PROFESSIONAL POLICY MAKING FOR THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

**Report
by
Strategic Policy Making Team
Cabinet Office**

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   The Modernising Government White Paper promises changes to policy making to ensure that policies are strategic, outcome focused, joined up (if necessary), inclusive, flexible, innovative and robust. This report is the culmination of work on policy making carried out by the Cabinet Office to follow up publication of the White Paper. It aims to

- examine what professional 'modernised' policy making should look like;
- provide a snapshot of current good practice as a high-level indication of areas where policy making is ; and
- suggest possible levers for change to help to bring about the White Paper 'vision' for policy making.

1.2   The project team tackled these aims by developing a descriptive model of 'modernised' policy making with the help of policy makers from a number of departments (Chapter 2 and Annexe A) and then using it to carry out an 'audit' of good practice. The 'audit' involved testing a range of cases identified by departments during preparation of the White Paper as examples of 'modernised' policy making against the model (Chapter 3).

1.3   The results of the work on good practice are set out in Chapters 4 to 10. Together with the other work done as part of the project, they suggest that policy makers have already assimilated and are acting upon several parts of the agenda to modernise policy making. In particular, the importance of joining up effectively is now well understood by policy makers though they are still feeling their way when it comes to how best to achieve it. The need to involve and communicate effectively with those

affected by policies as well as those who deliver them on the ground is also well understood and is producing innovative ways of consulting and involving a wider audience in the policy-making process. Likewise, policy makers are drawing increasingly on the experience of other countries in developing their own thinking, though there is still some way to go before this outward looking approach becomes the norm across Whitehall. For other elements of the policy process the picture is patchy. There remain obstacles – real and perceived – both to the development of more forward-looking and long-term policies and to greater innovation and creativity in policy making. Whilst there are examples of good practice in the way policy makers use evidence and in the way they learn lessons from past experience, there is a need to spread that good practice more widely and to overcome the barriers that inhibit policy makers from adopting it.

1.4   There is a good deal of work already in hand to tackle many of these issues. This report suggests a number of ideas designed to help bring about change to the policy process itself and to the organisational culture within which policy is made (Annexe B). Responsibility for delivering 'modernised' policy making rests primarily with departments but there are several areas where the centre can add value. The report identifies four 'big ideas' for the centre to pursue, arising from the White Paper and from work on the project. These are:

- using **peer review** as a structured mechanism for bringing about cultural change as well as enabling good practice experience to be shared more widely and lessons to be learned (paragraphs 11.4 – 11.6);

- developing a range of **joint training** events for Ministers and policy makers to encourage better mutual understanding of what is and is not possible. These include setting up a Senior Government Network to allow Ministers and top officials to attend seminars focused on cross-cutting policy and management issues together (paragraphs 11.6 – 11.7);

- developing a **policy 'knowledge pool'** – covering, for example, the objectives of new policy projects; the results of impact assessments; relevant consultation documents and information about responses; details of evidence used; and of policy evaluation – to allow easier sharing of information about and experience of policy making and to create a more easily accessible source of evidence for future policy making (paragraphs 7.17 – 7.19, 11.8); and

- developing the model of policy making used here to allow departments to use it to **benchmark** their current policy making against the standard outlined in the White Paper and identify where they need to change in order to 'modernise' their policy making process (paragraphs 2.6 – 2.11, 11.9).

1.5   For departments, the report suggests that 'early wins' can be achieved by applying project management disciplines to the policy process (as a number of departments already are) and by creating a 'policy researcher' role, both to relieve policy makers of some of the day to day pressures of their work and to develop expertise in gathering and assessing relevant evidence (paragraphs 3.8, 7.21 and 11.10).

1.6   Finally, the report points out that the changes to the policy process which the White Paper proposes can only be achieved if changes in working practices are accompanied by the development of new and different skills amongst policy makers. The report indicates that these should include:

- **understanding the context** - organisational, political and wider - in which they are working;
- **managing complex relationships** with a range of key players;
- well developed **presentational skills**, including the ability to work with others to gain ownership of their ideas by different groups;

- a broader **understanding of information technology** and how it can be used to facilitate and support policy making;

- a **grounding in economics, statistics and relevant scientific disciplines** in order to act as 'intelligent customers' for complex policy evidence;

- familiarity with using **project management disciplines**;

- willingness to experiment, **managing risks** as they arise; and

- willingness to continue to **learn new skills** and acquire new knowledge throughout a career in policy making and elsewhere.

1.7   Pulling together the elements of change described in this report will amount to a major programme of change for most policy makers. As with the rest of the Modernising Government agenda, change in policy making will need to be led from the top and the involvement of ministers as well as top managers and policy makers – through joint training – will be essential to success. The thinking and ideas contained in this report are intended to contribute to the debate and help both departments and the centre to identify effective action to bring about the White Paper 'vision' for policy making.

CHAPTER 2

MODERNISING POLICY MAKING

Background to the project:

2.1   The Modernising Government White Paper sets out a major programme of change for the public sector as a whole. In a nutshell, the programme aims to improve the 'user friendliness' of public services; the quality and efficiency of services; and the effectiveness of other Government policy interventions. In order to achieve these aims the White Paper envisages changes in working practices, flowing from increased 'joining up' and use of partnerships, wider use of quality schemes (including Investors in People, Business Excellence and Charter Mark), better use of technology and the application of the Best Value / best supplier approach; changes to organisational culture (empowering people, a drive to turn public sector bodies into 'learning organisations', reform of pay systems, improving recruitment and retention in problem areas, increasing diversity); and changes to the policy making process. In practice, these themes are closely related and change in one will have an impact on the others.

2.2   The focus of this project has been on one element of the White Paper programme – policy making. The White Paper's commitment on policy making, which has formed the starting point for our work, is:

> ***"We will be forward looking in developing policies to deliver outcomes that matter, not simply reacting to short-term pressures."***

The purpose of the project has been to explore and develop ideas on policy making contained in the White Paper, drawing on work already under way in the Cabinet Office and elsewhere. We have tried to tap into policy makers' own experience and expertise to produce practical ideas for improving the policy making process, to pull together information about good practice and to develop an understanding of what 'modernised

policy making' looks like. This report aims to contribute to the discussion about policy making and to signpost areas for further work in order to achieve the policy making 'vision' set out in the White Paper.

Why policy making needs 'modernising':

2.3   The need for change is clear. The world for which policy makers have to develop policies is becoming increasingly complex, uncertain and unpredictable. The electorate is better informed, has rising expectations and is making growing demands for services tailored to their individual needs. Key policy issues, such as social exclusion and reducing crime, overlap and have proved resistant to previous attempts to tackle them, yet the world is increasingly inter-connected and inter-dependent. Issues switch quickly from the domestic to the international arena and an increasingly wide diversity of interests needs to be co-ordinated and harnessed. Governments across the world need to be able to respond quickly to events to provide the support that people need to adapt to change and that businesses need to prosper. In parallel with these external pressures, the Government is asking policy makers to focus on solutions that work across existing organisational boundaries and on bringing about change in the real world. Policy makers must adapt to this new, fast-moving, challenging environment if public policy is to remain credible and effective.

What 'modernising the policy process' means:

2.4   The Modernising Government White Paper defines policy making as:

"the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions to deliver 'outcomes' – desired changes in the real world."

It then goes on to describe the characteristics of 'modernised policy' as shown in Figure 1.

Characteristics of 'modernised' policy

- *Strategic –* looks ahead and contributes to long term government goals

- *Outcome focused –* aims to deliver desired changes in the real world

- *Joined up (if necessary) –* works across organisational boundaries

- *Inclusive –* is fair and takes account of the interests of all

- *Flexible and innovative –* tackles causes, not symptoms and is not afraid of experimentation
- *Robust –* stands the test of time and works in practice from the start

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Figure 1

Finally, the White Paper identifies where the policy-making process needs to change if policy makers are to be confident of delivering the sort of policy Ministers want to see. Those changes are:

- designing policy around outcomes;

- making sure policies are inclusive, fair and evidence based;

- avoiding unnecessary burdens on businesses;

- involving others in policy making;

- becoming more forward- and outward-looking; and

- learning from experience.

2.5   The ideas set out in the White Paper provide high level objectives for change in policy making and have formed the basis for our thinking. With the help of other departments, we have developed our own model of the 'modernised' policy process and used it to carry out an 'audit' of good practice, identifying where the strengths of present practice lie and where further change seems necessary.

2.6   Traditionally, the policy-making process has been regarded as a sequence of closely inter-related and inter-dependent activities which, together, form a cycle geared towards the progressive improvement of outcomes. The basic model has usually been presented much as shown in Figure 2. According to this model of policy making, achieving good results – that is well thought out and well implemented policies that deliver desired outcomes – depends on thorough, competent performance of each step in the sequence.

CORE POLICY PROCESS

Understanding the problem - defining outcomes, resolving tensions, identifying stakeholders and deciding their role

Developing solutions - collecting evidence, appraising options, consultation, working with others, managing risks

Testing success and making it stick - evaluating success and adjusting action

Putting solutions into effect - communicating policy, supporting those who deliver, testing different options
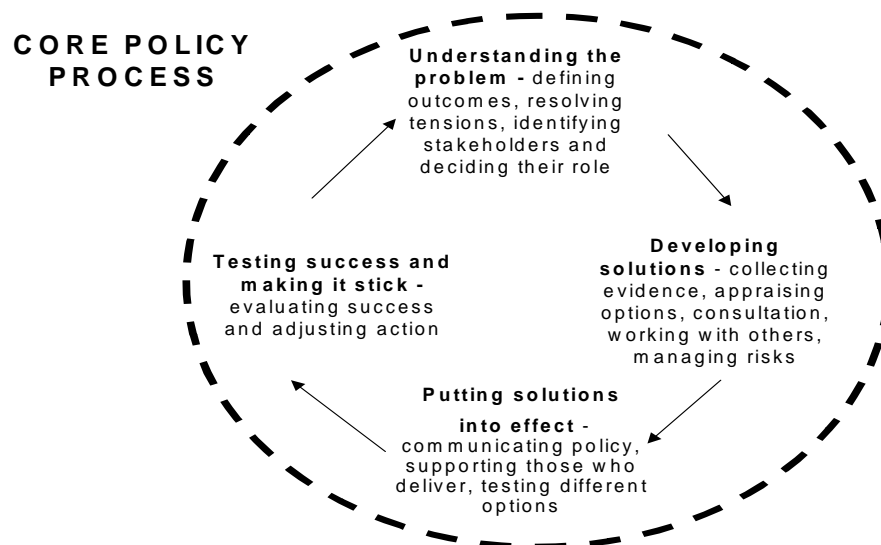
Figure 2

2.7   We found in our discussions with policy makers, however, that policy making rarely proceeds as neatly as this model suggests and that no two policies will need exactly the same development process. The reasons why policy-making gets underway will vary from case to case (manifesto commitments, court decisions, responses to external events all make for different approaches), as will the existing state of the policy, its complexity and its range. The policy process is often blown off course by pressures or events outside the control of policy makers – for example, the policy of

dumping low level nuclear waste at sea was made inoperable overnight by the decision of the seamen's union to advise their members not to work on ships carrying such waste. Approaching policy making as a series of sequential steps also tempts policy makers to leave thinking about some stages, such as implementation and evaluation, until late in the process.

