

Greater Manchester Area Business Plan

2009/10

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1. Foreword



John Foley
Acting Area Director

I am pleased to introduce my first Business Plan as Acting Area Director for Greater Manchester, having taken up post in October 2008. This plan sets out the Area's key priorities for 2009/10 which have been informed by the National Change Programme along with Regional and Area priorities for the forthcoming year. As in previous years, the senior managers in Greater Manchester have had an input into the plan and this year we have also had the benefit of input from representative staff and also the trade union. My thanks go to them for their contribution.

In support of the Business Plan, each court will have a local business plan which will provide a link between local and Area activities. These local plans will be updated and reviewed quarterly by the Greater Manchester Executive Team (GMET) and progress reports will be provided to the Greater Manchester Courts Board.

Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) sits within the Access to Justice Business Group of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) alongside the Tribunals Service, the Office of the Public Guardian, the Legal Services Commission and the Judicial Appointments Commission.

HMCS is committed to working with these organisations, and others within the MoJ, to improve services in order to deliver the aims and objectives agreed by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice under the partnership agreement announced in January 2008.

2. LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

Although 2008/9 was a very challenging year, it was not without its successes. I am pleased to say that performance on the whole was maintained and even improved in some areas, set against a reducing headcount and financial constraints.

I am particularly pleased with progress in relation to:

- CJSSS (Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary) – now embedded in all our magistrates' courts ensuring that cases are dealt with more quickly
- Chartermark Standard – a major achievement in attaining this accreditation for the Area which acknowledges the high level of customer service provided
- Administrative Court – the Court will operate in the Manchester Civil Justice Centre with effect from 21 April 2009 (one of four centres outside of London dealing with this high profile work) providing a local service for the people in the north west
- Community Justice – and community engagement - has been embedded into the day to day work of the magistrates' courts bringing courts closer to the communities they serve
- Wigan Integration – Wigan County Court is now co-located within the Wigan & Leigh Magistrates' Court building providing a much improved working environment and better facilities for court users
- Crown Courts - improved waiting time performance ensuring cases are dealt with more quickly
- Protocol for Civil and Family Orders – the introduction of the protocol has ensured that victims and vulnerable children are properly protected within Greater Manchester
- Public Law Outline – successfully implemented and providing improved case management and judicial continuity in the family courts
- HMCS National Awards – staff within Greater Manchester were successful in these annual awards in the Innovation and Skills and Development categories

The year wasn't without its setbacks. In May 2008 during what should have been a normal working day, Leigh County Court was subject to an arson attack which not only destroyed a significant part of the building but also had a major impact on the staff working in the building at the time. My appreciation goes to the staff at Leigh who, faced with the aftermath of the attack, have worked remarkably well in providing a reduced frontline service to the people of Leigh. My thanks are also extended to the staff at Wigan County Court, and to others who temporarily relocated to Wigan to provide much needed support and assistance to their Leigh colleagues.

The 2007 staff opinion survey identified that a number of basic systems were not being used effectively. During 2008 we have worked closely with the Area Staff Focus Group and the Trade Union in understanding how staff feel about working within Greater

Manchester and to identify the relevant issues that led to the poor 2007 survey results. The 2008 staff engagement survey provided some positive improvements which we will build upon during 2009/10. One of our primary objectives this year will be to deliver the Staff Engagement Survey Action Plan (at Annex 1) which details our plans for continuous improvement.

My focus for this year will be leadership – leadership from GMET and the leadership of all our managers. For me, leadership means communication, engagement, consultation, transparency and making difficult decisions. All, I know, often easier said than done, but that is what you can expect from me and what I will expect from all our managers.

To this end all our senior managers have already gone through the national leadership programme and, as strong leadership is crucial for our continuing development as an organisation, during 2009/10 this leadership training will be provided to all our Band C managers. This will bring a positive cultural shift within Greater Manchester which will benefit both the staff and the organisation as a whole.

In January 2009, a Business Planning Event took place, the primary focus of which was leadership. The culmination of the day was attendees providing their thoughts and ideas on what they thought we, as leaders and managers, needed to do to make HMCS in Greater Manchester a better place to work. This has now been turned into the 'Greater Manchester Leadership Pledge' - a document which every manager is expected to sign up to and, more importantly, deliver. Ownership of the Pledge by all leaders is crucial to the delivery of the Staff Engagement Survey Action Plan, as both go hand in hand.

