



Administrative Justice  
& Tribunals Council  
Advancing Administrative Justice

# AJTC's Strategic Approach

AJTC Conference  
12 November 2009

Richard Thomas

# A Formidable Challenge

- Council on Tribunals
- Leggatt Review
- White Paper
- 2007 Act
- Tony Newton
- Numerous stakeholders
- Great Expectations

# Chairman's Credentials

- Citizens Advice Legal Service
  - Tribunal advocate
- National Consumer Council
  - Small claims; Civil Justice Review; Ombudsmen
- Office of Fair Trading
- Clifford Chance
  - Public Policy; Financial Ombudsman Service
- Information Commissioner
  - Freedom of Information; Data Protection

# Approach

- Lawyer – committed to de-mystification
- Focus on consumer / user / citizen perspective
- Public service – making a difference
- Strategic approach
- “Selective to be Effective”
- “First Priority is to have Priorities”
- Build on unanimous wish to re-vitalise
- Strategic Review
- Corporate Plan 2010-13 & Action Plan 2010-11

# AJTC Strengths

- Wide statutory remit
- Expertise and experience across Council and Staff
- Solid foundations
- Reputation
- Influence, especially for Tribunals

# AJTC Weaknesses

- Width of remit; limited resources
- Need for clear focus / priorities
- Need for more tangible results and impact
- Working arrangements
- Lack of visibility

# Emerging Strategy

- Re-Statement of Purpose, Vision and Values
- Initiatives proposing improvements
- Working with others to achieve change
- Encouraging worthwhile research
- “What?” *and* “How?”
- Revised governance and working arrangements across AJTC and Scottish & Welsh Committees

# Purpose and Vision

- The “Authoritative and Independent Voice”
- Helping to make administrative justice and tribunals increasingly accessible, fair and efficient
- Ensuring needs of users are central
- Developing coherent principles and good practice
- Fair, timely, open and proportionate procedures
- Continuous improvement

# Proactive and Reactive

- Getting the balance right
- Five (?) initiatives per year, some in partnership
- Rigorous approach to consultative responses
- Criteria
  - important from users' perspective?
  - distinctive and authoritative contribution?
  - reasonable prospect of making an impact?
- Project Groups
- Purposeful visits

# Some possible initiatives

- Promoting “Getting it right first time”
- Use of Feedback / Learning mechanisms
- Proportionate Dispute Resolution – comparing judicial, tribunal and ADR techniques
- Local authority sponsored tribunals
- Diversity Review
- TCE Act – Progress Report
- Mental health
- Time limits in social security appeals

# The wider context

- Importance of Administrative Justice
- Relationships between State and Citizen
- Volume pressures on Tribunals
- Financial pressures
- MoJ - DSO 2
- The political environment
- A valued AJTC



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# The Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council

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