



**ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION**

Corporate Plan 2002/03

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1.	Terms of Reference	3
1.2.	Purpose of document	3
1.3.	Aims of the Royal Commission	3
2.	Achievement of objectives for 2001/02	4
2.1.	Studies	4
2.1.1.	Environmental Planning Study.....	4
2.1.2.	Chemicals Study.....	4
2.1.3.	Past Studies and other activities.....	4
2.1.4.	Future Studies.....	5
2.1.5.	Maintaining the Commission’s effectiveness	5
2.2.	Budget	5
2.3.	Staff.....	5
2.4.	Training and development strategy	5
2.5.	Efficiency gains.....	5
3.	Strategy for the next three years.....	6
3.1.	Future Studies.....	6
3.2.	Public accessibility.....	6
4.	Objectives for 2002/03	7
4.1.	Key Outputs in 2002/03	7
4.1.1.	Chemicals Study (Twenty-fourth Report).....	7
4.1.2.	Marine Fisheries (Twenty-fifth Report).....	7
4.1.3.	Selecting the Twenty-sixth Study	7
4.1.4.	Short Studies	7
4.1.5.	Advice in other forms.....	7
4.1.6.	Maintaining the Commission’s effectiveness	7
4.1.7.	External links.....	7
4.2.	Resources	8
4.2.1.	Staff.....	8
4.2.2.	Accommodation and office facilities	8
4.3.	Risks.....	8
4.4.	Efficiency gains.....	8
5.	Objectives for 2003/04 to 2005/06.....	9

5.1.	Objectives for 2003/04	9
5.2.	Objectives for 2004/05	9
5.3.	Objectives for 2005/06	9
5.4.	Longer-term Objectives.....	9
5.5.	Baseline resources and implications	9
5.6.	Implications of 5% cut each year in baseline resources	9
Annex A – Working Methods		11
1.	Background	11
2.	Mode of operation	11
3.	Timing of studies.....	11
4.	Indicators of performance	12
5.	Rationale for subjects being considered.....	12
6.	Secretariat Objectives.....	13
Annex B - Outturns for 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03		15
Annex C - Timetable and Resources.....		16
1.	Timetable of reports	16
2.	Organogramme.....	17
Annex D - Baseline Resources for 2003/04 to 2005/06 and Bid		18

1. Introduction

1.1. Terms of Reference

The Royal Commission's terms of reference as set out in the Royal Warrant are:

'To advise on matters, both national and international, concerning the pollution of the environment; on the adequacy of research in this field; and the future possibilities of danger to the environment'.

The Royal Commission is constitutionally independent of government Departments, but it is accountable for its use of public resources through DEFRA, and this document sets out the way in which those resources are used.

1.2. Purpose of document

The need for a corporate plan was set out in a Framework Document,¹ which describes the respective roles and responsibilities of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Royal Commission. The purpose of the Plan is to define the strategic direction, priorities and goals of the Royal Commission and its Secretariat over the next three years.

Of particular importance are the review of last year's performance, and objectives and targets for forthcoming financial years, together with the underlying assumptions.

1.3. Aims of the Royal Commission

Information about the Royal Commission's independent status, method of working and objectives were described in the first corporate plan and are summarised here at [Annex A](#). Key concepts guiding our work are:

- **Independence** – the Commission is an independent standing body established by Royal Warrant
- **Cross-border** – our work should serve all parts of the United Kingdom
- **Long-term** – our studies look well beyond the normal political horizon
- **High quality** – the Members of the Commission are appointed to bring experience, skill and expertise to our work. Our reports are both informative and accessible
- **Effective** – our reports are a major influence in the development of environmental policy
- **Efficient** – we make maximum use of the resources available to us.