I am proud of the continuing hard work and dedication shown by my staff and acknowledge that 2009/10 will be even more challenging for them in attempting to deliver our business priorities and targets.

John Foley

Acting Area Director

“On behalf of the members of the Greater Manchester Courts Board, I would like to express my appreciation to the staff in Greater Manchester for their hard work and dedication in a difficult year. Performance has been maintained and Board members, and the people of Greater Manchester, are I am sure grateful to them for their continuing excellent work in delivering a first class Courts Service in Greater Manchester.”

**Riaz Ahmad JP
Chairman**

3. Greater Manchester Area

- Greater Manchester is the largest HMCS Area outside London - it combines with Cumbria & Lancashire and Cheshire & Merseyside to form the North West Region
- The Courts in Greater Manchester serve a population of 2.38 million
- There are approximately 1,200 staff - approximately 130 of which are qualified legal advisers in the magistrates' courts
- There are approximately 90 judges and 2,000 magistrates
- The Greater Manchester estate comprises:
 - **3 Crown Courts** at Manchester Crown Square, Manchester Minshull Street and Bolton
 - **10 Magistrates' Courts** at Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan
 - **10 County Courts** at Altrincham (co-located with Trafford Magistrates' Court), Bolton (combined Court Centre with Bolton Crown Court), Bury (co-located with Bury Magistrates' Court), Leigh, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Stockport, Tameside (co-located with Tameside Magistrates' Court) and Wigan
 - 1 administrative centre at Queen Street, Bolton (the Central Confiscation Unit and the Legal Training Unit)
- The Area Director's Office is situated on level 13 of the Manchester Civil Justice Centre
- The Manchester Civil Justice Centre houses Manchester County Court, Manchester District Probate Registry, Manchester City Family Proceedings Court, the Regional Director's Office, Area Director's Office and, from April 2009, the Administrative Court
- Each Court is managed by a Court Manager - in addition, a Deputy Justices' Clerk heads up a team of qualified legal advisers in each magistrates' court
- Overall management of the Greater Manchester Area rests with GMET (the Greater Manchester Executive Team):
 - John Foley – Acting Area Director
 - David Greensmith – Justices' Clerk
 - Sue Lenihan – Head of Operations (Family & Civil Courts)
 - Graham Rutherford – Acting Head of Operations (Criminal Courts)
 - Lesley Wilby – Area Head of Performance
 - Peter Randall – Area Head of Finance
 - Barbara Harper – Area HR Business Partner
 - Chris Large – Area Estates Manager

- The Greater Manchester Courts Board offers advice and guidance to the Area Director on the services provided by the Courts. They are responsible for approving the Area Business Plan and reviewing progress against it, together with other action plans, for example Staff Engagement and Equality and Diversity. The Board meets approximately four times per year, with one meeting being designated as Open to the public. Membership comprises:
 - Riaz Ahmad JP – Chairman
 - Tina Bird – Community Representative
 - John Foley – Acting Area Director
 - His Honour Judge Tony Hammond – Judicial Representative
 - Bill Kempton JP – Magistrate Representative
 - Charles Lauder – Community Representative
 - Dorothy Meredith MBE – Court User Representative
 - James Moss – Court User Representative

4. DELIVERY OBJECTIVES – 2009/10

In the context of the financial allocation for Greater Manchester, the following priorities have been set for the coming year

1. IMPROVE THE WAY WE DELIVER OUR BUSINESS

KEY PRIORITY 1

We will aim to improve all aspects of our operational functions by focusing on assisting frontline staff to efficiently deliver business

- **Equality and Diversity** – We will continue to apply the principles contained within the Greater Manchester Equality and Diversity Action Plan in respect of all stakeholders
- **In Court Computing (ICC)** – We will deliver a faster and more efficient service to court users within a courtroom setting
- **Lean** – We will support and encourage the rollout of the Lean principles (ensuring operating processes are efficient and consistent in order to provide a high quality service that meets the needs of users) in our courts, thereby ensuring a culture of continuous improvement
- **Richard 7** – We will ensure that court results are entered in a timely fashion in order to update our criminal justice partners
- **Service Upgrade Project (SUPS)** – We will actively support the implementation of this service upgrade across the county courts and the family proceedings courts