2.8   For policy making to be fully effective, policy makers not only need all the 'traditional' attributes (knowledge of relevant law and practice, understanding of key stakeholders' views, ability to design implementation systems), but they must also understand the **context** within which they (and the policy) have to work. This means understanding not only the way organisational structures, processes and culture can influence policy making, but also understanding Ministers' priorities (such as the importance of constituency concerns or impending elections or re-shuffles) and the way policies will play in the 'real' world where they will make an impact. The way these 'layers' of context can influence different parts of the policy-making process is illustrated in Figure 3. Fuller understanding of the broad context within which policy works should help policy makers both when thinking about possible approaches to tackling a given problem and when they come to consider putting a particular solution into effect. Whilst organisational and management changes over the past decade have emphasised the separation of policy making and policy implementation, 'modernised' policy making demands that they be re-integrated into a single, seamless, flexible process.

2.9   For this project, we started to try to represent the 'modernised' policy process in the traditional way, using a model, like that in Figure 2, showing sequential activities organised in a cycle. But we found that experienced policy makers reacted against such a presentation because they felt it did not accurately reflect the realities of policy making.
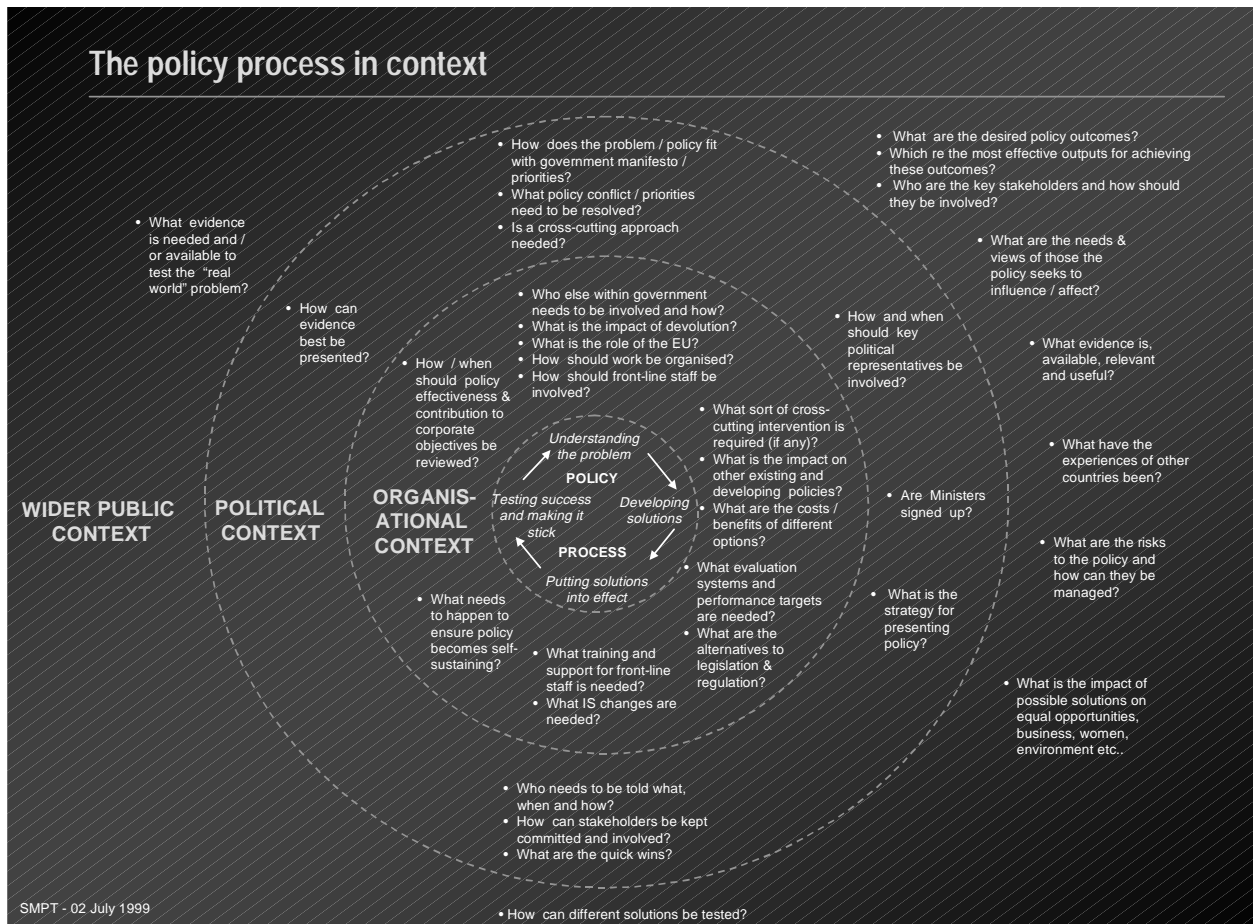
The policy process in context

- What evidence is needed and / or available to test the "real world" problem?
- How can evidence best be presented?

WIDER PUBLIC CONTEXT

POLITICAL CONTEXT

ORGANIS-ATIONAL CONTEXT

- How / when should policy effectiveness & contribution to corporate objectives be reviewed?

- How does the problem / policy fit with government manifesto / priorities?
- What policy conflict / priorities need to be resolved?
- Is a cross-cutting approach needed?

- Who else within government needs to be involved and how?
- What is the impact of devolution?
- What is the role of the EU?
- How should work be organised?
- How should front-line staff be involved?

Understanding the problem

POLICY

Testing success and making it stick   *Developing solutions*

PROCESS

Putting solutions into effect

- What needs to happen to ensure policy becomes self-sustaining?
- What training and support for front-line staff is needed?
- What IS changes are needed?

- What sort of cross-cutting intervention is required (if any)?
- What is the impact on other existing and developing policies?
- What are the costs / benefits of different options?
- What evaluation systems and performance targets are needed?
- What are the alternatives to legislation & regulation?

- What are the desired policy outcomes?
- Which re the most effective outputs for achieving these outcomes?
- Who are the key stakeholders and how should they be involved?

- What are the needs & views of those the policy seeks to influence / affect?

- How and when should key political representatives be involved?

- What evidence is, available, relevant and useful?

- Are Ministers signed up?

- What have the experiences of other countries been?

- What is the strategy for presenting policy?

- What are the risks to the policy and how can they be managed?

- What is the impact of possible solutions on equal opportunities, business, women, environment etc..

- Who needs to be told what, when and how?
- How can stakeholders be kept committed and involved?
- What are the quick wins?

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- How can different solutions be tested?

Figure 3

2.10   We concluded that a better way forward was to produce a ***descriptive model*** of policy making. Our model is described more fully in Annexe A. In brief, it consists of:

- a series of high level **'features'** which, if adhered to, should produce fully effective policies;

- three **'themes'** – vision, effectiveness and continuous improvement – that fully effective policy-making will need to encompass;

- a total of nine core **'competencies'** (see Figure 4) that relate to each theme and together encapsulate all the key elements of the policy-making process; and

- **definitions** of the core competencies, together with descriptions of the evidence needed to demonstrate each competency.

2.11   The model began life as a theoretical representation of the 'modernised' policy process. When we came to test it with policy makers, we found that it was accepted by them as a challenging and yet realistic representation of the policy process they experience in their day to day working lives.   Its strength is that it recognises the uniqueness of each piece of policy making yet is demanding in what it requires of policy makers and it has the capacity to be customised to reflect departmental priorities. Because it is descriptive rather than prescriptive, the model also recognises that on occasions policy makers will not have the luxury of being able to carry through all elements of the process as thoroughly as they might wish. In those circumstances they have to decide which of the key elements are most important and which will have to be handled differently. The model became an important part of the framework we used to 'audit' current good practice.

PROFESSIONAL POLICY MAKING – CORE COMPETENCIES

- *Forward looking* **–** takes a long term view, based on statistical trends and informed predictions, of the likely impact of policy

- *Outward looking* **–** takes account of factors in the national, European and international situation and communicates policy effectively

- *Innovative and creative* **–** questions established ways of dealing with things and encourages new ideas; open to comments and suggestions of others

- *Using evidence* **–** uses best available evidence from a wide range of sources and involves key stakeholders at an early stage

- *Inclusive* **–** takes account of the impact on the needs of all those directly or indirectly affected by the policy

- *Joined up* **–** looks beyond institutional boundaries to the Government's strategic objectives; establishes the ethical and legal base for policy

- *Evaluates* **–** builds systematic evaluation of early outcomes into the policy process

- *Reviews* **–** keeps established policy under review to ensure it continues to deal

with the problems it was designed to tackle, taking account of associated effects elsewhere

- ***Learns lessons*** – learns from experience of what works and what doesn't

Figure 4

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CHAPTER 3

THE 'AUDIT' OF GOOD PRACTICE

What we did:

3.1   The fieldwork for this project was carried out over a three month period by a team of two.   In approaching the work, we aimed to take a highly 'practice'-based approach. We collected information about actual cases of policy making. These cases range from large, high profile examples, such as the New Deal for Young People, to much smaller, often unnoticed, policy projects – such as the eradication of potato brown rot – of the type that make up the bulk of 'everyday' policy making. If real change is to be achieved and sustained, it must penetrate beyond 'show case' policy areas and impact on day-to-day policy work being done not only in Whitehall, but also in agencies and local government.

3.3   The cases we looked at were those submitted by departments during the drafting of the Modernising Government White Paper when they were invited to send in examples of good practice. In total, we received over a hundred such examples, only ten or so of which were finally mentioned in the White Paper. Although these cases were by no means a random, or necessarily representative, sample of current good practice, we felt it would be unreasonable to go back to departments and ask them to identify yet more examples. Instead, we decided to use those cases we already had as the raw material for an 'audit' of good practice.

3.3   In order to collect information about the cases in a consistent format, we developed a questionnaire which asked policy makers to provide information on all the main elements of the policy-making process, from identifying the need for a policy change to evaluating its effect. These elements, by and large, corresponded to the 'competencies' outlined in the descriptive model of policy making which we were developing in parallel.

3.4   The response rate to the questionnaires was about 50%. Where the response rate was poor but we had detailed information, submitted for inclusion in the White Paper, we used the latter. We followed up some answers by telephone to clarify particular points but were unable to do so in all cases so some information was incomplete.   In all, we collected information about some fifty cases from ten departments: Department for Education and Employment (DfEE); Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF); Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR); Department of Social Security (DSS); Customs & Excise (C&E); the Northern Ireland Office (NIO); Home Office (HO); Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); Inland Revenue; and Department of Health (DH).

