rpa
rural payments agency

Rural Payments Agency Five Year Plan 2012–2017

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Foreword by the Chief Executive

When I joined the Rural Payments Agency in January 2011, I knew that I faced a considerable number of challenges to turn around an organisation that had experienced significant problems over several years and was continuing to deliver poor service to its customers. RPA had not yet pulled itself out of a negative and damaging cycle of processing backlogs, EU disallowance, accounts qualification, regular loss of senior people and vociferous public criticism, despite significant investments and departmental encouragement.

Within a month I realised that the problems were far broader and deeper rooted than I had anticipated. I recognised I had to urgently set up a new executive management structure with genuine staying power and commitment to the organisation and to our customers. The lack of permanent and experienced people at the most senior level in the agency was one of the key and lasting problems and had been identified in the 2013 Defra Review of RPA. I am now able to report that all eight of the new Executive Team roles have been filled, and importantly all of those appointed are permanent civil servants, not contractors, consultants or interims. Their and my futures and our reputations are absolutely linked to the turning around of RPA.

We are building on the recommendations from the many reviews of the agency, including recommendations from the Public Accounts Committee. Our initial challenge is to stabilise the agency, to ensure that it has appropriate control of its risks and processes, addresses the legacy of the issues it still faces and can deal efficiently with change, and continue to deliver improvements to its customers across its full range of functions. The point about change is particularly important, as we face an enormous amount of change in the near future. We start from our present position, an uncertain operating base; and until recently, a lack of understanding of the resources we needed to deliver services. We will have to implement a new set of Common Agricultural Policy schemes. Our IT systems go out of support in 2014, and we will have to ensure that systems are in place to deliver for our customers from this point.

We are working on a Future Options Programme which challenges us to consider whether a radically different operating model could be the right way forward for the Single Payment Scheme of the future. All the options available have to be considered very carefully. However, if a new operating model is not synchronised with the implementation dates for the new CAP 2013 schemes, we run the risk of replicating some of the previous problems which stemmed from CAP 2005. I also note that the substantial issue of poor data accuracy is at the heart of our problems, especially processing payments for our customers and as such, is a key challenge for us to tackle. Beyond the immediate challenge of stabilisation is the vision to become an effective, successful and trusted organisation. Our future vision, shared by our people, is to be 'the delivery organisation of choice'.

The problems and uncertainties we face are significant. This plan will not be a quick fix or a silver bullet. To achieve our future vision will undoubtedly be difficult and will require a great deal of work, resilience and commitment. Although this continues to be a very demanding and uncertain time for the agency, I have however, been struck by both the determination and commitment of our people to deliver for our customers. This plan, which will be supported in more detail by our annual business plans, clearly shows what we are setting out to achieve and by when. As we continue to be periodically reviewed, we will be measured against our published plans and the outcomes they propose, not against worthy but unachievable expectations.

I am confident that with the support of the department and ministers, we can build the capability, transform the agency and achieve that compelling strategic vision.

Mark Grimshaw
Chief Executive

Executive summary

A. This Five Year Plan is the result of the work done to analyse the Rural Payments Agency's (RPA) problems and to plan how we deliver a better service to our customers, pay them the right amount of money on time, make the agency more effective and efficient, and better support the rural economy.

Our challenge

B. We are currently facing several challenges on different fronts. By far our biggest challenge will be in preparing for and delivering the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) period schemes effectively and efficiently for our customers.

C. As part of his initial strategic review of the agency, the Chief Executive found six high level issues that the agency has to address to improve service to customers:

- Inaccurate source data for past claims, present claims and future claims.
- A lack of standard processes and controls.
- Ailing systems and unsuitable technology.
- An organisational structure and corporate services that are not fit for purpose.
- Insufficient systems and tools to support customer delivery and ongoing service.
- A lack of people development and culture development.

D. These high level issues have contributed to our inability to pay our customers correctly first time in every case and have led to an unacceptably high cost of administration. We have needed to put together a clear plan to finally address these issues.

Our purpose and our customers

E. RPA's main tasks are to make CAP support payments, record livestock movements, carry out inspections and assure management and administration of CAP schemes at Natural England and the Forestry Commission. We manage more than 40 schemes, paying farmers and traders more than £2 billion each year. Our customers are farmers, food producers, landowners, their agents and representatives. We know that in the past our customer service has often been poor. Customers of the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) have been paid late or inaccurately, or both. As a result of this plan, our customers will receive a vastly better service.

The history

F. Our problems have been well explained in several reviews. We are still dealing with the 'legacy issues' of the poor implementation of the CAP in 2005. A highly complex SPS, inadequate IT systems and flawed data sets leave us with continuing problems. Payments to customers are too frequently slow and some are incorrect, customers often receive poor service because of our system and data problems, and we continue to grapple with backlogs of corrective action.

Our Five Year Plan objectives

G. There are three core objectives for us over the next five years:

- To stabilise RPA. This will enable us to deliver all our schemes in the remaining CAP period; in line with value for money principles; to achieve acceptable payment accuracy; and to draw a line under legacy issues in order to remove the accounts qualifications.

- To develop the specifications and procure the replacement systems that meet the CAP 2013 obligations and avoid the errors stemming from the introduction of the CAP 2005.
- To implement these new systems at best value for money for the taxpayer, without customer service issues or unexpected costs.

H. Our aim is that these objectives are achieved and clearly articulated through annual business plans, supported by the optimal level of scrutiny from the department and others such as the National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee.

What is happening already?

I. We are already working on improvements. Since the arrival of our new Chief Executive in January 2011, we have strengthened our corporate governance. All eight of the new Executive Team are now in place and are all permanent Civil Service appointments. We have agreed our overarching strategy with ministers and the department and this plan will put it into practice. Many of our Five Year Plan projects are already underway. The SPS 2011 scheme is the most successful so far. We are making progress in implementing many of the recommendations from the various reviews of the agency. But there is still more to do.

Phase 1: 2012–2015: Strategic Improvement Plan

J. The Strategic Improvement Plan contains 45 projects, of varying size and complexity but all focused on delivering the necessary priorities and improvements. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has agreed to invest an additional £21.8m in financial year 2012/13, with up to an additional £19.1m in the following two financial years to deliver them, subject to agreement. The Strategic Improvement Plan will deliver:

- Cleansed data.
- Improved processes and controls.
- Maintained or improved technology.
- Fit for purpose structure and corporate services.
- Better customer service tools.
- Improved people capacity and capability.