- **Unified Family Strategy** – We will implement the outcome of the consultation paper on the proposal to hold all Public Law Children Act 1989 work in Greater Manchester at the Manchester Civil Justice Centre

- **Regional Support Centre** – We will take an active part in the future strategy and development of the North West Regional Support Centre

- **Community Justice/Engagement** – We will further embed the principles of community justice in the day to day running of the magistrates' courts and further develop engagement with local communities

- **Review of Accounting and Enforcement** – We will review the number of accounting divisions in the magistrates' courts, including the delivery of the accounts and enforcement function

2. DELIVER IMPROVED SERVICES TO THOSE WHO USE OUR COURTS

KEY PRIORITY 2

We will aim to continually improve the services we provide for the benefit of our stakeholders, customers and all those who use the courts in Greater Manchester

- **Administrative Court** - We will promote the presence of the Administrative Court in the Manchester Civil Justice Centre in order to provide a more local service to people in the north west
- **Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary (CJSSS)** – We will continue to apply the principles of CJSSS in the magistrates’ courts and build on this to extend improvements in speed and effectiveness to all criminal cases in the magistrates’ courts and beyond
- **Greater Manchester Protocol for Linked Criminal and Care Directions** – We will apply the principles of the protocol for linked criminal and care directions hearings, working collaboratively with agencies within the family and criminal jurisdiction to improve service delivery, access to justice and a better service for victims and vulnerable children
- **Customer Service Standards** – We will ensure that improvements already embedded are maintained and, where possible, improved in order to retain Chartermark standards
- **Directors’ Guidance for Streamlined Processes** – We will ensure that streamlined process is fully implemented in the magistrates’ courts without impacting on the speed and effectiveness delivered by CJSSS
- **Juror Utilisation** – We will implement the best practice guidance in Crown Court centres in order to meet the new targets

- **Witness Charter Standards** – We will work with the Local Criminal Justice Board to improve performance in reducing witness waiting times during the course of the year, and also improve the experience of all witnesses who use our courts

- **Promoting e-channels** – We will actively promote the use of on-line services, eg Money Claims (MCOL) and Possession Claims (PCOL) within the county courts in Greater Manchester

- **Integration schemes** - We will continue to build on the success of previous integration schemes by integrating Stockport County Court into Stockport Magistrates' Court to provide a co-located business, subject to available funding

- **District Judge Listing Review** – We will implement the review recommendations to ensure that all cases are brought to hearing or trial without delay and that judicial resources are deployed as efficiently as possible

3. DELIVER OUR SERVICE WITHIN A DIFFICULT FINANCIAL CLIMATE

KEY PRIORITY 3

We will review, improve and implement more effective and efficient ways to deliver our services within a reducing budget

- **Performance Efficiency Programme (PEP)** – We will support and implement the outcome of the Regional PEP with a view to making support functions more efficient and cost effective
- **Resources to Match Workloads** – We will utilise the allocation models to effectively manage our staff resources and re-balance productivity levels
- **Operational Delivery** – We will continuously monitor and review budgets using existing mechanisms, eg quarterly business reviews, and, where necessary, take corrective action in order to deliver our services within budget
- **Goods and Services** – We will constantly strive to find cost effective ways of procuring goods and services alongside the national procurement contracts
- **HMCS Estate** – We will continue to provide regular maintenance to our court buildings within the allocated budget, ensuring compliance with health and safety and legal issues in those business critical courts
- **Energy Management** – We will aim, through a number of Energy Management Initiatives, to reduce our energy consumption by 12% across our estate, ensuring a better carbon footprint and lowering costs

4. CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP OUR STAFF ENSURING THE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES ARE DELIVERED BY OUR MANAGERS

KEY PRIORITY 4

We acknowledge that our staff are our greatest asset and we will ensure that they are adequately supported and given the opportunity to develop

- **Staff Engagement Action Plan** – We will implement actions outlined within the Action Plan, ensuring that core systems, eg performance management, communication, reward and recognition etc, operate effectively and consistently across the Area
- **Leadership Training** – We will continue to extend the Leadership Programme to Band C managers and other staff with leadership responsibilities
- **Greater Manchester Leadership Pledge** – We will embed the Pledge and ensure that our staff know what is expected of them
- **Attendance Management** – We will proactively manage absence through compliance with the Greater Manchester Area's Action Plan
- **Staff Feedback** – We will give staff appropriate feedback and recognise their contribution through informal and formal rewards
- **Celebrating Success** – We will recognise the significant contributions and achievements made by staff and submit their names for the appropriate levels of awards available

