.0	4.0	3.0	5.0	1.7	1.7
Phoenix Fund	25.4	26.0	28.0	26.0	12.0	9.0
Promotion of Enterprise	1.1	3.6	4.0	5.0	2.1	2.9
Social Enterprise	0.9	1.0	0.7	1.0	0.8	
Research and Evaluation	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.9	1.1	1.1
Legacy Programmes	0	0	17.4	9.2	9.2	6.2
Aerospace Launch Investment	218.0	-109.0	-126.8	-134.4	-158.3	-158.3
<i>of which:</i>						
Capital	323.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expert Advice and other programme	2.9	0.8	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.4
Receipts (excluding CFERs)	-20.9	-30.1	-29.7	0.0	0.0	
Total Receipts	-108.5	-109.8	-127.3	-135.4	-159.3	-158.7

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Source: Department for Trade and Industry 2006 (Cm 6826), page 79, and throughout report.

Also see core tables produced by Home Office, Department for Transport and Department for Education and Skills.

NB: there is no good practice example of reporting expenditure by targets and outcomes.

5. Efficiency reporting

There is no overall good practice example of efficiency reporting but different elements from several departments are picked out for use here.

The table from Annex 8 of the DfID Departmental Report is recommended on the basis of:

- Balanced reporting with traffic light assessments of progress
- Easily reconcilable to Efficiency Technical Note
- Good breakdown of reporting into sub-targets (equivalent to other departments' workstreams)
- More extensive narrative descriptions than most
- Use of baselines

Efficiency Programme	
Sub-target	Progress
<p>1: To increase the proportion of country programmes channelled in the form of programmatic support from 39% in 2004/05 to 53% in 2007/08.</p> <p><i>Baseline £680 million (DFID funds given as programmatic support 2004/05)</i></p>	<p>Off track</p> <p>Provisional 2005/06 figures show that £847m was channelled through programmatic support, an increase of £167m over the baseline. This equates to a proportion of 42% against a target of 45% by the end of March 2006. Although this shows a lower percentage than the baseline, the increase in the amount of funds given as programmatic support means that efficiencies of £33 million have been achieved. It is not anticipated that this will affect the final achievement of this target by 2007/08. Efficiency gains on this target are not cashable.</p> <p>Parallel actions are being taken to ensure that partner Government systems are subject to continuous improvement and all DRD support of this form is subject to a comprehensive assessment of fiduciary risk. Complementary technical assistance is given high priority and the performance of Public Financial Management is now assessed annually in conjunction with the World Bank and IMF.</p>

Source: Department for International Development Departmental Report 2006 (Cm 6824), page 277.

5. Efficiency reporting (continued)

The table from the FCO Departmental Report is recommended on the basis of:

- Outturn presented against plans for each year separately and comparable to the overall target
- Clarity

However the table gives a lesser breakdown than is provided in the Efficiency Technical Note.

Table 5: Forecasts for Office of Government Commerce project categories, 2004–5 to 2007–8 as at January 2006

Projects (£m)	2004–05		2005–06		2006–07	2007–08
	Planned outturn	Outturn	Planned outturn	Estimated outturn	Planned outturn	Target
Estate projects	0.0	0.0	4.0	4.1	4.2	5.3
ICT efficiencies	0.2	0.2	4.7	2.3	16.4	24.7
Reductions in low priority activity	0.0	0.0	2.0	6.6	4.5	4.5
Pay bill reduction ¹	0.0	0.2	8.0	8.4	18.0	27.0
Procurement efficiencies	1.2	2.9	4.6	4.1	6.1	7.8
Corporate Services	3.3	3.3	5.4	5.9	6.1	7.4
Other	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Total	4.7	6.6	38.7	41.4	65.3	86.7
Of which						
Cashable ²	1.4	3.3	15.8	18.4	33.5	44.8
Non cashable ³	3.3	3.3	22.9	23.0	31.8	41.9

Source: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Departmental Report 2006 (Cm 6823), page 80.

Also see table produced by the Department for Trade and Industry.

5. Efficiency reporting (continued)

The DCA Departmental Report includes some evidence of service quality measures:

Table 1		
Workstream/Initiative	Savings to date	Quality Assurance Outcom
<p>HMCS</p> <p>Savings delivered through line management and support function re-organisation, rationalisation and pooling of court business, estates integration and more efficient use of corporate resources</p>	<p>£17.1 million (cashable)</p> <p>£570,000 (non-cashable)</p>	<p>Increasing customer satisfaction in key areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of court staff at public counter – 84 per cent against a baseline target of 85 per cent • knowledge of staff on telephone service – 84 per cent against a baseline target of 80 per cent target • helpfulness of written communication – 83 per cent against baseline target of 80 per cent

Source: Department for Constitutional Affairs Departmental Report 2006 (Cm 6820), page 56.

6. Action to address poor performance

The Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report includes a section called 'Improving Performance' when progress on a PSA target is behind schedule.

Performance

52. There is **slippage** in progress towards this target. Latest data available (November 2005) shows that 25 per cent of parents with care on benefit are now in receipt of maintenance.

53. Achievement of the target is dependent upon the successful conversion of old scheme cases onto the new scheme, by December 2007. The review carried out by the CSA Chief Executive in 2005 demonstrated how difficult and resource-intensive conversion would be. The Department is keeping this under review and has asked Sir David Henshaw to address it in his redesign of Child Support, commissioned by the Secretary of State in February 2006.¹³

Improving performance

54. The Agency's Operational Improvement Plan published in February 2006¹⁴ aims to bring about:

- changes to the Agency's structure and streamlining of processes which will enable significant improvements in productivity, reduction in backlogs and faster clearance of applications;
- more effective collection and payment;
- a substantial increase in numbers of staff dedicated to enforcing liabilities, increased levels of compliance and debt recovery;
- restructuring to increase focus on the lifecycle of cases, senior caseworkers to resolve more complex cases and more staff deployed to deal directly with clients.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2006 (Cm6829), page 37

7. Looking Forward

The Northern Ireland Office Departmental Report balances reporting, looking both forwards and back.

Looking Back over Security in 2005/06

5.19 The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) published its fifth annual report in June 2005. The report highlighted the successes of the Task Force against organised crime during 2004/05, assessed the threat to Northern Ireland society from the various forms of organised crime and detailed the initiatives being taken forward in 2005/06. During 2004/05 the OCTF successfully:-

- Disrupted or dismantled 28 top level NI organised crime gangs
- £9.5m of drugs were seized by PSNI
- Counterfeit goods worth £7m were seized by PSNI
- Legitimate fuel deliveries increased by 6%
- Assets totalling nearly £12m were restrained or confiscated by PSNI, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Assets Recovery Agency (ARA).

...continued

Looking Forward – Security Organised Crime Task Force

5.53 The Task Force has developed an ambitious programme of work which it will take forward through its new structures. This includes:-

- Tackling illegal dumping - new legislation will be introduced in the autumn of 2006 enhancing waste enforcement powers to enable suspect vehicles to be stopped, searched and, if necessary, seized and retained pending the outcome of an investigation
- Oils fraud - proposals to streamline and tighten the petrol licensing regime are currently being considered. The Task Force will review the current petrol licensing regime in other jurisdictions, such as GB and ROI, to identify and implement best practice
- Safeguarding charities - legislation is planned for the summer of 2007 to introduce a full statutory regime, including a Northern Ireland Charities Register regulated by a newly appointed Charities Commission

...continued

Source: Northern Ireland Office Departmental Report 2006 (Cm6836), pages 35 and 40