K. Many of our projects deal with improving our underlying processes and data to make our foundation more solid, and the results may not be very visible to the average customer or stakeholder during the life of the Strategic Improvement Plan itself. However, these projects will be crucially important in ensuring that the agency is on a good footing to deal with the amount of change it faces over the next five years.

Phase 2: 2014–2017: Future Options Programme

L. The Future Options Programme is looking at alternative models for delivering some or all of RPA's business following the CAP scheme changes after 2013. Several different options have already been identified, comprising either IT or business process outsourcing, or both. We are currently determining which of the emerging options will be the best way to deliver CAP schemes to our customers, with a view to procuring the chosen solution within the next two years.

M. The objective of the Future Options Programme is to provide a much better service to our customers and much better value for money for the taxpayer.

What will RPA look like in five years' time?

N. Together, the Strategic Improvement Plan and Future Options Programme will ensure that RPA is in a much improved and fit state to deliver for its customers at best value for taxpayers' money. In five years' time we will:

- Have delivered a new system to implement the new CAP schemes effectively.
- Be delivering a far better service to our customers, including more timely and accurate payments.
- Be running the new systems smoothly, reducing the level of errors significantly.
- Have reduced manual payments, debts and backlogs to near-zero levels.
- Have contained disallowance to the current 2% of SPS claim value and built good foundations for its further reduction.
- Have ensured the accounts qualification is removed.
- Have addressed the recommendations made in recent reviews as far as possible, and improved our reputation.
- Be delivering services at lower cost and with less overall resource, offering best value for money for taxpayers.

Our challenge

1. This Five Year Plan is the result of the work done to analyse the RPA's problems and plan how to deliver a better service to our customers, pay them the right amount of money on time, make the agency more effective and efficient and better support the rural economy. The plan aims to overcome the legacy issues of inaccuracy, poor timeliness and failing to deliver value for money. It builds on the work of the recent reviews of the agency by the National Audit Office (NAO), the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (EFRA), and the Defra-commissioned 2013 Review, by implementing their recommendations as far as possible.

2. We are currently facing several challenges on different fronts. By far our biggest challenge will be in preparing for and delivering the new CAP schemes effectively and efficiently for our customers. There are inherent uncertainties about the new CAP schemes, particularly their detailed substance and implementation date; and our existing IT systems are due to go out of technical support in early 2014. We need to ensure that this time round we have successfully developed and implemented the right systems and processes to deliver payments smoothly to our customers before we 'go live'. The 2013 review of RPA identified a number of mistakes made during the last CAP implementation period which have principally led to the problems RPA is still trying to remedy. It is critical that in implementing the new CAP schemes, we do not make the same mistakes again.

3. As part of his initial strategic review of the agency, the Chief Executive found six high level issues that the agency has to address to improve service to customers:
   - Inaccurate source data for past claims, present claims and future claims.
   - A lack of standard processes and controls.
   - Ailing systems and unsuitable technology.
   - An organisational structure and associated corporate services that are not fit for purpose.
   - Insufficient systems and tools to support customer delivery and ongoing service.
   - A lack of people development and culture development.

4. These high level issues have contributed to our inability to pay our customers correctly first time in every case and have led to an unacceptably high cost of administration. Together, they cover a number of significant problems. For example, the complexity of our processing system (RITA) forces multiple work-arounds that are one of the main reasons for ongoing inaccuracy. Our management information is inconsistent and often measures the wrong things. Paying our customers incorrectly leads to the need to re-calculate claims, topping up payments to them where necessary or asking them to re-pay money to us if they have been overpaid. In many cases, we are aware there may be errors on customer accounts but we have not been able to make an accurate assessment of their value. These errors include both over and underpayments made to customers since SPS began in 2005. This situation has contributed to the National Audit Office qualifying our accounts for each of the last three years.

5. These problems, and other weaknesses with the management and administration of the scheme, have led to significant disallowance penalties. Disallowance means that the European Commission financially penalises the UK for administrative and accuracy errors.

6. Recently, problems have also arisen from our poor administration of the Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation Scheme (FV PO), resulting in RPA making compensation payments and raising the potential for future disallowance costs. This is indicative of the insufficient grasp that the agency has over its scheme controls and underlying processes, meaning that it cannot meet its challenges and fails to deliver an adequate service for its customers and stakeholders. The RPA Executive Team feels that it is possible that other problems will emerge that we are not currently sighted on or do not presently understand. The work we plan to do will help uncover them.

7. We have needed to put together a clear plan to address all of the above issues and to secure the necessary investment to make the required changes and give acceptable levels of performance return in the medium and long term. It was clear that there had not been a shortage of investment previously, but that this had been spent on short term, unconnected fixes, not on a long term plan with clear and achievable milestones. We have developed the right plan, a plan which the department supports, and which will, when robustly implemented, deliver against the investment offered.

8. There are risks that we face which could affect delivery of this plan. One of the main risks is the tough financial conditions which seem likely to prevail in the UK economy over the life of this plan. Another is that although the European Commission has pledged to simplify the new CAP schemes, there are aspects of the currently proposed schemes which are likely to entail a great deal of complexity for RPA, regardless of how our new systems and business models are constructed. There are also risks around our procurement of these new systems.

9. We must ensure that we have understood these risks, know how far we are willing to tolerate them (our risk appetite) and that we mitigate them as far as is sensible. However, if any of them look to materialise, we will need to re-visit the plan's objectives and its projected outcomes and restate them based on our assessment of the new context. For example, if the agency's budgets need to be reduced against its planned commitments, including this plan; or if any external change affects the agency's business to a significant degree.

10. We are actively encouraging broad oversight of our performance to ensure transparency. This will ensure that if changes need to be made because of external factors, all parties have a clear understanding of the risks and benefits of those changes and we have a sensible governance process to make the right decisions.

11. Delivering this plan will be a real challenge but one that we are determined to see through. Most of the issues we have identified so far are complex and deeply embedded. There will be no quick fix, no silver bullet, and it will take time for improvements to take effect and be visible to our customers.