3.5   We then tested the information provided against the competencies contained in our descriptive model of policy making. Inevitably, this was a subjective process as the quality of the answers given varied enormously. Likewise, we recognise that there was room for interpretation of the questions and many of the respondents were not as familiar with the Modernising Government agenda as we were. Nonetheless, this 'audit' still provides a useful indication of the extent to which some of the less prominent ideas associated with Modernising Government have already reached and been absorbed by policy makers.

3.6   In addition to our 'audit' of good practice, we gathered evidence through a series of nearly forty interviews with individual officials and policy advisers; through six focus groups with serving civil servants and recent leavers who are now working in the private sector; and through a review of relevant UK written material and available information about good practice in policy making in other countries, notably New Zealand and Canada. Finally, we carried out a training needs analysis for the joint training of Ministers and policy makers proposed in the White Paper. This involved analysing the responses to a questionnaire that was completed by twenty three Ministers and over fifty policy makers. Given the project's time and resource constraints, none of these sources could be comprehensive but, together, we believe, they have given us a reasonably robust, though high level and generalised, perspective on the current state

of policy making. We were able both to identify areas where policy making is strong – and there are plenty of examples where elements of 'modernised' policy making are already being used to good effect – and to identify areas where change will be needed to fulfil the White Paper 'vision'.

What we found:

3.7   Our work has largely confirmed the analysis set out in the White Paper. Our evidence suggests that policy makers concentrate their time and effort on policy analysis leading to advice to Ministers, on the design and processing of legislation, on co-ordination and clearance of policy within central government and on developing and appraising policy options. There is recognition amongst policy makers that joining up and inclusiveness are important, but less attention is being paid to learning lessons from the past and to being forward and outward looking. Too often policy makers react to major problems, formulate solutions, take decisions, implement them and move on to the next set of problems without being able to take the long-term view the White Paper envisages. This is, in part, because policy making is often perceived by policy makers as a fundamentally reactive process and, in part, because of the undoubted pressures under which they generally work. Whatever the reasons, other parts of the policy-making process are not always given the attention they need to achieve the White Paper 'vision'.

3.8   A few cases amongst those we saw stood out as being exemplary as a whole. They include the Single Work Focused Gateway ('One'); the New Deal for Lone Parents; the New Deal for Disabled People and the Northern Ireland Development Strategy/ Regional Strategy Framework. One distinguishing feature of these cases was the fact that they were being run on project management lines. This suggests that the disciplines of project management provide policy makers with the tools they need to focus on all of the aspects of good policy making simultaneously. For example, the need to plan systematically and to identify outcomes and outputs gives greater clarity about the purpose of the work. Stakeholder analysis helps policy makers to ensure that they have identified and thought about the role of all those with an interest in the policy.

Having a project board and steering group provides a mechanism for bringing in a range of views and 'joining up' across institutional boundaries. Techniques such as risk assessment and management help to provide a less risk averse environment in which innovative and creative ideas can come to the fore. Having to specify precise outcomes, products and milestones early on helps policy makers to build evaluation into the policy making process from the outset. And having in-built mechanisms for monitoring the progress of work helps to keep the policy process on track.

3.9 This report goes on to look in more detail at what we found against the core competencies in our descriptive model of policy making and attempts to identify actions and / or further work to address the problems associated with each. Finally, it looks at how work to modernise policy making can best be taken forward.

CHAPTER 4

LONG TERM, FORWARD LOOKING POLICY MAKING

Long-term, forward-looking policy making – what it means:

4.1   The White Paper stresses the need for policy making to be forward looking and to contribute to the Government's long-term goals. Many of the outcomes that the Government is seeking are, of course, fundamentally long term in effect. What the White Paper asks is that policy makers should look beyond the actions being taken now on, say, improving educational standards, reducing crime or reducing health inequalities, and think about what should come next. The outcomes being pursued are long tem but the policies being used to achieve them will need to be adjusted over time, as lessons are learned about what works and as the world within which policies take effect itself changes.

Our Findings:

4.2   Our findings indicate that real obstacles to long term thinking remain. Ministers often want to see measures that produce results in the short rather than medium or long term because of the pressures of the electoral cycle. There is also some scepticism amongst policy makers about their ability to look more than perhaps three or five years ahead because of the uncertainties involved.

4.3   That said, by fixing spending for three years, the Comprehensive Spending Review has required departments to look at a longer horizon than was previously the case (though policy makers have commented that no sooner was the ink dry on the review than they were being asked to look at new areas not spelt out in PSAs - the Modernising Government White Paper being a case in point) and there is a good deal of sophisticated long-term thinking going on in various departments as shown in Figure 5.

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FORWARD LOOKING WORK IN DEPARTMENTS	
Department of Trade & Industry	The **Future Unit** has produced scenarios on the future of work, on e-commerce and is currently running a project on what DTI's role might be in 2015. It is also planning an 'envisioning centre', a technologically-based facility within DTI, designed to help policy makers and others to think more innovatively and in a forward looking way.
Department of Health	Makes extensive use of scenarios to look, for example, at two possible worlds in 2020
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	The **Economics and Research Division** produces 10 to 15 year forecasts of prospects for world agricultural markets and on the impact of prospective EU reforms The **Food Standards Division** has a network of scientific committees to keep policy makers informed of likely future technologies which may impact on food standards
Office of Science and Technology	The **UK Foresight** programme involves both departments and outsiders in looking at future developments in particular sectors – such as built environment, transport, defence, financial services, healthcare and information, communications and media. Its focus is on helping industry to plug into scientific advances but departments are also using it to look ahead in a more systematic way. For example, DETR sponsored a Foresight Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE) Panel Environmental Futures Scoping Study. This produced four contextual futures scenarios for the UK to 2040. The scenarios provide a resource for use by panels in their next round and will help to ensure that there is consistency in their approach.

Figure 5

Other departments – including DfEE, Customs & Excise and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – have plugged into work going on in external think tanks such as the Chatham House Forum which aims to help member organisations to think about and plan for their future.

4.4   What is not so apparent from our findings is how far this forward-looking work is feeding through into policy making. In some areas, it is doing so explicitly. DH, for

example, has made the link between long-term thinking and policy making by holding workshops as part of the follow up to its scenario building (see Figure 6). But very few of the good practice cases we looked at mentioned contingency or scenario planning work specifically. Most mentioned that departmental specialists, such as statisticians and economists, had been consulted. Some of the specialists may have used forecasting techniques whose results were fed into the policy making process informally without the link to long-term thinking being made explicit.

Department of Health – scenario building and policy workshop

The **Healthcare and Pharmaceutical Scenario Project** was commissioned in Summer 1997. A joint DH/industry project team managed and facilitated the exercise. The aim was to develop ten year scenarios that would focus on possible developments – pharmaceutical, health service and political – which could then be used to ask "what if" questions and generate creative healthcare policy ideas.

A scenario-building workshop identified key uncertainties / associated events and constructed a matrix to indicate the degree of uncertainty / level of impact. Scenarios were framed around the areas of highest uncertainty and highest impact on the future. The scenario frameworks were then populated with illustrative trends and events.

The next stage was a policy workshop. This mapped and shared thinking on current policy perspectives and considered the implications of the scenarios for these, thus enabling participants to:
- identify both incremental policy changes that would sustain the NHS in each scenario and policy changes that that should be avoided;
- identify 'blue sky' policies that would be recommended in each scenario world;
- identify policy development themes for each scenario; and
- discuss emerging conclusions on policy developments common to all the scenarios.

Figure 6

4.5   Our conclusion is that, although there is a lot of activity across departments looking ahead, it has not, as yet, been joined up effectively nor does it feed systematically into mainstream policy making in the way that it needs to if long-term thinking is to become ingrained in the policy process.

Ideas for the future

4.6   In the time available to us we have not been able to investigate this feature of policy making in depth. It is clear that the use of scenarios and other techniques as a tool in long-term policy making is still in its infancy. There is a need to look carefully at the value different approaches add to the policy process in different areas and to learn lessons from departments' experience. The Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) in the Cabinet Office is now carrying out a study which aims to pull together the threads of futures work being done elsewhere in Whitehall and to identify a collectively agreed analysis of the key challenges that the government will have to face over the next 10 to 15 years. This will ensure that assumptions about the future are shared and that those who need to use forward-looking information have it available in standard form. The study may also provide an opportunity to look at experience so far and identify any lessons that should be learned for the benefit of government as a whole and to investigate the barriers – real and perceived – that seem to be preventing effective cross-fertilisation of ideas between mainstream policy makers and those whose job it is to look ahead.

4.7   At the same time, there is a need to link those doing futures work across departments. The DTI has set up an informal Whitehall Future Network to develop these links and the sharing of knowledge. We see value in building on this initiative to develop an effective network of those most closely involved in looking ahead.

CHAPTER 5

OUTWARD-LOOKING POLICY MAKING

Outward-looking policy making – what it means:

5.1   The White Paper refers to policy making that learns lessons from other countries and takes account of developments in the European and international spheres.   On another level, being outward looking means building into the policy making process an awareness of how the policy can best be communicated to various audiences in the wider world beyond the civil service, not least to the public at large.

Our Findings:

5.2   Our evidence shows that looking at other countries' experience can contribute very positively to the policy-making process. The New Deal for Lone Parents and the Single Work Focused Gateway project ('One') both drew extensively on experience abroad to inform their thinking. The latter made comparisons with similar interventions in California, Maryland and Wisconsin USA, Australia, New Zealand, New Brunswick, Canada and the Netherlands and involved a practitioner from the USA in some of the detailed work.

5.3   There is high level recognition that many policies, including many that are primarily domestic, must now be looked at from a European perspective.   So, for example as Figure 7 shows, the UK is arguing for greater EU co-operation on crime policy.   In doing so, policy makers have the opportunity both to learn directly from experience in other countries and to influence the development of thinking across the EU in new policy areas. In our audit of good practice, we found little evidence that this recognition of the importance of the EU dimension is yet filtering down to working level.

UK position paper – Tampere Conference

"The UK welcomes the opportunity … to set out a clear vision of the area of freedom, security and justice we seek to create within the EU. … The scourge of criminality is a feature in all our societies. The UK believes that there is much that member states can learn from each other, both in analysing the causes of crime so as to be better able to eradicate them and **in sharing experience of policies to tackle crime** so as to derive maximum benefit from each others' policy successes.

The UK welcomes the ideas put forward by Sweden in this area, and, we have ourselves suggested a particular focus on the problems of youth criminality, which are of special importance in the social as well as the criminal fields. The UK looks to Tampere to decide to pursue a co-operative approach to crime prevention, and to initiate Community funded programmes to study the causes and manifestations of criminality in our societies and ways of combating it, so as to facilitate a bench marking of best practice among member states."

Figure 7

Our work suggests that government-level work to initiate greater cross-EU collaboration, such as the Tampere conference, needs to be supported by other mechanisms for reinforcing the importance of the European dimension in policy making.