¹ published February 2001 – <http://www.rcep.org.uk/pdf/framework.pdf>

2. Achievement of objectives for 2001/02

2.1. Studies

2.1.1. Environmental Planning Study

The Commission's Twenty-third report *Environmental Planning* was published on 21 March 2002. The report was launched at the right time to influence the government's revision of planning policy, and has already provided a valuable base on which to carry forward discussions with Ministers and to provide evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Transport, Local Government and the Regions. It is, however, much wider and deeper than current Government policy proposals, and will have implications lasting well into the future of planning policy.

2.1.2. Chemicals Study

A working group was set up to analyse responses to the initial announcement and to decide on the need for further scoping activities. A consultant was commissioned to review the literature on people's attitudes to chemicals. A seminar, 'Fresh Approaches to Chemical Use and Control' was held on 19 July 2001.

An invitation to submit written evidence on key issues drew 51 responses, which were analysed and assessed. Based on this, a framework for the report and a timetable to achieve it have been drawn up.

2.1.3. Past Studies and other activities

The Twenty-first Report *Setting Environmental Standards* was used as the basis of a response to the consultation paper on the government response to the Phillips Report, and many of its concepts reappeared as the Office of Science and Technology's Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees.²

The Twenty-second Report *Energy – The Changing Climate* led to the Cabinet Office's Performance and Innovation Unit study on meeting future UK energy needs³ which in turn will form the basis for a White Paper.

The Commission responded to consultations or made statements on:

- DETR Consultation on the Future of Aviation
- Building Regulations
- House of Lords inquiry on the EU Chemicals White Paper
- DEFRA's aims and objectives
- The Policy Commission on Farming and Food
- The joint DETR/MAFF Draft Soil Strategy for England.

The Commission continued to contribute to the work of the network of European Environmental Advisory Committees, including Professor Macrory's role as chair of the Steering Committee.

² Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees, Office of Science and Technology Dec 2001, www.ost.gov.uk/policy/advice/copsac/index.htm

³ "The Energy Review", Performance and Innovation Unit Feb 2002, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/2002/energy/report/index.htm

2.1.4. Future Studies

A short-list of topics for the next major study was drawn up:

- Air Transport and the Environment
- Environmental Aspects of Producing Food in the UK
- Flooding and Coastal Defence
- Marine Pollution

and consulted on. The consultation drew 31 responses.

2.1.5. Maintaining the Commission's effectiveness

- a) A review of activities covering 2000/01, and a corporate plan for 2001/02, were published.
- b) We have commissioned reviews of the effectiveness of the Soil Report and the second Transport Report.
- c) We secured new offices for the Commission and relocation was completed in December 2001.
- d) The Commission's website was further developed as the first stage in making it more accessible. Maintenance of the site was improved and we keep the site more up to date.

2.2. Budget

The estimated out-turn for 2001/02 is attached at [Annex B](#) together with the figures for 2000/01 and proposed budget for 2002/03. Total forecast expenditure for 2001/02 was £1029k, with the initial allocation increased to £1036k to cover escalating office relocation costs. Relocation of the Commission's offices accounted for some £216k but savings ensued from negotiation of a 6-month rent-free period for the new offices. Study-related consultancies were lower than initially planned due to the high relocation costs and staff needing to divert to relocation duties. Staff costs at £425k were lower than anticipated due to Secretariat vacancies through the year.

2.3. Staff

There has been a large turnover of Secretariat staff in 2001/02. Use has been made of temporary staff to fill in, but at the end of the year, we were still carrying two full-time science policy vacancies, and this has degraded our capacity to handle new work. The new Secretary to the Commission took up his post in February 2002.

2.4. Training and development strategy

The Secretariat attended a total of 23 days training through the year averaging at 2.5 days per person, mainly covering diversity issues and DEFRA finance systems. Two people undertook external courses in their own time, on websites and IT. A similar amount of time was spent attending conferences, roughly divided between developing professional competence and informing studies.

2.5. Efficiency gains

- Greater use of the Internet to source and disseminate information
- Increased use of email to give speedier responses to public and other enquiries
- Reduced paper consumption and mailing costs from better use of Internet and email
- Smaller floor area for new building

3. Strategy for the next three years

3.1. Future Studies

The Commission's strategy for publishing reports and monitoring their effectiveness was set out in the first corporate plan and is repeated here in [Annex A](#).