5. ENSURE GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE ACROSS OUR BUSINESS AREA

KEY PRIORITY 5

We will ensure that systems of assurance are in place to minimise risk within the Area and we will monitor, review and test those systems

- **Governance** - We will ensure national guidelines addressing risk, business continuity, statement of internal control, health and safety, data integrity and quality are followed
- **Risk** – We will actively identify and manage risk and we will review the system for risk identification and ensure the risk register is embedded, updated and monitored within the business
- **Business Continuity Plans** – We will ensure that our continuity plans are up to date and tested across the Area
- **Stocktakes** – We will undertake quarterly business reviews of progress against Business Plan objectives, highlighting successes and identifying any risks to delivery of core functions

5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS

Business Area	High level target Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Other targets and measures Supporting Indicator (SI)	Target
Criminal Courts	KPI 1 - Crown Court - To commence 78% of cases within the following timescales in the Crown Court: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defendants' cases that are sent for trial within 26 weeks of sending; • defendants' committal for trial cases within 16 weeks of committal; • appeals within 14 weeks of the appeal being lodged; and • committals for sentence within 10 weeks of committal. 		78%
		Crown Court: Average trial waiting time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for trial cases where defendants are on bail; - for trial cases where defendants are in custody; and - for all trial cases. 	No target set*
		Crown Court - Ineffective trial rate	To maintain 08/09 performance
		Crown Court – Cracked trial rate	No target set*
		Crown Court – Effective trial rate	
	Crown Court – Witnesses called within 2 hours	60%	

Business Area	High level target	Other targets and measures	Target
	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Supporting Indicator (SI)	
Criminal Courts		Crown Court – Average witness waiting time	2 hours and 30 minutes
		Crown Court - Jury utilisation – Juror sitting days as a proportion of the sum of attendance and non attendance days	70%
		KPI 2 – Magistrates’ courts – Charged cases, average time from charge to disposal	<6 weeks
		Magistrates’ courts - The average number of hearings per case	2.25
		Magistrates’ courts - Ineffective trial rate	To maintain 08-09 performance
		Magistrates’ courts - Cracked trial rate	No target set *
		Magistrates’ courts - Effective trial rate	
		Magistrates’ courts - Vacated trial rate	
		Magistrates’ courts - Witnesses called in one hour or less	60%
		Magistrates’ courts - Witnesses called within 2 hours	80%

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Business Area	High level target	Other targets and measures	Target
	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Supporting Indicator (SI)	
Criminal Courts		Magistrates' courts - Average witness waiting time	1 hour and 30 minutes
	KPI 3 - Magistrates' courts – time taken to produce and send court results to police		95% in 3 working days 100% in 6 working days
		Time taken from receipt of properly completed Rights to Representation applications to despatch of decision	90% by COP** 2nd working day 95% by COP 3rd working day 100% by COP 6th working day
Enforcement	KPI 4 - Payment Rate for Financial Penalties***		85%
		Payment rate excluding administratively cancelled matters	No target set *
	KPI 5 - Percentage of all breached Community Penalties to be resolved within 25 days of the relevant failure to comply		60%
		Community Penalty Breach Warrants executed within 20 working days for adults and 10 working days for youths	75%

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Business Area	High level target	Other targets and measures	Target
	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Supporting Indicator (SI)	
Enforcement		Community Penalty Breach Proceedings – average time from unacceptable failure to comply to resolution of the case	35 working days
		Reduce the number of unresolved Community Penalty Breach cases over 35 working days old.	Local targets
Civil	KPI 6 - Increase the proportion of defended small claims that are completed otherwise than by a court hearing (settlement)		65%
		The proportion of defended fast and multi-track cases that are completed otherwise than by a hearing	Maintenance of 07/08 Performance
	KPI 7 - Increase the proportion of defended small claims that are completed (from receipt to final hearing) within 30 weeks		70% or above
		The proportion of defended fast track cases that are completed (from allocation to final hearing) within 30 weeks	Maintenance of 07/08 Performance
		The proportion of defended multi track cases that are completed (from allocation to final hearing) within 50 weeks	Maintenance of 07/08 Performance
	KPI 8 - Increase the amount of civil work initiated online – percentage of eligible possession claims through Possession Claim Online and percentage of specified money claims through Money Claim Online and via the Claims Production Centre		PCOL - 65% MCOL - 75%