5.4   *Communication:* Our work on good practice showed there is very widespread recognition of the importance of considering communications issues as an integral part of policy making. The project to develop a regional strategic framework for Northern Ireland (see Figure 8) created a communication/presentation strategy as part of the process. Likewise, both the New Deal for Lone Parents and the Single Work Focused Gateway provided evidence of the way in which communications issues can be integrated into the day to day running of a policy project. In the case of the New Deal, a team was set up within the DSS policy group dedicated specifically to presentation. The team worked with colleagues in other departments/agencies on the handling of presentation. During the early phases of the programme, major announcements were largely covered by joint DSS/DfEE press releases and ministerial photo calls. The launch of phase 3 was a national event supported by a series of regional events. A joint advertising/marketing agency was appointed to handle the marketing campaign and an information line was set up.

Regional Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland – **Northern Ireland Office**

The project team drew up a PR plan which involved:
- regular contact and briefing with press, radio and television;
- major launch events at key stages involving ministerial and other high profile presence;
- public events aimed especially at school and youth audiences; and
- use of a university led consortium to manage community group inputs.

Figure 8

5.5   The evidence we collected indicated, unsurprisingly, that communication issues are taken most seriously in the case of high profile, national policies.   In less far-reaching policy areas, communication needs will be different but our work suggests that the same general principles will apply if presentation is to be effective – see Figure 9. One area of concern is that we found evidence of a lack of clarity about the respective roles of Ministers and officials in communicating policy.   In particular, Ministers want presentation that is 'politically acute, not naïve', whilst some policy makers are uncomfortable with this, seeing it as at odds with their political neutrality

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COMMUNICATION OF POLICY – GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

To be successful, communication must:

- be **planned** from the start of the policy process and tackled as an issue throughout;

- be based on a **sound awareness** of the political and wider context within which the policy is being developed;

- be **targeted** according to different audiences and make use of a range of media and formats in order to reach those audiences; and

- **involve** all those who will have a part to play in presenting policy – Ministers, policy makers, press officers and service deliverers / implementers.

Figure 9

Ideas for the Future:

5.6   Our work suggests that there is a need to do more to encourage policy makers, especially in those areas where European work is not already a live, 'bread and butter' issue, to build relationships with their counterparts abroad. Mechanisms such as the Matthaeus exchange programme, run by Customs & Excise, the Karolus programme and the bi-lateral exchange arrangements which the Cabinet Office oversees already exist to facilitate this process and should continue to be used. Our experience on this project shows that opposite numbers in other countries are generally only too pleased to exchange information, while the internet and e-mail make such exchanges increasingly easy. The proposals made in the context of the Islington Conference on Modernising Government held in October 1998 to encourage policy makers to 'think Europe' will be helpful. In particular, we see value in pursuing moves to encourage departments to ensure that all policy jobs have an explicit reference to Europe in the job description and objectives.

5.7   At the same time, policy makers directly involved in EU policy work, including the negotiation of regulations and directives, need to make use of the good practice material that already exists. The Regulatory Impact Unit (RIU) of the Cabinet Office has recently published a guide on good practice for Ministers and policy makers involved in negotiating, implementing and presenting European law. It gives a clear lead on what policy makers must do to assess the possible advantages and disadvantages of legislation and how it will affect people in the UK and the rest of the European Union. It adds transparency to the whole process of working with Europe and fills a previous gap in the guidance.

5.8   On communication, our findings suggest that there is a need to explore the issue of roles and responsibilities further. This is something that might usefully be taken up in the planned joint training for Ministers and policy makers (see Chapter 11). In other respects, the disciplines of project management seem to provide a mechanism for ensuring that communication does become an integral part of the policy process. Project management methods require policy makers to carry out a stakeholder analysis which ensures they have identified those groups and interests affected by the policy

and considered communication issues in detail at an early stage. Equally, finding new ways of looking at communication – perhaps by involving a focus group of outside stakeholders in designing the communications strategy – will help to ensure that management of change in the real world goes smoothly.

CHAPTER 6

INNOVATION AND CREATIVENESS

Innovation and creativeness – what they mean:

6.1   The White Paper stresses the need for policy makers to be flexible and innovative, willing to question established ways of dealing with things and to create an environment in which new ideas can emerge and be tested. Closely tied to innovation is the issue of risk. Being innovative usually involves taking risks and effective policy making must encompass the identification, assessment and management of risk.

Our findings:

6.2   The best cases we found in our work on good practice showed that, where there is clear political will and the resources are provided, policy makers are capable of producing wide-ranging and innovative change. In policy areas such as Sure Start and the New Deal for Young People, experimentation based on the controlled use of pilots is allowing new ways of working to be tried. Sure Start is providing money to a large number of small programmes to plug gaps in local provision for very young children. The intention is to achieve two hundred and fifty such programmes by 2001-02, sixty of which will get under way as 'trailblazers' in its first year. Whilst we have encountered some concerns about the way in which Sure Start is being put into effect at local level, its approach should, over time, provide a useful source of evidence about what works. Likewise, the action research programme which underpins the Better Government for Older People programme involves twenty eight pilots where the impact is being evaluated as the project develops. There is no pre-determined expectation of how the programme will turn out so the pilots are a genuine attempt to find out what works. And the pathfinder projects for the New Deal for Young People were carefully monitored and evaluated, allowing gaps in provision for the most disadvantaged to be identified and subsequent corrections to be made. The various area-based initiatives currently being

rolled out also provide opportunities for experimentation and, provided lessons are learned, present a potentially 'safe' method of innovating.

6.3   Another fruitful area for innovation is in the way policy makers tackle consultation and presentation.   For example, bringing the local academic community into the process and involving some 500 voluntary and community groups, opened up the development of the Northern Ireland regional strategic framework to a much wider range of informed opinion than would otherwise have been the case. The Excellence in Schools White Paper used a telephone helpline, free information distributed through supermarkets and high street shops and a 4-page pull out in the Sun newspaper to reach a wider audience than would normally be the case. In total, the White Paper generated nearly 10,000 responses, some 3,500 of them from individual parents. And the People's Panel, consisting of a representative sample of the population, can be used for both qualitative and quantitative research into how public services are delivered and how delivery can be improved from the point of view of the user, rather than the system.

6.4   Elsewhere, we found a widespread view that civil service culture does not welcome new thinking or change. Outsiders tend to perceive policy makers as inward looking.   There is general acceptance that fear of failure and the high penalties attached to 'mistakes' are powerful disincentives to real innovation. Policy makers often do not choose to take risks, in part, because of the way Parliament and other external bodies hold them to account, but also because there is a belief that career progression depends more on being 'a safe pair of hands' than on being innovative. These factors suggest that there is still a need to take steps to encourage experimentation and make significant change to the policy making culture if innovation is to flourish in all parts of the policy process.

6.5   On risk, we found little evidence that risks are being identified, let alone actively managed, as a matter of course. Policies like the Single Work Focused Gateway which have complex implementation programmes and are using project management

techniques seem to be best equipped to address the question of risk. We did have a very few examples of relatively small scale policies (see Figure 10) where effective risk assessment was integral to determining the policy itself.   These show how risk techniques can be used to inform policy decisions. Elsewhere, even the most basic risks – that the policy might not achieve its intended outcome or that it might have unforeseen consequences – did not appear to be addressed.

Review of fire cover – Home Office

The Home Office is reviewing its fifty-year-old standards of fire cover. These define how the fire service responds to calls for service. The new standards are risk based and are backed by research on ways of measuring risk within the community and the effect of fire service response time, on the risk of death in domestic dwellings, where 75% of fire fatalities occur. The new procedures have been developed to allow best use to be made of the fire-fighting resources within a community by concentrating on driving down risk and providing cover in proportion to that risk. Pathfinder trials are currently underway in local fire brigades to assess the operational effectiveness of the new standards.

Figure 10

Ideas for the future:

6.6   Whilst the barriers to innovation may be deep-seated and difficult to remove or overcome, simple changes have the potential to foster a more innovative culture. Becoming less insular will help. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office cite bringing in staff from non-governmental organisations as opening up their policy making to new ideas.   Equally, secondments into and out of policy divisions, full-time or part-time should help to expose policy makers to different ways of working. Using the Internet in order to tap into the experience of policy makers in other countries can open up thinking and broaden horizons. More effective networking within government – and with bodies outside - allows the exchange of ideas and experiences as well as fostering better 'joining up' where that is needed. The DfEE, working with innovation specialists, has identified a number of principles of innovation which can help to develop a more creative climate and encourage new thinking (see Figure 11)

Principles of Innovation
• Organisations need a **mixture of innovation and established systems** – the balance varies according to an organisation's particular role and functions • Equip policy makers with **techniques to encourage creativity** – these might include De Bono's lateral thinking techniques • Focus on those areas where innovative solutions are needed most and on **definition of the problems** to be tackled – as much effort needs to go into defining the problem (and signing up those who will have to implement a solution) as into developing the solution itself • Create a **working environment** that encourages innovative ideas – maybe by getting out of the office or bringing people with different perspectives together or setting ground rules for sessions that outlaw immediate critique of ideas • Create **momentum** for delivering innovative solutions by setting up projects with tight deadlines (six weeks should be enough to go from a start point to having a range of workable propositions) • **Make innovative solutions real** by prototyping them, learning from experience and trying them again • **Challenge assumptions** about innovation by taking them to organisations that are more innovative and by visibly rewarding new ideas • **Start small** – work to develop a more innovative approach in particular areas and build from there.

Figure 11

6.7   At a more sophisticated level, formally trying out different options as part of policy development and implementation has clear advantages. Recent initiatives such as Better Government for Older People and the New Deal for Young People provide models of different approaches to allowing experimentation.   The departments concerned first need to learn and promulgate the lessons of the process they have been through covering, for example, what they did to ensure that legislation is framed in such a way as to allow variation and flexibility where appropriate. Policy makers then need to build on this good practice.   This may be something that the Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) – part of whose remit is to promote good practice in policy making – can help with.

6.8   The PIU's forthcoming study on accountability and incentives will make proposals for tackling the accountability issues which discourage innovation and risk taking. At the same time, policy makers need to improve their understanding of risk

and how to manage it. The Better Regulation Task Force and the Regulatory Impact Unit (RIU) in the Cabinet Office are together looking at the issue of risk and how it affects policy making. A seminar earlier this year concluded that there is a need for more openness in the way government assesses and manages risks if public confidence is to be maintained. There is also a need for clarity over the basis on which decisions will be taken. Following the seminar, the RIU is drawing up a policy statement setting out the Government's overall approach to risk and departments have agreed that they will publish their own risk frameworks. The Health and Safety Executive has already issued its framework for consultation. The RIU is also looking at possible areas for evaluation and guidance on media handling. At a lower level, there is a recognition that policy makers need to be better equipped to manage risks at programme and policy level. This need is being addressed by the RIU in collaboration with the Inter-departmental Liaison Group on Risk Assessment and CMPS, through the development of revised training.