Our purpose

12. RPA's main tasks are to make CAP support payments, record livestock movements, carry out inspections and assure management and administration of CAP schemes at Natural England and the Forestry Commission. We manage more than 40 schemes, paying farmers and traders more than £2 billion each year. To administer such a wide range of schemes and meet European Union (EU) requirements we manage information on more than two million land parcels and thirteen million cattle movements, and hold the personal data, including SPS entitlements data, of some 120,000 customers. Our customers rely on us to deliver the money to which they are entitled. Our work supports the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Structural Reform Plan, particularly in the key area of supporting British farming and encouraging sustainable food production. Our data and processes support delivery of the 'Pillar 2' CAP schemes (agri-environment schemes and other non-direct payments) by other parts of the Defra network.

13. We are required by the EU to ensure that our customers have claimed accurately and comply with the rules of the schemes they participate in. We must then validate their payments in order to pay them promptly. The application qualification requirements are partly EU-wide and partly determined by Defra policy. Ministerial objectives to ensure improvement of the environment have increasingly led to RPA becoming an environmental regulator, because cross compliance (requirements for farmers and land managers to meet certain environmental criteria which are monitored by RPA) underpins both direct payments and agri-environment schemes. Failure to meet the scheme rules can lead to substantial deductions from or loss of a full payment in any one year. We want to work more collaboratively across the Defra network to assess how future regulations can balance objectives to achieve a particular outcome with their ease of implementation and measurability. This will help us to understand how disallowance can be avoided as far as possible or, when unavoidable, be appropriately planned for and managed.

Our customers

14. Our customers are farmers, food producers, landowners, their agents and representatives. They rely on the payments we make to support their businesses. In many cases, the payments can be the substantial part of their income. They may be their only profit, and occasionally constitute their livelihood. The timing of the payments can sometimes be the difference between financial viability and financial ruin. It is extremely important that we provide them with the best service that we can.

15. We know that in the past our customer service has often been poor. Customers of the Single Payment Scheme have been paid late or inaccurately, or both. Our interaction with our customers could often be vastly improved, and complaints and appeals have sometimes been poorly handled. As a result of this plan, our customers will receive a vastly better service. This will be through not only speedier and more accurate direct payments, but also a greatly improved response service if they have queries or concerns.

The history

16. RPA has encountered serious problems in delivering many of its schemes over the past few years. Our problems have been well explained in several reviews, including by the National Audit Office in 2006 with progress reviews in 2007 and 2009; the Public Accounts Committee in 2007 with progress reviews in 2008 and 2009; the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee in 2007; and two Defra-commissioned reviews (David Hunter in 2007, David Lane in 2010).

17. These reviews have focused particularly on the implementation of SPS, which was introduced in 2005. In October 2009, the NAO calculated that the problems in delivering SPS between 2005 and 2009 led to over £680m in unforeseen additional costs. We have also incurred disallowance (EU fines) for other schemes, including the Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation Scheme and on the cross compliance regime which underpins the SPS and rural development schemes of CAP.

18. We are still dealing with the legacy issues of the poor implementation of the CAP in 2005. A highly complex scheme, inadequate IT systems and flawed data sets leave us with continuing problems. Payments to customers are frequently too slow and some are incorrect, customers often receive poor service because of our system and data problems, and we continue to grapple with backlogs of corrective action. Corrective action in one year can open further queries about other scheme years, creating a cycle of correction and re-correction which we find extremely hard to draw a line under because of both system and regulatory requirements. This is partly because of the 'dynamic hybrid' system introduced in the three English regions in 2005, in which more customers were eligible to claim direct payment subsidy than previously, and more land became eligible, all of which needed to be validated before payments could start.

19. Under this system, entitlements are allocated to customers. Entitlements were calculated partly on the historic value of payments and partly on a flat rate based on the number of eligible hectares declared in 2005. Each subsequent year of the CAP period, entitlements need to be re-calculated, with the weighting moving from historic values to flat rate payments. This system was chosen for perfectly sensible reasons; breaking the historic link with subsidy for production, but giving customers a seven year adjustment period over the life of the current CAP. However, it means that in each year of the scheme payments are calculated differently. If errors are subsequently found in the validation of a claim, it is very difficult to correct it for the several SPS scheme years that have now taken place, largely because our IT system has insufficient capacity to retain and review past workings.

20. We recognise that these problems cannot continue. Implementing the plan will minimise the issues by correcting data problems, or taking risk-based decisions to tolerate or close down minor errors using established value for money principles. Errors and poor service have a big impact on our customers, who are relying on us to deliver the payments that they are entitled to in order to support their farms and their families. We need to stabilise our current systems, processes and data to ensure that our customers are getting the right level of service. We also need to appropriately empower our people to engage more effectively with the customers that they serve.

The new CAP proposals

21. The legal proposals for the next set of CAP schemes have been presented by the European Commission and are now under discussion in the European Council and Parliament. The new schemes are currently proposed to run from 1 January 2014.

22. The objective of the current proposals is that all other EU states will now have to go down the same path as England in breaking the link between historic entitlements and future direct payments (the dynamic hybrid system). As yet we do not know whether RPA is ahead of the curve in the way that future CAP schemes will operate, but there is a good chance that the right investment in cleansing and capturing core data now, will pay dividends in enabling it to be imported into the new scheme.

23. It is our intention to ensure that RPA can successfully plan, build and deliver the new schemes. But again we are likely to find ourselves needing to specify and procure new systems before the final CAP requirements are fully known, and the potential complexity of the proposals is a concern to us. It is crucial that the lessons of past failures are learnt. However, a significant number of factors are posing potential challenges for RPA. These factors could lead to increased criticism for higher running costs in the short to medium term, not least as we will be effectively managing two delivery systems in parallel. There continues to be a need for a degree of ongoing investment in the existing scheme to avoid higher than planned disallowance costs, and we must scope and deliver the right system for the future schemes.

Our Five Year Plan objectives

24. There are three core objectives for us over the next five years. These are:

    - To stabilise RPA. This will enable us to deliver all our schemes in the remaining CAP period; in line with value for money principles; to achieve acceptable payment accuracy; and to draw a line under legacy issues in order to remove the accounts qualifications.
    - To develop the specifications and procure the replacement systems that meet the CAP 2013 obligations and avoid the errors stemming from the introduction of the CAP 2005.
    - To implement these new systems at best value for money for the taxpayer, without customer service issues or unexpected costs.

25. Our aim is that these objectives are achieved and clearly articulated through annual business plans, supported by the optimal level of scrutiny from the department and others such as the National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee.

26. Our intention is also to be trusted to deliver 'no surprises' as a result of this plan. However an unfortunate by-product of our inherited issues is that we are still uncovering some surprises with the way schemes have been run. Typically, problems are discovered (and penalised in terms of disallowance) some years after their initial cause, largely due to our audit cycle. We will be open about any new issues as we encounter them, and use the skills of our people to determine the most sustainable way of dealing with them.