Business Area	High level target Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Other targets and measures Supporting Indicator (SI)	Target
Family	KPI 9 - To increase the proportion of care and supervision orders completed within 40 weeks by 10 percentage points		56% magistrates' courts 48% county courts
		To increase the proportion of residence and contact orders made by consent in the county courts (excluding cases involving allegations of harm)	A) Areas with levels of consent orders at or above 37% to maintain or improve performance B) Areas with levels of consent orders below 37% to improve performance to at least 37%
		The percentage of section 31 Children Act applications (care and supervision) completed (by any disposal) within 50 weeks	55%
		Outstanding care and supervision cases over 40 weeks in the county court	<30%

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Business Area	High level target	Other targets and measures	Target
	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Supporting Indicator (SI)	
Family		Outstanding care and supervision cases over 75 weeks in the county court	<10%
		Outstanding care and supervision cases over 40 weeks in the family proceedings courts	<20%
		Outstanding care and supervision cases over 75 weeks in the family proceedings courts	<5%
Customer Service	KPI 10 - The 'very satisfied' element of the HMCS court user survey be maintained at or above the year 2 (2007/08) survey baseline of 41%.		≥41%
		Area Measure: Each Area to maintain their "very satisfied" survey results at or above their 2008/09 Area baseline.	Local Area baseline targets
		Customer Service Unit (CSU) - proportion of complaints responded to in 15 working days	90%
		Area offices – proportion of complaints responded to in 10 working days	90%
		Courts – proportion of complaints responded to in 10 working days	90%

* No target has been set against a limited number of measures. The HMCS Board will be advised of performance against these measures in the same way as for targeted KPIs and SIs in order to provide a full understanding of business performance. It will be for the Board to determine whether movements in performance against these measures require attention.

** Close of play.

*** The payment rate is calculated by dividing the amount of fines collected in a year by the amount of fines imposed. The monies collected may relate to fines and other financial penalties imposed in that or earlier years.

ANNEX 1 – STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY ACTION PLAN

Leadership Interaction: Internal Communication Flow

- GMET members to attend local core brief sessions across the Area on a planned programme. Staff to be provided with an opportunity to ask questions to GMET members. Members of GMET in attendance to update staff on national developments which affects them and their work.
- Review communication channels (including dissemination of information provided by Area/Region) to ensure that any information/updates are targeted to the correct people and duplication is avoided wherever possible.
- Each court or office to create a local 'What's happening in the Ministry' board where local senior managers can post information about larger corporate issues.

Facilitative Line Management

- Staff understanding to be obtained and discussions of how individual members of staff fit into the organisation to form part of performance review meetings.
- In line with the Band C programme, managers to undertake 360 degree feedback from all staff they are responsible for. Identified areas requiring improvement to be included in their personal development objectives.

Recognition and Reward

- Managers to hold face to face meetings with staff to discuss pay scales and communicate non-salary benefits available and how to access them/understand their entitlement.
- Review the use of recognition and reward and special bonuses ensuring consistency across the Area.
- Ensure that all staff have performance meetings (including mid-year) with their line manager and that reports are 'signed off' by countersigning manager at year-end.

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- Benchmarking exercises to be carried out at Area, court and team level ensuring consistency and compliance to performance marking guidance (including outstanding) has been carried out.

Organisational Culture & Efficiency

- Promote the MoJ People Proposition: Senior Managers to take every opportunity to ensure adherence to the Proposition and to challenge both through role modelling and failure to reach the correct standard.
- Ensure managers are trained and confident in dealing with poor performance.
- Managers to promote culture where staff have opportunities to speak up and challenge the way things are done.
- Systems to be 'tested' ensuring they are effective and in operation (e.g. briefings, performance management, learning and development, communications etc)

Work-Life Balance & Resources

- Regular reviews of workload against resources to be undertaken to ensure that staff are deployed accordingly.

Leadership Effectiveness

- GMET to publish a 'who's who' to include details of what jobs/responsibilities managers have and how it fits into the organisation.
- All line managers (Band C) to undertake leadership training as part of the GM or national programme.

Inspirational Vision & Direction

- Staff to be made aware of the importance of dealing with customers with respect and understanding.