CHAPTER 7

USE OF EVIDENCE

Use of evidence - what it means:

7.1   This Government's declaration that 'what counts is what works' is the basis for the present heightened interest in the part played by evidence in policy making. The White Paper makes it clear that policy decisions should be based on sound evidence. The raw ingredient of evidence is information. Good quality policy making depends on high quality information, derived from a variety of sources – expert knowledge; existing domestic and international research; existing statistics; stakeholder consultation; evaluation of previous policies; new research, if appropriate; or secondary sources, including the internet.   Evidence can also include analysis of the outcome of consultation, costings of policy options and the results of economic or statistical modelling. To be as effective as possible, evidence needs to be provided by, and/or be interpreted by, experts in the field working closely with policy makers. This expertise includes economists and statisticians, employed and on a service-wide basis by the Government Economic Service etc, and social researchers, doctors and other scientists employed by departments.

Our findings:

7.2   The best cases we found in our work on good practice are those able to demonstrate what evidence had been used to underpin policy decisions. It is apparent that different policy areas adopt very different approaches to identifying 'what works'. In health, it is accepted that services should be exposed to rigorous scientific evaluation and the structures and mechanisms are in place to carry that through. From what we found, the same is true in other science-related policy areas, as the agriculture example set out in Figure 12 shows.

Plant Health Policy: Control of Potato Brown Rot – MAFF

Potato Brown Rot is a bacterial disease of potatoes and other crops such as tomatoes. In 1997 it was found in tomatoes grown in glasshouses at one locality in Bedfordshire. Investigations linked the outbreak to irrigation with water taken from a contaminated river. Extensive sampling and testing revealed widespread contamination of the watercourses of East Anglia, a major potato producing area.

A forthcoming EC directive requires member states to prohibit irrigation of susceptible crops from contaminated watercourses. Such prohibition in East Anglia would have had potentially serious implications for potato growers. Comparisons were drawn with the Netherlands and with Sweden who had experienced similar difficulties.

Policy decisions were based largely on cost-benefit analyses in the light of the likely costs to grower of an outbreak – anything up to £4,500 per hectare. Costs of eradicating known contamination at that stage were estimated at some £7,000 – potentially less than the cost of a single outbreak of potato brown rot. Ministers were consulted early on and supported proposals for a trial eradication exercise.

A pilot exercise was conducted in 1998 on two small rivers that were known to be contaminated. Results were very promising, achieving around 90% removal of target plants, and it was decided to extend the eradication programme to all other watercourses in East Anglia which were known to be contaminated.

Figure 12

7.3   The principle that interventions should be tested is less widely accepted in those policy areas where it is difficult to produce data with the same degree of scientific reliability and validity. This is especially true of economic and other social science research dealing with controversial and politically contested policies. Even so, it is still possible to apply rigorous scientific method as the example from DTI in Figure 13 demonstrates.

7.4   This case was relatively small scale and well focussed, but even with larger more complex social problems, evidence can be collected to identify optimum opportunities for intervention, particularly when the nature of the intervention can be targeted very

Solvent abuse labelling – DTI

Young people abusing solvents had created difficulties for the industry because, although the products were safe to use as intended, if deliberately inhaled they were highly dangerous. The dilemma was how to allow producers and retailers to sell their products whilst minimising the risk to young people. One option was to label the product with an unambiguous health warning.

The DTI commissioned quantitative and qualitative research in which 15 alternative warnings were tested with parents, teachers, young people and others over a period of two years. The then commonly used warning was shown to be largely ineffective, but three others emerged as front runners. One of the findings showed that many young people were unaware that solvent abuse could kill suddenly and they could not define the word 'fatal'.

The new warning *'solvent abuse can kill suddenly'* has now been put on millions of products sold in the high street and has been taken up by the Health Education Authority's campaign to reduce solvent abuse. The research has been published and has attracted interest world-wide.

Figure 13

precisely. This was the approach adopted for Sure Start where a cross departmental review of provision for young children involving 13 departments found evidence that early, sustained, comprehensive interventions were the most effective in preventing later social exclusion. The evidence was collected from academics, service providers and government departments. It was on the basis of a report presenting this evidence, that the Government decided to allocate over £450 million to set up local Sure Start programmes in England.

7.5 Whilst there is plenty of research available in areas such as education, social services and criminal justice, the coverage is patchy and there is little consensus amongst the research community about the appropriateness of particular methodologies or how research evidence should be used to inform policy and practice. These factors perhaps contribute to our finding that, although there are examples of good practice, in some areas of policy the generation and use of information and research in policy making is not as strong as it needs to be to support the Government's pragmatic approach.

7.6   Research commissioned by departments is only one source of evidence for policy making but with over £350 million spent on policy-related research in 1998/99, it is clearly a significant one. Recent work by the Council for Science and Technology found that no department was really organised to make the best possible use of science and technology either in delivering its immediate objectives or in formulating its strategy for the long term. Our evidence suggests that the same is true of social and economic research.

7.7   Where technical and scientific research does exist it is important to ensure that it is in a form which is accessible to generalist policy makers. A number of good practice cases referred to using departmental specialists, including statisticians and economists, as part of the policy process. But our interviews revealed anecdotal evidence that little of the research commissioned by departments or other academic research was used by policy makers. There does seem to be a need to ensure that policy makers either have the skills themselves to find and interpret research data, or have access to others who have them (as they do in those departments which have specialised analytical services divisions). The existence and provision of evidence by itself is not sufficient.

7.8   One of the analytical tools which provides evidence for policy making is micro-economic modelling. Concern has been expressed recently about weaknesses in departments' capability in this area. Deficiencies in economic modelling and other analytical capabilities raise questions about the robustness of the policy decisions reached.

7.9   We also looked at work carried out by the State Services Commission in New Zealand which considered the effective use of information in policy advice. That work identified that policy makers' ability to access evidence-based advice is constrained in a number of ways. For example, the demand for quick fixes means policy makers often do not have time for in-depth research (though techniques such as interim findings, qualitative work and omnibus surveys can inform policy early). Where time is not a

constraint, the sheer volume of research material available can be daunting. There is a danger of information 'overload', compounded by a shortage of people with the skills needed to act as an 'intelligent customer' for research and to understand or interpret available information. And, of course, in many cases evidence can either be incomplete, contradictory or inconclusive, adding to the difficulty of taking informed decisions rather than reducing it. Finally, the growing emphasis on cross-cutting policies increases the need for cross-cutting information and research if either duplication of effort or information gaps are to be avoided. All of these findings have been echoed in our discussions with policy makers here.

7.10   Our conclusion is that ensuring that policy making becomes more soundly based on evidence of what works means tackling two key issues – the need to improve departments' capacity to make best use of evidence; and the need to improve the accessibility of the evidence available to policy makers.

Ideas for the future:

7.11   **Departmental research strategies:** Departments' ability to use the research they themselves commission to best effect was questioned in the study by the Council for Science and Technology referred to in paragraph 7.6. Whilst some departments are better placed than others, it seems unarguable that all departments should be taking a strategic and forward-looking approach to their use of research. The mechanism for doing this proposed by the Council for Science and Technology – and one which we endorse for all departments with extensive research interests – is the development of a single, over-arching research strategy, related to the priorities and objectives set out in departments' PSAs. Tobe effective, the strategies need to look beyond the timescales of any one expenditure review or, indeed, the life of the Parliament. They must take account of the key scientific and/or socio-economic issues departments need to address and the provision of professional expertise to support policy makers over the long term. The introduction of such strategies would do much to give departments the capacity to take a central overview of their future research whilst leaving them free to develop their own systems for taking decisions on research spending.

7.12   **Joining up between departments***:* The drawing up of departmental research strategies alone is not enough: they also need to be joined up.   There are many examples of good cross-departmental co-operation on individual projects and programmes – such as DTI and DETR working together on environmental research and developing new technologies for transport and the Government Social Research Network – but the arrangements for sharing views on priorities or approaches are patchy.   One option for further strengthening the overall co-ordination of research across government would be to give someone overall responsibility for ensuring that research effort is joined up and avoids both duplication and gaps.   Canada's on-going Policy Research Initiative (see Figure 14) may provide a model.   The question of 'joining up' will need further consideration once departmental strategies have been drawn up.   In the mean time, better communication and the discussion of strategies between departments may be enough to overcome these shortcomings.

Policy Research Initiative – Canada

The PRI was launched in 1996 to build a solid foundation of horizontal research upon which future policy decisions could be made. The initiative brings together over thirty government departments and is supported by the Policy Research Secretariat.

- In phase 1, Departments identified key pressure points in Canadian society, assessing the current state of knowledge and pinpointing research gaps that needed to be filled in order to support these gaps. A work plan was developed to address these gaps.
- Phase 2 went deeper by establishing four inter-departmental research networks – growth, human development, social cohesion and global challenges and opportunities – and a fifth working group is looking at transition to the knowledge-based society and economy.
- Policy research is disseminated throughout government and the policy research community via facilitating networks, conferences, seminars, regular reports and newsletters where it informs policy development and thinking.

Figure 14

7.13   **Maintaining the 'intelligent customer' role:** If policy makers are to make the best use of evidence then they must be able to understand and interpret often very

technical research. This has traditionally been achieved by having suitably qualified civil servants working either alongside or in the same teams as policy makers. Such people do not have to be career civil servants. Specialisms such as economics, statistics, law and accountancy that are formally organised on a service-wide basis offer long term career opportunities. The attractions of a civil service career for other professionals, be they scientists, doctors or social scientists, are not so obvious. There is evidence that once specialists in these categories are in competition for promotion with administrators it is the latter who tend to succeed. This may indicate that specialists should be offered tailored development opportunities, in addition to the long-standing SPATS scheme which provides a route for them to become administrators.

7.14   There is no doubt that policy makers will continue to need the professional skills and expertise of specialists. It is important that departments should take action now to ensure that they are able to meet demand for an appropriate level of scientific and other specialist expertise and to attract the right calibre of individuals. Co-ordination between departments will help to ensure that opportunities for career development are maximised. Departments should also aim to make regular and systematic use of inward and outward secondments of specialist staff at all levels with Research Councils, universities and the private sector. In addition, policy makers themselves need to have a grounding in relevant areas of expertise in order to use professional input effectively. Ensuring that this is the case means providing development and training for policy makers in these specialist areas where they are particularly relevant.

7.15   **Economic modelling:** To address the concern expressed about the quality of departments' economic modelling capability in key policy areas, the PIU are carrying out a short term study, identifying strengths and weaknesses and making recommendations for change. Amongst the issues to be considered are the integration of professionals and policy makers; obstacles to recruiting first rate specialists; and the process for deciding priorities for the use of research funds. The findings of this study should give departments important pointers for improving their use of specialists more generally.

7.16 **Improving the accessibility of research evidence:** Moves are already underway to address the 'user friendliness' of the evidence base. The National Health Service (NHS) recently announced the establishment of a national Electronic Library for Health which will provide easy access to best available current knowledge on health and healthcare, clinical practice and patient choice. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has recently invited bids from institutions to create a national 'Centre for Evidence-Based Policy'. The successful bidder will develop a network of international collaborations, forming an extensive system of linked databases in different policy areas. The databases will contain both research reviews and policy evaluations from the UK, US, Europe and the rest of the world. The invitation envisages that different policy 'nodes' will be owned by relevant departments or research centres. The CMPS will work alongside the Centre for Evidence-Based Policy. Its role has yet to be determined but it will certainly want to encourage departments both to contribute actively to development of the database and to use it. The Centre will provide policy makers with a new and more accessible source of policy relevant evidence.