What is happening already?

27. We are already working on improvements. Since the arrival of our new Chief Executive in January 2011, we have strengthened our corporate governance and appointed a new Non-Executive Chair of the Agency Management Board (AMB) and new Non-Executive Directors for both AMB and the Audit and Risk Committee. All eight of the new Executive Team are now in place and are all permanent Civil Service appointments. Annex C is a summary of their main responsibilities. We have agreed our overarching strategy with ministers and the department and this plan will put it into practice. We have also recruited several highly skilled people to strengthen our finance function – a key recommendation of the recent Defra 2013 review.

28. Many of our Five Year Plan projects are already underway. For example, as part of the SPS Complex Case Working project, we have identified those cases that have thrown up complexities or problems in the past, meaning they are difficult to process and often paid late. We have assessed, identified and trained our senior processors to deal with the more complex SPS cases from start to finish. The plan to give detailed and consistent attention to these claims should mean that they are paid quicker without compromising accuracy, and that customers are kept up to date with the progress of their claim. We expect that this project will begin to make a difference during the 2011 scheme year; but the 2012 scheme year will provide really visible benefits for our customers with more complex claims.

29. The SPS 2011 scheme year is the most successful so far. By the end of December 2011, we had made payments amounting to £1.427 billion, or 82.5% of the estimated fund value, to 92,066 farmers in England, some 87.8% of eligible claimants. This represents the highest ever proportion of payments made by the agency in the opening month of the payment window and is an early indication that our improvements are already starting to bear fruit.

30. One of the issues that has been most difficult for the agency to resolve has been inaccurate payments. We ran a Debt and Data project that identified underpayments to over 6,000 customers, to whom we have now paid top-ups of over £15m. We have also recovered almost £60m of overpayments during 2011. However, almost £30m is still owed to us, and we still have to work through a backlog of up to 7,000 cases identified as having possible material errors in the form of over or underpayments.

31. We have also been working on a broad culture change programme for all the people in the agency and have already introduced a set of new working standards. These set out our expected standards to maintain a professional, hard-working and productive atmosphere in our offices. It includes a clear desk policy and regular housekeeping; guidance on clear communications and consideration for colleagues; and a dress code to engender a positive working environment, ensuring that we give the right impression of our organisation, its people and our commitment to our work.

32. One of the key indicators that our performance has been measured against is the cost of processing each SPS claim. In 2010/11 we met the target to achieve a cost per claim reduction of 15% and further improvements are expected in 2011/12. However, the initial investment required to deliver this Five Year Plan means the cost per claim is likely to rise in the short term before we can capitalise on the efficiencies the plan will bring and reduce the cost per claim further.

33. We are making progress in implementing many of the recommendations from the various reviews of the agency, but there is still more to do. Several of the projects in the Five Year Plan are directly linked to recommendations in the recent reviews of the agency. For example, both the 2013 review and the NAO recommended that we improve our underpinning financial management. We are doing this through defining and improving our financial controls and reporting, by cleansing the data in the Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable ledgers, and by making our finance function the right size, with the right specialists and right skills. We are also streamlining existing paperwork processes in line with recommendations from the Farm Regulation Task Force led by Richard Macdonald. For example, in early 2012, we will provide an 'update only' Single Payment Scheme information booklet to farmers, showing key regulatory changes instead of issuing a comprehensive guidance book as we have done in previous years. One of the most far-reaching recommendations was the 2013 review's proposal that Defra and RPA should investigate outsourcing of IT contracts and business processes in preparation for the CAP 2013 changes. The Future Options Programme is presently doing just that, a significant piece of work involving colleagues in the department, Cabinet Office and Treasury.

What will improve over the Five Year Plan?

34. The agency has to successfully deliver SPS 2011, SPS 2012, SPS 2013 and possibly future SPS scheme years depending on how the European negotiations run, as well as the annual cycle of trader and other schemes under the CAP. We must successfully manage the land information we hold in the Rural Land Register (RLR), and we must successfully manage the various livestock identification and movement recording systems.

35. Alongside this, we must ensure we have the right number of inspections looking at the most appropriate issues, and here we are engaging with the department over the use of 'earned recognition' principles to try and make our inspection regimes more risk-based. We must meet the requirements of the European regulations governing our work as far as possible, and we must deliver the best possible service to our customers.

36. Although we have made some immediate improvements, they are not enough to deliver the radical changes that our customers need, and to provide best value for money for taxpayers in the future. This is why we are introducing the Five Year Plan to fundamentally change the way we work to provide a better service for our customers.

37. The Five Year Plan will be delivered in two phases, largely because of the changes to our business that the CAP reform will require.

38. Phase 1, the Strategic Improvement Plan will prepare us for the CAP reform changes. Over the coming three years, the Strategic Improvement Plan will stabilise the agency, ensure it is fully prepared to successfully deal with change, and can stand on its own two feet. Among other things, new professional working standards, common scheme processes, improvements to core data and better management and governance will equip our people with the right tools to steady our systems and processes. We will successfully deliver SPS 2011 and plan for successful delivery of SPS 2012, contain the disallowance risk on these scheme years to the 2% flat rate correction perceived as acceptable, and contain the disallowance risk on the other CAP and trader schemes. Annex B shows the main milestones in our Strategic Improvement Plan projects and what they will deliver.

39. Phase 2 will be the implementation of the Future Options Programme systems. This programme is evaluating different models of delivery for the agency's services, and will be implemented to deliver the new CAP schemes. The Future Options Programme will ensure that the agency is in the optimum position to implement the changes to the schemes smoothly and with an improved service to our customers. The preparations for the Future Options Programme will be ongoing while we are delivering the Strategic Improvement Plan in Phase 1, ensuring the two phases are compatibly intertwined.

40. As a whole, the Five Year Plan will be governed and monitored through well established Programme and Project Management methods. We will invite the department and NAO to scrutinise our internal programme plan, governance processes, management processes and documentation and hold us to account for delivering the plan.

41. We know that we will have to deal with an enormous amount of uncertainty in the coming years. This Five Year Plan sets out our ultimate objective and how we are intending to get there. We will set out further detail of what projects are expecting to deliver when, and what improvements customers can expect to see in our annual business plan. This will ensure the plan is flexible in dealing with external changes, and allow our progress against it to be tracked by any interested parties.