A review of future workload and discussions with major stakeholders has suggested that the Commission's production of shorter, more focussed reports should be incorporated formally into our workplan. This will stretch our resources, increasing demands both on the Secretariat and on Members' time. To accommodate this, more effective ways of working will be sought, particularly more modern IT and more use of small drafting teams.

[Annex C](#) shows a revised workplan for 2002-2006 covering current and future studies.

3.2. Public accessibility

The Commission has considered the Office of Science and Technology's Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees. While it clearly is not addressed to the Commission (because the Commission is independent of government and is not a scientific advisory committee) the Commission intends to comply with the Code. For the most part the Commission already meets the requirements, but in order to comply fully intends to take the following actions during the course of 2002/03:

- Preparation of a publications strategy
- Publication of all agendas and (where possible) meeting papers in advance
- Making arrangements to hold public meetings or seminars at appropriate stages of each major study.

4. Objectives for 2002/03

4.1. Key Outputs in 2002/03

4.1.1. Chemicals Study (Twenty-fourth Report)

1. Presentations, oral evidence and visits completed by October 2002
2. Agreed structure of the report in June 2002
3. First draft in September 2002
4. Finalise draft in February 2003 for publication in May.

4.1.2. Marine Fisheries (Twenty-fifth Report)

5. Initial papers in May 2002
6. Announcement in June 2002
7. Event to scope study in December 2002
8. Call for written evidence on key issues by February 2003.

4.1.3. Selecting the Twenty-sixth Study

9. Short list for consultation by March 2003.

4.1.4. Short Studies

10. Response to DEFRA consultation on agriculture in June 2002
11. Short report on the environmental consequences of air transport and the policy implications, to complement a response to the forthcoming second DTLR consultation.

4.1.5. Advice in other forms

12. Increased impact of previous reports through media strategies and strong responses to consultations and other opportunities to advise.

4.1.6. Maintaining the Commission's effectiveness

13. Publish reviews of:
 - Soil Report
 - Transport Report
 - Standards Report.
14. Maintain strong Commission messages in government statements on:
 - Energy
 - Planning.

4.1.7. External links

15. Improve machinery for serving the devolved administrations.
16. Review internal IT systems and links to Departments, and implement new technologies and procedures as appropriate.

4.2. Resources

4.2.1. Staff

An organogramme showing the structure and staffing level of the secretariat needed to deliver these outputs is at [Annex C](#). This assumes confirmation of the proposed budget shown in [Annex D](#). We start the year with one vacancy – a policy analyst/senior scientist post.

The Secretariat will formalise its Training and Development Strategy by October 2002, allowing the results to be fed into the mid-term reviews of Personal Development Plans.

4.2.2. Accommodation and office facilities

The new accommodation in the Sanctuary is now fully operational and no further changes are planned for the near future.

4.3. Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Seriousness	Management
Budget cut	Medium	High	Re-prioritisation of targets; hold fewer Commission meetings; take longer over reports; no short studies
Protracted staff vacancies	High	Medium	Use agency staff/consultants to cover; delay studies.
Members unable to contribute fully	Low/medium	High	Re-prioritise studies; adjust working methods to accommodate Members; delay affected study
Delays to Chemicals Study (e.g. by controversy)	Low	High	Delay subsequent studies to compensate; divert staff effort from subsequent studies
Delays to Marine Fisheries Study	Low	High	Delay subsequent studies to compensate; divert staff effort from subsequent studies
Loss of building or IT systems	Very low	Very high	A business continuity plan will be prepared

4.4. Efficiency gains

The scope for further reductions in budget is limited, given the expanding work programme described above, and efficiency gains must come instead from increased effectiveness. We plan to secure this by:

- Modernising the Secretariat computer system
- Further improvements to public access through our website
- The preparation of dissemination and media strategies for our main reports
- Carrying out a review of the Guidelines for Conduct of Commission Studies in the light of experience with the Environmental Planning Report
- Implementing a plan to move to electronic record keeping.