7.17 Useful as the new Centre for Evidence-Based Policy will be, our findings suggest that there may be a need to go further and to share knowledge not just about relevant research but also about policy making more generally. Policy makers have suggested that they would like to have easy access to information about policy making both within their own department and elsewhere. The concept is of a 'knowledge pool', akin to the one set up as part of the UK Foresight programme, but dealing with policy making. Such systems exist and are used in consultancy firms where ready access to a wide range of information is a vital factor in success (see Figure 15).

> **Knowledge management – McKinseys**
>
> McKinsey's consultants can get information from three main sources: direct from the client; from McKinsey's own institutional knowledge base; and from external sources. The institutional knowledge base includes an information unit, staffed by generalists who have well-developed skills in accessing relevant information from a wide range of

sources. It also includes a research unit, to provide depth of information, which is staffed by subject specialists who can not only access information but also assess its quality.

McKinseys have tried actively to develop a culture that rewards sharing and learning from others' experience in spite of the tendency for its consultants to compete. All consultants are required to provide an account of each case they have worked on which is posted on a Practice Development (PD) net database and which can be accessed by all of the other consultants on line. The account is written in a standard format to make it simple to use. Client confidentiality precludes too much detail being posted on the PD net, but consultants have found it most useful to identify people who have worked on projects similar to their own or with the same client previously with whom they can discuss their current project

Figure 15

7.18   The knowledge pool could contain information in a standard format covering: the objectives of new policy projects, grouped by outcome or by sector; the results of impact assessments carried out; relevant consultation documents and information about responses; details of evidence used; and, at the end of the process, details of the evaluation of the policy. Over time this would build into a historic record of success and failure, helping to supplement government's far from perfect 'institutional memory'

7.19   This thinking is being taken up by the CMPS as it develops its role.   The creation of any 'knowledge pool' will require the extensive involvement of departments in order to ensure that it meets their needs and takes account of work already under way, such as the DfEE work to set up an equivalent in education to the Cochrane Collaboration in medicine. The key will be to give enough time and effort to considering the information needs of the intended clients, alongside the issue of technical feasibility, training, system design and financing. CMPS propose that they should design and manage the overall knowledge pool but departments should take the lead in the various policy areas. At present, CMPS envisage that the knowledge pool will encompass:

- a comprehensive directory of policy expertise across departments;

- a 'landscape map' of the current policy agenda;

- a major resource centre, along the lines outlined above, to serve the needs of policy makers; and

- a cross-departmental research and evaluation function.

7.20   The creation of a knowledge pool, coupled with the creation of the Centre for Evidence-Based Policy, is capable of making a very significant contribution to improving both the capability of departments to use evidence and the accessibility and user friendliness of that evidence. The systematic gathering and sharing of information on policy making by policy makers should also help to create a common policy focus, encouraging participation and mutual understanding with benefits both in terms of building the corporate identity of the civil service and generating greater openness in policy making. In developing these ideas it will be important to take account of work already going on in departments in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy.

7.21 **Developing a 'policy researcher' role:** The development of a 'knowledge pool' is clearly a relatively long-term solution to the need to improve the use of evidence. A more easily implemented option may be for departments to set up a specialism in evidence gathering. Such a role would be an extension of the information officer / librarian and research analyst roles that already exist in many departments and could be modelled on practice in consultancy firms. The latter ease the burden of basic evidence gathering on consultants by employing specialists to find information on their behalf. The researchers are experts in sources of published information and can scan a number of sources and provide readily available information quickly to form the basis of further work by the policy maker. Whilst there might need to be a cadre of permanent policy researchers, these posts could provide excellent early developmental opportunities for new recruits, especially fast-streamers, destined to work as policy makers. Equipping future policy makers with these kinds of skills should help to ensure that expertise and familiarity with use of evidence is extended throughout the policy area. Networking - either in person or electronically or both - would be essential to

avoid creating new 'silos' for the researchers to work in but, in our view, such a role could do much to relieve some of the day to day pressures on policy makers.

7.22   Finally, there is a tendency to think of evidence as something that is only generated by major pieces of research. In any policy area there is a great deal of critical evidence held in the minds of both front-line staff in departments, agencies and local authorities and those to whom the policy is directed. Very often they will have a clearer idea than the policy makers about why a situation is as it is and why previous initiatives have failed. Gathering that evidence through interviews or surveys can provide a very valuable input to the policy making process and can often be done much more quickly than more conventional research.

CHAPTER 8

INCLUSIVENESS

Inclusiveness – what it means

8.1   The concept of inclusiveness as outlined in the White Paper is concerned with ensuring that policy makers take as full account as possible of the impact the policy will have on different groups – families, businesses, ethnic minorities, older people, the disabled, women – who are affected by the policy. As well as being a mechanism for ensuring fairness, it also gives policy makers the opportunity to maximise their understanding of how the policy will work on the ground and to see its operation from the point of view of the user, thus reducing the likelihood of unintended consequences. The principal way of achieving these objectives is by involving a wide range of interested parties – such as those who will be affected, service deliverers/implementers, academics and voluntary organisations – in the policy process. Considering the effect of policies on different groups is done formally through impact assessment techniques.

Our findings

8.2   Our good practice audit showed a reasonable awareness of the need to involve key players in making policy. As indicated in Chapter 6, consultation is one area of policy making where innovation and new approaches are most in evidence. Exercises like 'Listening to Women' are involving new and previously ignored groups in the policy-making process. Likewise, some of the credit for the positive response to the Competitiveness White Paper is given by DTI to the very direct and close consultation with a wide range of business representatives that the White Paper received. Some 200 business leaders contributed to six competitiveness working parties and eight Treasury/DTI productivity seminars. A number of the specific proposals in the White Paper had their origins in the recommendations from the working parties. Equally, the example in Figure 16 shows good practice in operation.

The review of economic development in Northern Ireland was initiated in January 1998 to offer the new Northern Ireland Assembly recommendations on how a more vibrant, competitive and inclusive economy might be developed. In commissioning the review the Minister stressed it was to be a collaborative venture between the public and private sectors which would build up a consensus about the direction of the strategy and acceptance by all involved of their role in delivering it. Previously economic development strategies had been led by officials who took advice from key figures in the academic and wider community.

Over 300 stakeholders were involved. The steering group which led the review comprised people from the private sector, local government, trade unions and departmental officials. Seven cross sector working groups were established to look at areas such as culture, innovation and design and were chaired by leading figures from the business and academic communities. Eleven sector working groups were also set up to look at issues and prospects for specific industry sectors. And a consultative panel with some 65 members representing 30 different organisations was drawn together to allow for widespread community input to, and comment on, the emerging strategy.

Figure 16

8.3   Whilst the benefits of effective consultation are increasingly acknowledged, it is not without its risks and pitfalls. Work by the OECD has identified the benefits and dangers set out in Figure 17. We found ready recognition of the pitfalls amongst policy makers and that in some cases the costs and time needed to carry out an exercise were such that policy makers chose not to proceed.

8.4   We still found some evidence of consultation being used primarily as a means to flush out challenges to emerging policies. Such an approach can undermine public and interest group confidence in policy making. Consultation should be seen by policy makers as part of the gathering of evidence to underpin policy advice - it is not a substitute for analysis and Ministers still have to make the final decisions.

BENEFITS & PITFALLS OF CONSULTATION	
Benefits	**Pitfalls**

Consultation can –	Consultation can –
• enhance the **quality and effectiveness** of policy making by providing insights that are otherwise difficult to obtain – such as differing cultural perspectives, hidden costs and risks, likely winners and losers and the factors shaping entrenched positions on particular initiatives	create **delay and administrative overload**. Identifying and informing interest groups, seeking views, building the results into analysis and feeding-back are all time-consuming and potentially costly activities which can lead to policy makers being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information generated;
• **strengthen the legitimacy** of final decisions	• provide a focus for the **mobilisation of resistance**, creating difficult public presentation issues especially if the scale of the challenge is greater than expected or comes from unforeseen quarters
• increase the **responsiveness of citizens** and build the confidence of communities or interest groups in dealing with particular issues	• **raise expectations** amongst those consulted that their views will be taken into account even though decisions cannot possibly reflect every opinion expressed • produce **unrepresentative views** - well organised lobby groups and sectoral interests can dominate a consultation process giving a distorted view of relevant opinion.

Figure 17

8.5   Tapping into the views of sections of the community that are not well-organised or articulate is one of the most difficult aspects of effective consultation. The New Deal For Lone Parents used representatives of the Black Training and Enterprise Group to provide ethnic minority input. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have tried to reach ethnic minority communities through the local authorities in areas when ethnic populations are particularly strong.

8.6   Building effective consultation practices means dealing with the time and cost requirement and developing the relevant skills. Effective consultation cannot be hurried. The more comprehensive the policy being developed, the more extensive the consultation is likely to need to be. Guidance issued by the Modernising Public Services Group (MPS) of the Cabinet Office – which is to be evaluated later this year

– lays down a minimum of eight weeks as the period those being consulted should be given to respond. In total, the process will take significantly longer and needs to be allowed for in planning policy-making activities. Public consultation demands some particular skills and competencies – presentation and communications skills, dealing with minority groups, survey techniques and data interpretation. These are not always well developed – or highly valued – amongst policy makers and in several of our case studies departments had bought in expertise from outside.

8.7   Inclusiveness does not simply mean involving people *outside* government in the policy process. Equally important are those who have to implement policies on the ground – a group that are too often overlooked, especially in the early thinking about policy. We found some examples of positive efforts to bring operational staff, as well as outsiders, into the process (see Figure 18). On the face of it this process

Debt recovery – Customs & Excise

Customs & Excise debt recovery law evolved piecemeal. It was confusing for business, costly to administer and potentially unfair. The proposal to remedy this was sent to over 180 relevant trade organisations representing the majority of taxpayers, including the British Bankers Association and the Institute of Chartered Accountants. In addition there was regular liaison between the group who maintain and develop policy and operational staff in the 28 Debt Management Units (DMUs) across the country who are responsible for implementing it. DMUs had an input to the development of the new policy through progress reports, network meetings and focus groups all of which helped to ensure that the policy worked effectively from the start.

Figure 18

should be reasonably straightforward in the case of a body like Customs & Excise where policy is implemented by staff in the department. It is much more difficult – and all the more important – where policy is implemented by people who have no direct organisational link with policy makers. This includes staff in local authorities who see enormous value, in terms of *their* efficiency and effectiveness, in being involved in the policy process at an early stage. Figure 19 gives an example of good practice in this area.