42. The lessons of the past will be learnt. In the long term, we seek to be the delivery organisation of choice for the European schemes, for Defra and for the Government.

Phase 1

2012–2015

Strategic Improvement Plan

43. The high level problems that the agency is currently facing were identified by the Chief Executive as:

    - Inaccurate source data for past claims, present claims and future claims.
    - A lack of standard processes and controls.
    - Ailing systems and unsuitable technology.
    - An organisational structure and associated corporate services that are not fit for purpose.
    - Insufficient systems and tools to support customer delivery and ongoing service.
    - A lack of people development and culture development.

44. The Strategic Improvement Plan contains 45 projects, of varying size and complexity but all focused on delivering the necessary priorities and improvements. Defra has agreed to invest an additional £21.8m in financial year 2012/13, with up to an additional £19.1m in the following two financial years to deliver them, subject to RPA proving it can deliver the first outputs from the plan in line with the agreed programme and it continuing to deliver the best value for public money in times of financial constraint (a fuller breakdown is available at Annex A). The Strategic Improvement Plan will deliver:

    - Cleansed data.
    - Improved processes and controls.
    - Maintained or improved technology.
    - Fit for purpose structure and corporate services.
    - Better customer service tools.
    - Improved people capacity and capability.

    It will also address many of the recommendations made in recent reviews of the agency.

45. These projects will be crucially important in ensuring that the agency is on a good footing to deal with the amount of change it faces over the next five years. Nevertheless, many of them deal with improving our underlying processes and data to make our foundation more solid, and the results may not be very visible to the average customer or stakeholder during the life of the Strategic Improvement Plan itself.

Cleansed data

46. The cleansing of our data is perhaps the most important output of the Strategic Improvement Plan. It is likely to offer the best return on investment, through reducing the risk of disallowance increasing by approximately £60m each year. The poor quality of the data we hold has been one of the main causes of errors and backlogs in our SPS processing. We know that we are highly likely to have to take much of this data forward into the new CAP schemes. Cleansing it now allows us to reduce errors in the forthcoming SPS scheme years, but also puts us on a good footing to deliver the new CAP schemes with minimal problems. It will allow us to reduce re-work and manual intervention on claims, and prepares the ground for further reduction of processing costs in future years.

47. There is a clear need to tackle the three main types of data we hold; customer, land and entitlements data. Sorting out entitlements data will prove the most complicated. We are required to ensure that errors which are found in any scheme year are corrected in previous scheme years. Unlike many organisations, it is currently extremely difficult for us to 'close-down the books' annually on SPS. An early task as part of our Five Year Plan will be to identify how we can 'close down' previous scheme years for the majority of claims, in order to provide certainty to our customers and reduce our continued administrative burdens.

48. We are running six projects that contribute to cleansed data in different parts of the organisation. We will improve the data on the Rural Land Register by dealing with backlogs of reported changes, and we will implement a more effective strategy to keep it up to date going forward using Ordnance Survey data and aerial photography, amongst other data sources. We are also running projects to improve the underlying quality of the data in our Customer Register, our accounts ledgers, and our Entitlements Register. We are also identifying and tackling SPS claims that have been materially under and overpaid. Further into the future, there will be scope to consider how we make better use of our data for the benefit of wider Government and to consider revenue generation in order to provide better overall value for money for taxpayers.

49. All these actions to cleanse our data will ensure that we pay our SPS customers accurately and on time, and they can rely on us to manage the transition to the new CAP schemes smoothly and transparently.

Improved processes and controls

50. Improving our processes and controls is a crucial part of ensuring that errors are reduced, our customers are paid accurately and in a timely fashion; but also that we meet our legal and audit obligations. It is a fundamental part of the preparation for the new CAP schemes, because improving our processes and controls ensures that once data has been cleansed, it will not degrade and we can rely on using it in future schemes. This should remove the need for the significant data collection exercises that proved so difficult at the time of the last reform.

51. As part of improving our processes and controls, we are consistently recording our current reliable processes, information and rules and are improving others where there are deficiencies. We will then be introducing common online guidance for all our processors in all our schemes. This will reduce the risk of errors and inconsistencies in scheme processing, improving our service to customers and helping to contain the disallowance risk. We are improving the process for 'rolling over' SPS each year to ensure we better learn the lessons of previous years. In the short term, we are identifying and implementing several improvements to SPS 2012, learning the lessons of previous years.

52. On the controls side, we are establishing the key control frameworks and defining the key audit requirements for each scheme, and establishing an effective quality assurance team. This will ensure better forward control of disallowance risks and will contribute to improving the quality of our scheme administration.

53. We are improving our mechanisms for engaging with the department. This ensures we understand and are fully engaged in Defra's change programme and policy environment, which will enable us to better plan for the future. We must prepare for potential changes in Defra's delivery landscape in the future and by stabilising the agency and getting the basics right, we expect to play our full part in improving the end customer experience and value for money of what we deliver. The Government has been supportive of the findings of the Macdonald Review. We are currently examining how to implement its recommendations, in line with ministerial requirements and value for money, as far as possible, given the scale of the challenges faced to stabilise the agency. As we move forward, we will be looking at how to use its principles as we review our processes and future systems. We are aligning better with Defra's corporate strategies in the effort to reduce overall corporate overheads.

54. In the short term, we have identified and trained people at a more senior grade specifically to process those SPS cases which have presented us with processing problems in the past. This increases the number of people working directly on processing SPS claims by 43, or almost 10%. It will enable a faster and more accurate service to be delivered to our customers with complex claims. The people carrying out this work have been moved from management and oversight work which requires less resource because of increased focus on the accuracy of our payments, and more automation of the collection of information on processor error rates.

55. Improving our processes and controls in this way will contribute to our SPS customers being paid faster and more accurately. It also means that all of our customers can rely on us to be implementing improvements to their service and successfully preparing for change coming our way.

Fit for purpose structure and corporate services

56. RPA has often been criticised for ineffective management, poor management information (MI) and being an ineffective 'customer' in its interaction with its suppliers.

57. The major improvement in our corporate services through the Strategic Improvement Plan projects will be in the management of information. We are finishing the development of a new MI tool which will enable us to establish a 'single version of the truth'. We will only produce the MI that we really need. This will help us to understand our business and how we can improve it. This MI tool can be taken forward into the new CAP schemes, offering a long term investment in improving the data we hold to drive effective business processes and services to customers. We are also recruiting specialists in MI management and we will develop an analytical team to provide us with a forensic analytical capability that will drive better decision making. The benefits of an enhanced analytical capability are already clear in producing the revised payments strategy for SPS 2011, which so far has provided the best ever service to our customers.