5. Objectives for 2003/04 to 2005/06

5.1. Objectives for 2003/04

In addition to recurring Commission objectives, the main targets for 2003/04 will be:

1. Publish the Twenty-fourth Report (Chemicals)
2. Analyse evidence to the Twenty-fifth Report and progress drafting (Marine Fisheries)
3. Select subject for the Twenty-sixth Report and announce Study
4. Review developments since publication of the Twenty-second Report (Energy)
5. Carry out short studies as opportunities arise.

5.2. Objectives for 2004/05

1. Publish the Twenty-fifth Report (Marine Fisheries)
2. Invite written evidence on the Twenty-sixth Report and begin presentations, visits and oral evidence
3. Select subject for Twenty-seventh Report and announce Study
4. Participate in the quinquennial FMPR of the Commission.
5. Carry out short studies as opportunities arise.

5.3. Objectives for 2005/06

1. Publish the Twenty-sixth Report
2. Invite written evidence on the Twenty-seventh Report and begin presentations, visits and oral evidence
3. Select subject for Twenty-eighth Report and announce Study
4. Review developments since publication of the Twenty-third Report (Environmental Planning)
5. Implement the findings of the quinquennial review
6. Carry out short studies as opportunities arise.

5.4. Longer-term Objectives

The priority objective is the timely publication of authoritative new Commission reports. Subject to review, the pattern of a 15-month publication schedule for major reports will continue, and will be supplemented by responses to consultations, short reports or limited studies as opportunities arise. Regular reviews of Commission working methods will be undertaken to incorporate lessons from the process of compiling previous reports and disseminating their messages.

5.5. Baseline resources and implications

Baseline resources for 2003/04 to 2005/06 are attached at [Annex D](#). No bid for extra resources is envisaged at this time despite the anticipated increase in output (paragraph 3.1). For the reasons set out in paragraph 5.6, no scope for further cost savings has been identified.

5.6. Implications of 5% cut each year in baseline resources

Year on year reductions of this size would have a dramatic effect on the output of the Commission, largely because the high percentage of fixed costs (accommodation, Members

fees and associated T&S, rent and rates) leave only staff costs and consultancies available to absorb the shortfall.

The result would be that it would no longer be possible for the Secretariat to undertake preparatory work for a study while progressing the previous study at an acceptable pace and to the desired quality. Studies would therefore have to be undertaken sequentially rather than overlapping as at present, reducing the Commission's output of major studies to around half its current rate. Our ambition to increase the output of short reports would be forfeit.

Annex A – Working Methods

1. Background

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution is an independent standing body established by Royal Warrant in 1970 to provide advice on environmental issues. Her Majesty The Queen appoints the Chairman and Members of the Commission on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The Commission's functions relate to all parts of the United Kingdom. It therefore advises both on matters that are the responsibility of the UK government and on matters which are the responsibility of the devolved administrations. The Commission and its full-time Secretariat are funded through the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on behalf of the UK government.

2. Mode of operation

The Members of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution are drawn from a variety of backgrounds in academia, industry and public life. Contributing a wide range of expertise and experience in science, medicine, engineering, law, economics and business, Members serve part-time and as individuals, not as representatives of organisations or professions. The term of appointment is three years, but Members may be reappointed. They are required to declare in a Register of Members' Interests any interests that may conflict with their role as Commission Members.

A full-time Secretariat supports the Chairman and Members by arranging, preparing papers for, and recording meetings; by handling the Commission's finances, administration and correspondence; and by drafting and producing the Commission's Reports.

The Commission normally meets for 1½-2 days a month. Additionally, smaller groups of Members may meet to take forward particular aspects of studies. Minutes of Commission meetings are published on the Commission's website.