Crime prevention and community safety – Home Office / Local Government Association (LGA)/ Crime Prevention Agency (CPA)

Between 1992 and 1997, the local authority associations developed proposals for taking forward partnership in community safety. These built on the experience of many authorities who had worked with the police and other agencies to develop community safety strategies. Their key proposal was for a new statutory duty for authorities to lead the development of local strategies. This approach was adopted by the new Government and incorporated in the Crime and Disorder Act.

The Home Office and CPA invited the LGA to work together with other interested parties such as the police and the Audit Commission from a very early stage in producing detailed guidance for implementation of the Act. This co-operative approach began while the Bill was before Parliament so the implications emerging from consideration of implementation were fed into deliberations on the Bill.

As the Act only provides a broad framework for partnership arrangements it was recognised that detailed guidance was needed. LGA officials and local government practitioners joined government working groups and policy makers attended meetings of LGA advisory panels. Working with practitioners enabled detailed, but not prescriptive, joint guidance to be produced that has allowed implementation of the Act to proceed in a timely and efficient way.

Figure 19

8.8   Whilst consultation and involvement are essential to find out about how stakeholders perceive policy options, the formal tool policy makers are expected to use to address the question of how 'fair' are the policies they propose is the impact assessment. Our work on good practice revealed a patchy understanding of the importance and role of impact assessment. Formal assessments were carried out as part of some cases but we had little evidence that the full range of impact assessments was being done. This is perhaps understandable given the range of impacts policy makers are asked to assess and the extent and diversity of the guidance they are expected to follow.

Ideas for the future:

8.9   There seems to be plenty of good practice developing about how to involve stakeholders in the policy process. This is not an area where prescription is appropriate. The extent and nature of stakeholder involvement will vary from case to case. Policy makers are being innovative in looking for new ways to reach interested parties. It will be important over the coming years to share good practice

and learn what works best in terms of consultation and involvement in what circumstances. This is something that the CMPS will be well placed to oversee as part of its on-going remit to support good practice in policy making.

8.10   On impact assessment there is certainly room for streamlining. At present, policy makers are required to carry out separate assessments of the impact of policies on businesses, sustainable development, health and particular groups, women, older people, ethnic minorities and the disabled.   Each of these assessments is done in isolation and each is the subject of long and involved guidance. In order to help policy makers to use these various tools more effectively, the RIU has been co-ordinating a project to bring them together in a user-friendly form.   The project has come up with a 'rapid checklist' listing some of the key elements of the policy process and providing an electronic link to all the relevant guidance policy makers need when working up a policy proposal.   Providing the checklist in electronic form will ensure that policy makers always have access to the latest guidance, it will allow the checklist to be customised to the needs of individual departments and ensure that the checklist can easily be updated and amended. The intention is that the checklist will be supported by training in impact assessment provided either by departments or by the CMPS.   The proposal is being piloted in the DETR with a view to producing a single assurance document which Ministers could sign off to say that all relevant interests have been considered.

CHAPTER 9

JOINING UP POLICY MAKING

Joining up - what it means:

9.1   The Government's focus on cross-cutting outcomes presents a major challenge to policy makers. The White Paper envisages policy making built around shared goals, not around organisational structures or existing functions. But joining up is not just about shared approaches to cross-cutting issues. Horizontal joining up between organisations needs to be supplemented by better co-ordination between policy makers in the same departments and by better 'vertical' joining up with service deliverers and those who implement policy. It is not an end in itself but should be undertaken where it adds value.

Our findings:

9.2   The evidence from our work is that the importance of joining up effectively is now well understood by policy makers but they are still feeling their way when it comes to how best to achieve it. We found a broad acceptance of the need to identify and sign up to cross-cutting outcomes. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) started to define cross-cutting outcomes at government level. Although very helpful, the perception remains of a need to build on the process started by the CSR and set clearer cross-government priorities so that departments can better prioritise their own work to ensure that it contributes to the achievement of long-term goals.

9.3   As with 'inclusiveness', a majority of our cases showed evidence of departments seeking to work together horizontally and, to a lesser extent, involving their operational colleagues at an early stage of the policy making process. The example in Figure 20 demonstrates good practice in both of these.

Single Work Focused Gateway/'One' – DfEE / DSS

The policy is intended to tackle the problem of social exclusion arising from welfare dependency and poor services; a result of a fragmented benefits system which reflected bureaucratic/administrative divisions rather than the customers' need to find work.

A ministerial group was set up under the leadership of the Minister of State for Employment at the DfEE with a remit to 'develop innovative pilots for introducing a single gateway into the system and close collaboration between the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency'. Other members of the group include Ministers from five department and representatives from the private sector.

A joint strategy group of senior officials from DSS, DfEE, BA, ES, Cabinet Office, and No.10 shapes the policy at a high level. In addition to the formal consultation process business people and front line ES and BA staff were involved in an awayday at the beginning of the policy making process. Subsequently they, and others representing individual client groups, were invited to consultation and 'deconstruction' meetings which are designed to generate ideas and test emerging policy from a number of different perspectives.

Figure 20

9.4   Common reasons we were given for not joining up include incompatible IT systems, differences of culture and organisational structure and lack of time. All of these are real barriers to successful joining up that require sustained effort to overcome. There are multiple examples of possible approaches to cross-cutting problems – from the PIU, Social Exclusion Unit and Drugs Czar in the Cabinet Office to the approach used in joining up the criminal justice system (CJS) or the 'closer working' of Customs & Excise and the Inland Revenue – but, as yet, little real experience of what works best in which circumstances. Experience is growing, though, and those departments involved in joining up the CJS, for example, are starting to promulgate lessons learned by issuing guidance dealing with the specifics of developing joined up criminal justice policy (see Figure 21).

9.5   Finally, we found a very wide desire amongst those involved in the project to develop a greater sense of 'corporacy' for the civil service, turning it into an organisation with a much stronger sense of common endeavour to achieve shared goals. We found a strong desire to see the Civil Service Management Committee (CSMC) giving a positive lead on this.

Principles of new criminal justice policy development – Home Office / Lord

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<u>Chancellor's Department / Crown Prosecution Service</u>

When new policy is planned which affects more than one of the three Justice Ministers' responsibilities, the following should be produced, collectively agreed and, where necessary revisited as the policy is developed:

- A rationale and priority for the policy consistent with the strategic aims and objectives the CJS;
- A policy appraisal which specifies objectives and outcomes; identifies options based on evidence; and assesses costs, risk and benefits;
- A plan and timetable for involving and consulting others;
- A full specification of the policy based on the agreed option which sets out what is to be achieved, by when and how achievement will be measured, at what costs, to whom and how the costs are to be met;
- Plans and timetables for implementing the policy, monitoring progress and evaluating the policy

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Figure 21

<u>Ideas for the future:</u>

9.6 There seems to be a common recognition of the benefits of joining up and a genuine desire to approach cross-cutting work in a new way. Policy makers need more help though to identify when joining up is necessary and what form it can best take. The work of the PIU study on accountability and incentives to identify different types of joining up and when they might be used will be very welcome.

9.7 Similarly, policy makers accept the importance of defining cross-cutting outcomes but want to see the process begun in the CSR pursued. The Treasury is taking this thinking forward in its preparations for the next spending round. But the move to greater clarity about cross-cutting outcomes needs to be accompanied by greater clarity on responsibility and accountability for success. Again these issues are being addressed by the PIU.

9.8 The difficulties of joining up within departments and between departments and service deliverers also seem to remain. The mechanisms for dealing with them are, first, better communication between policy makers and service deliverers / implementers and, secondly, greater involvement of the latter in the policy making process. The use of secondments from local government or elsewhere into policy-making teams is happening to an increasing extent but it needs to be extended

further. Options such as job shadowing of operational staff by policy makers are simple to set up and have the potential to improve enormously policy makers' understanding of the organisational and wider context their policies will play in. Joining up is a multi-faceted and long-term problem that needs to be tackled on a broad front. Again, the PIU study recognises this and will come up with a useful menu of actions to begin to break down barriers of the sort we have found.

9.9   The CSMC is already looking at ways of building a stronger corporate identity for the civil service through the work of its four sub-groups. There is a great deal of support for greater flexibility of interchange between departments, central and local government and outside sources of expertise. Whilst this is starting to happen, more needs to be done to remove the barriers (real or perceived) to greater movement. We found support for the notion of a 'common employment area' for Whitehall to help break down barriers - though there is also recognition of the problems this could cause if it meant pulling back on the delegations made under Next Steps.

9.10   Finally, the Modernising Government White Paper envisages the use of peer review as a means of reinforcing modernisation (see Chapter 11). Development of a peer review process is being taken forward by CMPS. It could, if handled sensitively, do much to underpin greater 'corporacy' by enhancing cross-departmental understanding of issues / problems.

CHAPTER 10

LEARNING LESSONS

Learning lessons - what it means

> 10.1   The White Paper says that to be effective policy making must be a learning process which involves finding out from experience what works and what does not and making sure that others can learn from it too. This means that new policies must have evaluation of their effectiveness built into them from the start; established policies must be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are still delivering the desired outcome; and the lessons learned from evaluation must be available and accessible to other policy makers.

Defining features of evaluation	
Key characteristics:	**Key objectives:**
Evaluation should	Evaluation should aim to
• be systematic	• improve decision making
• be analytical	• help resource allocation
• study actual effects	• enhance accountability
• judge success	• bring organisational learning

Our findings

10.2   We found a widespread perception amongst policy makers that the policy process does not put enough emphasis on learning lessons from experience. The principal mechanism for learning lessons is through evaluation of new policies and by regular review of existing policies. Systematic assessment of policies, programmes and projects helps to improve the design and delivery of current and future policies. It also reinforces the use of evidence in policy making by helping policy makers to find out 'what works'. While some departments carry out relevant and practical evaluations of new policies to a high standard and manage their

evaluation work in a strategic way, in others the work is unsystematic, low profile and has limited impact on Ministerial policy decisions.

10.3   Our good practice work looked principally at evaluation of individual policies and programmes.   In almost all cases, policy makers envisaged some kind of evaluation but the quality of what had happened or was expected to take place was very variable.   In some cases, the criteria by which success was to be measured were long-term trends without any indication of how the effect of the policy was to be isolated from the other factors in a complex situation.   Others focussed on technical outputs without reference to the wider outcome.   The best cases showed departments preparing to evaluate from a number of different perspectives and over a range of timescales (see Figure 22).   If completed according to plan this information would provide a substantial body of evidence on the policy's effectiveness.

National Training Organisation Network - DfEE

The characteristics of a successful National Training Organisation (NTO) were published in December 1998.   Performance will be measured against formal indicators –
- a three year longitudinal evaluation
- DfEE enabling agreements
- the priorities set out in the annual prospectus
- the annual survey of NTO activity
- research planned for 1999-00 into the impact of NTOs
- the re-recognition process planned for implementation in 2000
- uptake of NTO products such as vocational qualifications
- sectoral and employment coverage of the workforce.