58. We are reorganising the agency in line with the new Executive Team structure. Through concentrating our Operations Directorate on customer-facing activity, we will deliver an improved and more focused customer service. All policy will be dealt with centrally, and therefore more consistently. We will better match our existing people with the roles that use their skills and competencies, producing efficiencies for the agency as a whole.

59. We are reviewing all our existing supplier relationships and contracts to ensure that they are really delivering what we and our customers need. We are introducing and enforcing better Service Level Agreements and Service Management Processes.

Better customer service tools

60. RPA has rightly been criticised for poor customer service in the past. Much of the criticism arises from the problems of slow and inaccurate payments due to our legacy issues. However, when customers have received poor service, we often deal with their complaints and appeals poorly too, compounding the problem. We will be re-designing our process for dealing with complaints and appeals which will lead to speedier resolution and remedy of customers' concerns, and establish a process to capture their issues and report them back to avoid recurrences. We expect that improvements in the Strategic Improvement Plan leading to faster and more accurate payments will also inevitably bolster the service to our customers, but there are still some basics we need to get right in our systems for interacting with customers.

61. We are reviewing all our publications to ensure they are clear, easy to read and logical. Ultimately they should be helpful for those who need information from them. We are also co-ordinating with others who are delivering similar or linked information to ensure our customers are getting the right information in the most appropriate format, and not more than once if possible. We will move to greater use of electronic publications where we can, while maintaining a sufficient print service for those customers with no computer or internet access. We will ensure that when the relevant details of the new CAP schemes are apparent, we communicate with our customers and stakeholders about it clearly and at the earliest opportunity. We are developing a better content management system so our sharing of information within the agency is more efficient, helping us to serve our customers better.

62. We are improving our correspondence management system. We are developing better processes and supporting IT for complaints and appeals and will deal with them more effectively, following the principles set out by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

Improved people capacity and capability

63. We are improving our resource planning, ensuring that we are putting our people in the right place at the right time to improve our service to customers. In particular, we will be optimising the number of people in customer-facing roles to ensure that our customers are receiving a better level of service.

64. We are introducing a more effective performance management system, improving rewards and recognition for high performance against challenging objectives. We will be an organisation recognised for its highly professional, trained and motivated workforce, which can be deployed at speed in the right places to meet the needs of the business.

65. Understandably, our confidence as an organisation has been severely damaged over many years of criticism. We are building our people's confidence and productivity back up through changing our working culture, introducing a new set of working standards, and running programmes to improve our leadership skills and to develop our most talented people. This will improve the capability of our people, generating better service for our customers, improved productivity and potentially financial efficiencies.

Maintained or improved technology

66. It has been well established that much of the agency's technological support platform has not enabled fast and accurate information. In a number of areas, it is not fully supported or is due to run out of support very shortly. The challenge for the agency in the next two to three years is to keep the technology running sufficiently to deliver the schemes as our customers expect, until they are replaced (and in practice, many of the annual schemes have to run beyond their nominal year because of external factors, for example, probate cases). Looking ahead, we know we have to have a new system to deliver the new CAP schemes. But there is a challenging balancing act for the agency and department here. We must invest enough now to ensure delivery in the short to medium term; but any major investment that cannot be taken forward into the new CAP schemes would simply be a waste of taxpayers' money. Therefore, we must strike the right balance and we will be open in how we do it.

67. As part of maintaining our technology, we are introducing upgrades to some of our software and to our servers. If we do not upgrade these specific pieces of software, they would have minimised support and would carry an unpalatable risk of failure. Our servers also need to be updated to minimise the risk of failure. Any software or hardware failure would have a negative impact on our processing and payments to customers. We are also introducing some automation of processes that will reduce the risk of errors being introduced by manual processing, where this provides value for money. For example, we will be introducing more automation in the pre-population of the SPS application.

Phase 2

2014–2017

Future Options Programme

68. Looking to the future, we are faced with a significant challenge in forecasting and preparing for the new CAP period. We must ensure that over the next seven years of the CAP period and beyond, RPA moves towards being best, not worst, in class. The Future Options Programme is looking at alternative models for delivering some or all of RPA's business following the CAP scheme changes after 2013.

69. The Future Options Programme arose from recommendations in the 2013 Review that Defra and RPA examine both IT outsourcing and business process outsourcing to establish whether either or both were viable models for delivering the RPA's business with improved efficiency and greater value for money. The Future Options Programme will need to implement the right IT and processes to deliver the new CAP schemes, and its objective will be to do this seamlessly and without creating problems or unreasonable demands for our customers. Our business processes are currently delivered within RPA, so an outsource would be a significant change, but is worth serious consideration for the potential efficiencies it could deliver. The Future Options Programme is expected to cost money to deliver, as our IT systems will need revising or replacing whatever option is chosen. At present we have a range of estimated projected costs but the total final cost will likely be subject to negotiation with suppliers, and so is not yet known.

70. Several different options have already been identified, comprising a combination of one or both possibilities for outsourcing. The emerging set of options include (but are not limited to):
    - An IT outsource only for either the successor of the SPS or including existing schemes.
    - Outsource both IT or business processes, or both following the CAP 2013 changes.
    - A staged outsource of IT for the new scheme initially, followed by business processes once the IT platform is stabilised.

71. We are currently determining, with specialist help, which of the emerging options will be the best way to deliver CAP schemes to our customers, with a view to procuring the chosen solution within the next two years. This would include consideration of a partnership with smaller businesses, moving away from large contracts with a single supplier.

72. The objective of the Future Options Programme is to provide a much better service to our customers and much better value for money for the taxpayer.

What will RPA look like in five years' time?

73. Together, the Strategic Improvement Plan and Future Options Programme will ensure that RPA is in a much improved and fit state to deliver for its customers at best value for taxpayers' money. In five years' time we will:

    - Have delivered a new system to implement the new CAP schemes effectively.
    - Be delivering a far better service to our customers, including more timely and accurate payments.
    - Be running the new systems smoothly, reducing the level of errors significantly.
    - Have reduced manual payments, debts and backlogs to near-zero levels.
    - Have contained disallowance to the current 2% of SPS claim value and built good foundations for its further reduction.
    - Have ensured the accounts qualification is removed.
    - Have addressed the recommendations made in recent reviews as far as possible, and improved our reputation.
    - Be delivering services at lower cost and with less overall resource, offering best value for money for taxpayers.