The way the Commission sets about tasks is described in Guidelines for the Conduct of Commission Studies (available on the Commission's website www.rcep.org.uk/about.html). These are kept under review and implementation is revised from time to time in the light of experience.

3. Timing of studies

The Commission's broad target is to publish a major report roughly every 15 months. The review of working methods, which reported in January 1998, concluded that the target timetable for a study should be 25 months from announcement to publication, on the assumption that substantial time (up to 12 months) had been spent prior to the announcement on scoping and initial preparation. The Commission's working methods involve working on more than one study in parallel.

The timetable for future studies is been drawn up on the basis that the Commission will publish reports at 15-month intervals. On the basis of the target timetables for each stage, this requires that, before the most advanced current study has been completed, written evidence will have been invited on the next study; and the next but one study will have been selected following consultations.

4. Indicators of performance

The Commission's ability to take a long view means that it may be some time before its recommendations are acted upon. Suitable performance indicators are therefore best aimed at long-term outcomes. The Commission will produce an evaluation of each of its main studies, starting three years after publication of the report, taking into account the objectives and any indicators of performance, expressed in terms of outcomes rather than processes, identified at the outset of each study. The conclusions of these evaluations will then be published in its annual review of activities. To facilitate this process the Commission will, as part of the scoping phase of studies, seek to define the impacts the eventual report is intended to have.

At the process level, the Commission will make every effort to adhere to the planned timetables for studies. However revisions to the timetable often achieve a more effective outcome, because they enable the Commission either to produce a more convincing and cogent report, or to relate the report more closely to developments in government policies or the availability of other crucial information. So, while indicative timetables will be published to assist work planning they will not form part of the Commission's formal performance indicators.

5. Rationale for subjects being considered

The primary aim of the Commission is to contribute to policy development in the longer term by providing an authoritative factual basis for policy-making and debate, and setting new policy agendas and priorities. In reaching its conclusions, the Commission seeks to take account of the wider implications for society of any measures proposed. This involves consideration of the economic, social and ethical aspects of issues as well as the scientific and technological aspects.

Other activities ancillary to this primary aim are disseminating the messages of published reports and evaluating previous reports. From time to time the Commission produces other statements, often as contributions to government consultation exercises, and usually on topics on which it has expressed views in previous reports. The Commission will continue to keep under review the balance of effort between these ancillary activities and its current major studies, taking into account data now being collected about the proportions of Secretariat effort devoted to various activities.

In choosing subjects for study, the Commission is guided by the following criteria (although any one study will not necessarily satisfy all of them):

- The topics chosen should be what the Commission's First Report called 'priorities for enquiry': issues which require detailed and rigorous analysis before satisfactory policies can be adopted;
- They should raise wide issues, both intellectually (in the sense of spanning several disciplines) and organisationally (in the sense of not falling within the terms of reference of any other single body);
- They are likely to involve general issues of principle;
- They should not normally duplicate other studies already in progress or planned in the near future;
- There should be a reasonable prospect that worthwhile conclusions can be produced within two years with the resources likely to be available to the Commission;

- They should take into account trends in environmental policy at European and global levels which seem to have significant implications for the UK.

Studies are therefore generally complex and challenging, covering broad cross-disciplinary issues.

The Royal Warrant provides for Ministers to refer matters to the Commission. In practice, the government has rarely used these powers to request the Commission to study a particular issue and the Commission itself has chosen virtually all the subjects for study.

Following an Order in Council, Scottish Ministers have the same rights of referral as their UK counterparts. Although there is no statutory requirement, it is agreed that the Commission will treat references from Ministers in Northern Ireland, or Secretaries to the Welsh Assembly in the same way as those from Scottish Ministers. The Commission is not required to inquire into matters referred by the Devolved Administrations, but it is sensitive to their needs, and is committed to doing its utmost to satisfy their requests.

The Commission also maintains a close liaison with other advisory bodies and Select Committees in order to ensure a sensible relationship between the respective work programmes, taking into account the distinctive role of each body.