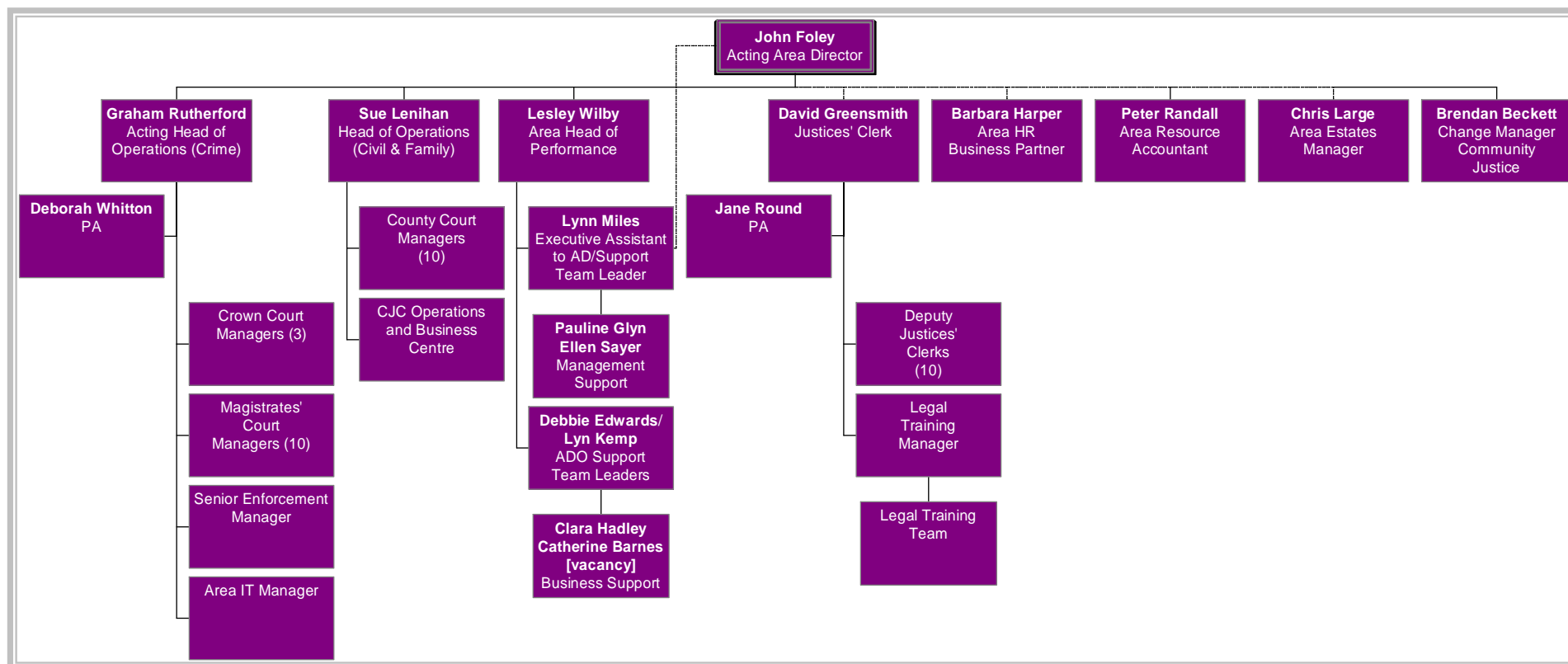
Employee Autonomy & Involvement

- Staff to be involved in business planning, change and activities such as LEAN at Area and court level.
- Area and Court Staff Focus Groups to continue. A programme of visits to be undertaken by GMET to coincide with Focus Group and Core Briefing meetings. Area to continue working with PCS to gather staff views, thoughts and opinions of staff.

Personal/Career Development & Performance Management

- At 1:1s or appraisals identify and discuss learning and development interests. Where development opportunities arise, ensure all staff expressing interest receive an equal chance.
- Review the delivery of Learning and Development within Greater Manchester.
- Complete an Area-wide training/skills analysis working with the Regional L & D Co-ordinator, Justice Academy and Union Learning Representatives to deliver skills and development learning.

ANNEX 2 - GREATER MANCHESTER AREA STRUCTURE CHART



Copies of this Business Plan will be published on the HMCS internet and on the North West HMCS intranet. Hard copies are available on request from:

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