74. Our annual business plans will report the detailed resources, milestones and indicators that can be used to track our progress in delivering these successes.

Annex A
Total RPA Financial Resources

This table sets out the total funding allocation provided to the agency from the Spending Review settlement for the next three years, split between business as usual (BAU) and the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP).

Funding allocations table

	FY2012/13 (£m)	FY2013/14 (£m)	FY2014/15 (£m)
Admin and programme costs	149.0	136.1	127.0
Depreciation	20.8	19.7	18.7
BAU sub-total	**169.8**	**155.8**	**145.7**
SIP additional investment	20.0	12.1	5.0
Total costs	**189.8**	**167.9**	**150.7**

As part of the process for considering the funding for the Strategic Improvement Plan, the department also considered the agency's business as usual funding. The baseline allocations above have been agreed although for financial years (FY) 2013/14 and FY2014/15, the department will review business as usual requirements as part of the usual budget allocation process.

An additional £1.8m of capital funding in FY2012/13 has been set aside for the implementation of the Strategic Improvement Plan, although capital allocations for FY2012/13 and future years have yet to be formally allocated. In addition, the department will consider a further £0.7m of capital and £1.3m of programme funding for FY2013/14 and FY2014/15 subject to RPA proving it can deliver the first outputs from the plan in line with the agreed programme, and it continuing to deliver best value for public money in times of financial constraint.

The additional funding for Future Options Programme requirements and potential savings are very unclear at present and, as funding has not yet been finalised, specific figures are not included here. Additional funding has been agreed in principle for the procurement phase of the Future Options Programme but final details have yet to be agreed. Funding for the implementation stage will be fully considered once more detailed proposals have been developed.

Funding for the remaining two financial years (FY2015/16 and FY2016/17) covered by this Five Year Plan has not yet been allocated, as the recent Spending Review has not yet allocated any funding to the department beyond FY2014/15. However, the expectation is that the cost savings resulting from successful implementation of the Strategic Improvement Plan during the first three years should see further reductions in the baseline Admin and Programme budgets allocated to the RPA.

Annex B
Major milestones in the Strategic Improvement Plan

These are provisional dates based on our current planning, and may change as part of the regular programme and
(Key: Q denotes the quarter of the financial year in which the project is currently expected to complete.)

Outputs	Projects	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Cleansed Data	SPS Entitlement Register Enhancement	✓ Q4		
	Cleanse Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable Ledger	✓	✓ Q4	
	Identify, Cleanse, Clear And Update Debt Data	✓	✓ Q4	
	Investigation And Clearance Of Discrepancies Arising From Interfaces Between RITA And Oregon	✓	✓ Q4	
	Improving The Customer Register	✓	✓	✓ Q4
	Improve Accuracy And Currency of RLR	✓	✓	✓ Q4
Improved Processes	SPS Complex Case Working	✓ Q1		
	Establish Single Point Of Claim Value Confirmation	✓ Q4		
	Funding Of Legal Risks Following FV PO Review	✓ Q4		
	Engage With Defra To Determine Future Of Bovine And Sheep Electronic Identification (EID) Requirements	✓ Q4		
	Identify And Improve Key Business Processes	✓	✓ Q4	
	Introduce Common Online Guidance For All Business Processes	✓	✓	✓ Q1
	Establish Effective Quality Assurance Team (phased approach)	✓	✓	✓ Q4
	Engage With Defra On Macdonald Review Recommendations			
Improved Controls	Develop Coherent And Rationalised MI Solution	✓ Q1		
	Establish Key Controls Framework For Each Scheme	✓ Q2		
	Introduce Analytics Capability	✓	✓	✓ Q4
	Enhance And Exploit Data Warehouse	✓	✓	✓ Q4
	Define And Improve Financial Controls And Reporting			
Maintained/ Approved Technology	Out Of Support Systems – Server Decommissioning	(Q4 11/12)		
	Final Settlement Of Previous Years SPS Claims	✓ Q1		
	RITA Infrastructure Out Of Support	✓ Q2		
	'CESG' Enhanced Security Requirements	✓ Q4		
	Upgrade Key Infrastructure Support Services	✓	✓ Q3	
	SPS Rollover/E-channel Enhancements (12/13/14) (annual rollover delivered in Q1 each year, 2014 rollover requires EU and Member State endorsement)	✓ Q1	✓ Q1	✓ Q1
	Implement Improvements To SPS Online	✓	✓ Q3	

project planning process.

Table continues on pages 24 and 25.

What do they deliver?
• Clean, accurate, up to date data • Reduces need for manual interventions leading to fewer errors and swifter payments • Enables right starting position for CAP 2013 • Address legacy issues and criticisms • Fulfils recommendations in various reviews and from the Public Accounts Committee • Reduces the risk of disallowance and lays the foundations for its reduction • Accurate knowledge of the debtor/creditor position • Significant savings in running costs post CAP 2013 implementation
• Reduces errors in value of SPS claims by improving processes of interaction between finance system and RITA • Reduction in local work-arounds, leading to more flexible workforce, promoting efficiency and reducing errors • Ultimately fewer errors resulting from inconsistent guidance, and improved customer satisfaction • Better understanding of processes, reduced number of procedure and maintenance manuals
• Delivers data warehouse and improves our MI function, enabling far improved MI, enabling RPA and Defra to have a better understanding of the agency's business and performance, allowing us to better model the impact of future change, and meeting review recommendations • Consistent application of controls and guidance across the agency • Standardisation of a single operating model to help in implementation of CAP 2013 changes • Far lower rate of degradation of data (once cleansed)
• Upgrades the agency's servers • Upgrades to key systems software supporting RITA and technical infrastructure supporting our servers • Ensures sustainable support levels, reducing risk of system outage and associated poor customer service • Aligns the agency's standard applications with Defra's • Implements necessary security controls for continued Government Secure Intranet (GSI) accreditation • Improves the SPS Online service, encouraging online take-up