6. Secretariat Objectives

1. Provide high quality support to the Chairman and Members of the Commission, including:
 - a. preparing and circulating papers that provide a satisfactory basis for Commission meetings
 - b. circulating promptly minutes of Commission meetings which accurately and concisely record all substantive points
 - c. making efficient arrangements for submission of written and oral evidence, presentations and visits, and the employment of consultants and special advisers
 - d. drafting reports and handling their publication
 - e. briefing the Chairman and Members for speaking engagements and interviews and identifying current policy issues on which statements by the Commission would reinforce the impact of its reports.
2. Ensure that all Commission reports and statements are progressed effectively, continue to meet the highest standards of accuracy and authoritativeness, and remain at the cutting edge, including:
 - a. ensuring Members have information about the relevant policy context for Commission studies at national, European and international levels
 - b. ensuring the Commission is aware of new trends and developments of other kinds
 - c. identifying, and briefing Members on, relevant conclusions and recommendations in previous Commission reports and statements
 - d. identifying, obtaining and analysing other information that has a material bearing on Commission studies, and ensuring all relevant interests have been taken into account
 - e. carrying out consultation, research and checking to finalise and verify the content of Commission reports

- f. advising, and undertaking consultations, on the selection and scoping of subjects for Commission reports.
3. Maintain the Commission's reputation and viability as an independent body by:
- a. developing and operating the systems required for its efficient functioning
 - b. ensuring that appropriate objectives and targets are identified, relating them to the resources required, and reviewing and evaluating outputs in order to improve the Commission's performance
 - c. maintaining high standards of financial management
 - d. effective dissemination of information about the Commission and its work through its website and in other ways
 - e. maintaining effective liaison with the Commission's major customers and with advisory bodies in other European countries.

ANNEX B**Annex B - Outturns for 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03**

Figures in £000s [as at 1 June 2002]

	F/Y 2000/01 outturn	F/Y 2001/02 provisional	F/Y 2002/03 forecast
Members' fees	44	54	58
Staff costs	429	425	442
T&S	54	48	55
Consultancies	39	137	146
Rent	90	79	112
Rates*	22	24	30
Other office costs	106	262	96
Capital	0	0	75
TOTAL	784	1029	1014

Notes:

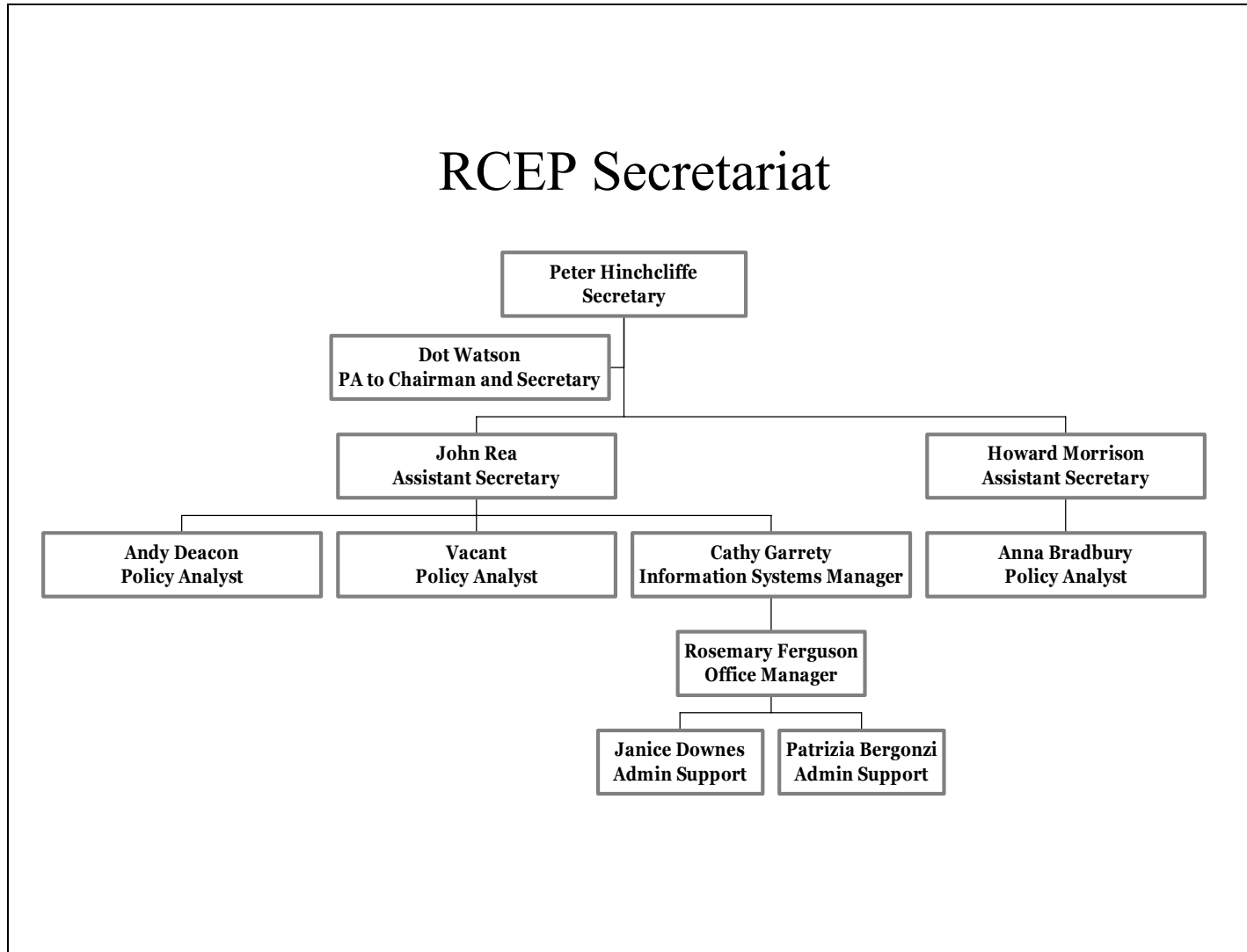
* 2000/01 includes a £9k rates rebate

Annex C - Timetable and Resources

1. Timetable of reports

Financial year	2002/03				2003/04				2004/05				2005/06				
	Quarter beginning	Apr-02	Jul-02	Oct-02	Jan-03	Apr-03	Jul-03	Oct-03	Jan-04	Apr-04	Jul-04	Oct-04	Jan-05	Apr-05	Jul-05	Oct-05	Jan-05
(i) Main Reports																	
Twenty-fourth Report (Chemicals)				4	5												
Twenty-fifth Report (Marine Fisheries)		2		3					4	5							
Twenty-sixth Report					1	2			3					4	5		
Twenty-seventh Report									1	2			3				
Twenty-eighth Report													1	2			
(ii) Short Studies																	
Agriculture																	
Air Transport																	
(iii) Reviews of past Reports																	
Nineteenth Report (Soil)																	
Twentieth Report (Transport)																	
Twenty-first Report (Standards)																	
Twenty-second Report (Energy)																	
Twenty-third (Environmental Planning)																	
(iv) Other activities																	
Review of Working Methods																	
FMPR																	
Implementation of FMPR																	
Key		Process	Endpoint														
Selection of topic			1														
Announcement of Study			2														
Invitation to submit evidence			3														
Signing off report			4														
Publication			5														

2. Organogramme



ANNEX D**Annex D - Baseline Resources for 2003/04 to 2005/06 and Bid**

Figures in £000s [as at 1 June 2002]

	F/Y 2003/04	F/Y 2004/05	F/Y 2005/06
Members' fees	55	56	57
Staff costs	456	469	484
T&S	49	50	51
Consultancies	127	108	88
Rent	112	113	113
Rates	25	26	27
Other office costs	117	119	121
Capital	0	0	0
Baseline	941	941	941
Bids	-	-	-
TOTAL incl. bid	941	941	941