Outputs	Projects	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Fit for Purpose Structure and Corporate Services	Payroll Contract Renewal (dependency with shared service may result in additional work)	✓ Q1		
	Running Cost Efficiency Programme	✓ Q4		
	Shared Services And Finance Systems Upgrade	✓	✓ Q3	
	Corporate Services Project; Strategic Interactions With Defra	✓	✓ Q3	
	Establish Existing Supplier Relationships	✓	✓ Q4	
	Utilise Existing Supplier Partners	✓	✓ Q4	
	Deliver Estates Strategy In Line With Defra	✓	✓ Q4	
	Review And Define Chart Of Accounts	✓	✓ Q4	
	Review Existing Supplier Relationship/Partner Processes	✓	✓	✓ Q4
Better Customer Service Tools	Re-engineer Complaints And Appeals Handling	✓ Q3		
	Improve Stakeholder Relationship Management	✓	✓ Q4	
	Analyse And Improve Customer Experience; Customer Insight	✓	✓	✓ Q4
Improved People Capability and Capacity	Workforce Planning And Resourcing Strategy	✓ Q1		
	Realign Resources Into ARC (organisation design)	✓ Q1		
	Define Performance And Measurement Frameworks	✓ Q2		
	Professional And Engaged Workforce	✓ Q3		
	Next Generation Human Resources (HR)	✓ Q4		
	Leadership, Talent Management and Succession Management	✓ Q4		
	Implement The Operational Delivery Plan	✓	✓	✓ Q4

What do they deliver?
• An improved relationship with the department, reducing risks of further problems arising as a result of misunderstanding or miscommunication, and meeting review recommendations • Enables the agency to be a more intelligent customer, commissioning the right services from the right supplier, dealing with change more effectively and offering better value for money for the taxpayer • Develops capacity to better identify and deliver ongoing efficiency and value for money • Optimise the number of people dealing directly with claims and customers, improving our resource modelling
• Complaints handling database to support delivery of improved processes for dealing with complaints and appeals • Meeting the recommendations of the Parliamentary Ombudsman • Standard agency-wide approach to customer service, ensuring better service for our customers • Customer insight • Improved relationships with our stakeholders, enabling open and honest conversations and involving them in the development of our business
• More effective performance management through clearer key performance indicators and improved accountabilities • Development of the agency's people, including improved leadership skills • Bringing the agency's HR policies more into line with Defra and the Civil Service as a whole • Better people engagement, leading to better motivation, fewer sick absence days, increased productivity and better customer service

Annex C
Executive Team structure

Chief Executive

External Relations Director | Customer Director | Design and Change Director | Information and Technology Director

External Relations Director

- Management of relationships with Ministers, Defra and other government departments (including the Ombudsman) – delivering external communications
- Stakeholder management
- Policy liaison – working towards the Common Agricultural Policy and for all other schemes
- Policy advice and guidance
- Development of 2013 Common Agricultural Policy legislation, strategy and policy
- Developing the strategy for the Strategic Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan and Business Plan
- Governance of the executive meetings (excepting Programme Sub-Committee and the Programme Directors Review Meeting) with responsibility for consistency and auditing of decision making
- Management of CEO's Office and all executive support teams
- Central risk management coordination for the agency
- Honours process

Customer Director

- Developing and producing marketing communications to the following audiences through a variety of channels: customer, stakeholder and employee
- Responsible for managing and telling the 'RPA story' to our people as we change and develop
- Improving the customer experience and performance through development of new ideas, innovations and analysis of dissatisfaction
- Managing customer campaigns and branding
- Customer surveys
- Improving the agency's media reputation
- Complaints review and appeals casework
- All literature production
- Communications Forum

Design and Change Director

- Lead the change programmes with responsibility for all programme, projects and change management
- Deliver change through a visible change lifecycle: feasibility, benefits, requirements, build, test, assure, deliver
- Programme Management Office will manage governance controls for all change projects through the Programme Directors Review Meeting and Programme Sub-Committee) corporate owner for all operational process and scheme design
- Live Model Office

Information and Technology Director

- Corporate owner for data integrity, information governance and data protection
- Responsible for the agency's IT strategy
- Responsible for all service management and release management (working in tandem with Design and Change)
- Corporate responsibility for IT capacity management
- Responsible for all security: physical and data
- Test and assurance of all IT
- Telephone services, desktop services

Chief Executive

Human Resources Director | Planning and Performance Director | Operations Director | Finance, Assurance and Commercial Director

Human Resources Director

- Delivery of the Agency People strategy; skills, capability and motivation
- Training design and delivery for people changes
- Reward and recognition
- Recruitment, re-deployment, pay and people performance management
- Talent management
- HR Business Partners
- Responsibility for health and safety and wellbeing policy
- Workforce planning – strategic and current
- Sickness and absence reduction
- HR appeals and litigation
- Annual people survey
- Employee relations

Planning and Performance Director

- Co-ordination and consolidation of all performance activity
- Data analysis, case profiling and customer segmentation
- Performance forecasting
- Development and implementation of case routing plans, inspection management plans and evaluation of case management across all schemes
- Area Managers, for example, site services, sick absence, behaviours and culture, business continuity, local IT
- Implementing change into Operations
- Manages MI for operational performance
- Capacity and resource planning for Operations

Operations Director

- Managing and delivering the processing of Single Payment Scheme claims in readiness for payment recovery, or both
- Maintaining the Single Payment Scheme Entitlement Register
- Managing and delivering Trader schemes claim processing
- Managing and delivering Meat Technical Scheme claims processing
- Managing and delivering Older Cattle Disposal Scheme claims processing
- Overseeing delivery of rural development schemes
- Providing customer helplines and e-mail service through our Customer Service Centre
- Supporting online services for customers
- Managing and delivering the Customer Registration service
- Managing livestock tracking including the British Cattle Movement Service, Cattle Tracing System and other services
- Managing and delivering Geographical Information Services including maintaining the Rural Land Register
- Managing and delivering the Inspection Service including:
- Managing and delivering Cross Compliance regulations

Finance, Assurance and Commercial Director

- Financial planning: budget setting
- Financial management reporting and controls, running and scheme costs
- Compliance to the EU reporting mechanism for our accounts
- Audit, liaison and accreditation for all schemes (managing the National Audit Office)
- Customer Payments Account Team
- Business continuity, estates and sustainability
- Procurement and management of our relationships with suppliers of contracted services
- Governance controls – statement of internal controls, annual report etc
- Quality Assurance Team, peripatetic team checking on process accuracy in all schemes and sites
- Defra Investigation Services

rpa182 - Five Year Plan
Version 1.0
February 2012

Produced by the Rural Payments Agency
rpa.defra.gov.uk