And informal indicators –
- Feedback from within DfEE and other government departments
- Attendance at NTO events
- Views of the NTO Recognition Panel

Figure 22

10.4   Once again the disciplines of project management which make policy makers specify outcomes from the outset seem to have been effective in encouraging departments to think about evaluation as an integral part of the policy making process. They help to counter the pressure on policy makers to develop,

obtain parliamentary approval for and implement policy very fast which leaves little time for them to consider the basic information that will demonstrate whether or not policies and programmes are achieving what they set out to.

10.5   The White Paper's calls for greater innovation and risk taking, together with its focus on cross-cutting outcomes all increase the need for high quality evaluation. The more policy makers innovate, the less certainty they can have about achieving intended results and the greater the need to assess policy impacts and be prepared to change tack. There are also concerns around timing. Evaluators have long faced a tension between the wish to generate results early enough to be relevant to current and imminent policy decisions and the need to wait until changes have bedded down enough to generate robust findings and lessons.

10.6   Our conclusion from our good practice work and reviewing the recent and extensive literature on the subject is that there are fundamental issues that need addressing if policy making is to become the learning process the White Paper envisages. There is a need, first, to foster an evaluation culture amongst policy makers and decision takers; and, secondly, to improve evaluation practice so it can meet the demand for evaluation as effectively as possible. .

Ideas for the future:

10.7   The first pre-requisite for a culture where evaluation is taken for granted is a lead from the top, with Ministers and the most senior civil servants understanding the value of evaluation and demonstrating their willingness to make effective use of evaluation-generated advice. That said, it is important that Ministers and policy makers have realistic expectations about its use. The objective of evaluation is to provide useful information and reduce uncertainty in relation to the policies or programmes it studies, but it cannot give 'right' answers or replace judgement in decision making.

10.8   Although the necessary lead from the top exists in some departments, to achieve consistency across Whitehall the message needs to be reinforced. One approach would be to ask either the Treasury or the Minister for the Cabinet Office,

with the Treasury, to lead action to strengthen the existing culture. Such actions might include amending Cabinet Committee guidance to require that Cabinet papers include explicit references to ways in which lessons have been learned from previous experience (along the lines of the present requirements for impact appraisal); encouraging Select Committees to take a closer interest in evaluation work; and asking all departments to cover their evaluation work and the application of lessons learned in their annual reports.

10.9   Equally important is encouraging departments **to manage their evaluation activities strategically**. Some, like the DTI (see Figure 23) and the DSS, do so already but there is a long way to go before this kind of approach is the norm.

Evaluation – DTI

The DTI evaluates many of its programmes and policies yearly and publishes the results. Specialist evaluators work both throughout the department in partnership with programme budget holders and in a central evaluation unit to manage the process. Every year the central unit invites bids from the 'field' evaluators on programmes that are suitable for evaluation. The central unit co-ordinates the bidding processes and recommends the priority of each bid.

An Evaluation and Policy Improvement Committee (EPIC) has responsibility for approving the evaluation work programme for the year. The Committee is chaired by the Head of the Finance and Resource Directorate and comprises budget holders and economists.

Once approved the 'field' evaluator – in partnership with the central unit - prepares a plan for the evaluation which reflects the desired outcome of the programme and satisfies the Department's requirements on methodology and standards. The plan is then subject to approval by an Evaluation Methodology Group (EMG) and, if successful, implemented by the field evaluator or put out to tender. The draft evaluation report is submitted to the EMG following which the chair drafts a letter to the budget holder pulling out the main points for action and lessons learned. The budget holder is required to respond to EMG within three months, after which the report is published and, if appropriate, the department's response is also published.

Figure 23

10.10   Adopting a strategic approach means organising an evaluation programme to correspond to the needs and priorities set out in PSAs; planning evaluations of policies and programmes as they are developed; and having in place mechanisms

for learning lessons from evaluation results. This management approach needs to be reinforced by appointing an individual to be the 'intelligent customer', responsible for commissioning, planning and receiving each evaluation report and an action manager to handle follow up to the report. Equally, policy makers have a responsibility to ensure that short-term pressures do not prevent them from agreeing clear, unambiguous statements of desired outputs and outcomes at the start of the policy process in order to facilitate later evaluation.

10.11   The drive for better front-line services can strain the **budgets** available for evaluation. In the USA, this has been addressed through legislation earmarking 1% of programme budgets for evaluation work. Such a standard approach is crude and unlikely to meet the National Audit Office's requirements for appropriate allocation of funds. But it is essential that the scale, timing and source of evaluation funds should be specified for new policies, programmes and projects. The Treasury could also consider provision of funding specifically for evaluations as an incentive for departments to evaluate policies. If departments prepare and publish forward-looking evaluation programmes, internal and external evaluation communities will have the information they need to gear up for future demands.

10.12   Another mechanism for raising standards in evaluation – and one advocated by the Modernising Government White Paper – is the use of **peer review**. The CMPS has been charged with developing this idea. One approach would be to examine the evaluation system of each department in turn using a small team of people drawn from other departments. This would give each an opportunity to learn from each other how to improve their own systems and approach to evaluating policies and programmes.

10.13 The other side of the coin from improving demand for evaluation is improving the supply of effective evaluation capability. Factors influencing the credibility of evaluation include the competence of evaluators, the level of mutual trust between evaluators and those evaluated, the extent of consultation and involvement of key stakeholders (policy makers, staff implementing the policy, those

on the receiving end of government interventions) and the way findings are communicated.

10.14   If more evaluation work is to be done in future, public service and externally contracted **resources** need to be developed. There are advantages in looking first at expanding internal resources. DSS, DETR and DTI, as some of the leading evaluation departments, have large cadres of specialist staff.   This creates momentum behind evaluation work, promoting a culture of inquisitiveness about what works, and engenders greater receptiveness to evaluation findings.   Internal evaluators start from a position of knowledge of the department and its policies which helps to build confidence and credibility. On the other hand, it is important that evaluators are independent for reasons of objectivity and rigour. Contracted resources will still be needed for many evaluation projects.

10.15   Evaluators need to tailor their work to the needs of their customers. The current **technical guidance** on evaluation, the Treasury's Green Book, places greater emphasis on impact appraisal than on evaluation and the evaluation itself gives greatest weight to cost / benefit and quantitative analysis, offering limited guidance on or encouragement of less formal qualitative methods. In practice, these techniques are often complementary and the right combination will depend on the questions to be answered and the data available. The Treasury are now working with the Cabinet Office and departments to refocus the existing guidance.

10.16   Once uncovered, **lessons need to be presented effectively** if they are to be absorbed and used. One obstacle is defensiveness if the lessons are mixed and an evaluator expresses an overall judgement about a specific initiative. Far more useful in many cases will be to focus on a small number of significant and timely lessons for future policy. Completeness can, perversely, become a barrier to learning, both in terms of generating resistance to more critical elements of an evaluation and because of the sheer volume of material involved. With this in mind, a more targeted approach, presenting a few key lessons – both through executive summaries and preferably face to face – to Ministers and top officials is more likely to have an impact.

10.17   The present emphasis on **cross-cutting working** poses new challenges for evaluators.   Those working across organisational boundaries will only rarely have entirely shared interests.   Instead they may well find themselves compromising about objectives or accepting 'fuzziness' over the precise purpose of a joint initiative. While this may be necessary to get a partnership off the ground it will store up difficulties for future evaluation.   Equally, agreeing the amount and funding of joint evaluations will be more complex and they will require stronger management if they are to be done successfully. 'Joined up' ventures will often be directed at particularly intractable policy problems which will then require a more sophisticated approach to evaluation work and the right mixture of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Finally, an important new feature of joint working is the process of collaboration itself. Lessons learned about effective and ineffective forms of collaboration will be a new stream of analysis, relevant across the 'joined up' agenda.

10.18 One mechanism for tackling these new issues and improving the capability of evaluators to meet the new challenges they face will be to develop a **centre of excellence** within the Civil Service on policy evaluation.   The CMPS has a clear remit to lead the development and dissemination of good practice on evaluation. They will need to work closely with both the internal and external evaluation communities to promote high standards of evaluation, share good practice and findings amongst evaluators. The Internet and other IT facilities will provide further mechanisms for networking among evaluators in departments, agencies and the wider public and private sectors.

10.19   Finally, in addition to carrying out formal set-piece evaluations policy makers need to set up effective **feedback loops** to allow those in departments, agencies and local authorities who deliver policy on the ground to inform them about how policy is received and works in practice over time. These mechanisms might include providing regular management information but should also allow for 'softer', face to face contact between policy makers and deliverers through workshops or network meetings. They are especially important once a policy is established so that policy

makers can get early warning of any change in circumstances that may effect the outcomes the policy is designed to deliver.

CHAPTER 11

TAKING THIS FORWARD

Making it stick:

11.1   Previous chapters of this report examine what professional, 'modernised' policy making should look like and give a snapshot of where we are now in terms of achieving it.   Policy making is a very diffuse and wide-ranging activity and it is difficult to generalise, but it is apparent from our work that the changes envisaged by the Modernising Government White Paper do have far-reaching implications for policy makers.   They add up to a significant programme of change both to working practices and to culture for many parts of Whitehall.   Although a lot of progress has already been made and there is plenty of evidence of good practice in some areas, the picture is patchy both across government and across the policy process.

11.2   The previous chapters have reviewed some ideas for actions to address individual issues and these are brought together in Annexe B.   Some of those actions are already underway – indeed, some are milestones in the Modernising Government White Paper action plan – and can be expected to contribute significantly to progressing the change agenda we have outlined.   Others need to be initiated by the centre (Cabinet Office, CMPS or Treasury) or in departments.   The extent of change for policy makers in different departments will vary according to what sort of policy process they use now, the extent to which they need to 'join up' with others, the complexities of their policy responsibilities, the existing management culture and skills mix.   It seems to us vital that departments embark on their own 'policy improvement' projects as part of their work to implement the Modernising Government White Paper.   What they do and how they do it will be up to individual departments but, in our view, it will be important for the Modernising Government Project Board, chaired by Brian Bender, to retain a co-ordinating role if duplication and overlap are to be avoided and if experiences are to be shared successfully.

11.3   Equally, the centre needs to step in where it can add most value.   There are perhaps four areas coming out of our work or from the White Paper itself which might count as 'big ideas' for the centre to pursue in terms of taking forward the challenges for policy making of modernising government. They are:

- peer review;
- joint training of Ministers and policy makers;
- benchmarking of the policy process; and
- the knowledge pool.

Peer review:

11.4   Peer review, both as a mechanism to promote modernising government and, more specifically, to build on good practice in evaluation, was proposed in the White Paper. Taking peer review forward is the responsibility of the CMPS but as part of our work we carried out a brief review of three cases where peer review had been used and its use evaluated. The cases showed very clearly the benefits peer review can bring. Although the purpose for which the process was used (in one case to help the DH with decisions about resource allocation, in another to help local authorities identify their strategic change needs and in the third to turn around a failing business) all three identified benefits in terms of:

- a greater sense of 'corporacy' amongst participants and better understanding of the role of others in the organisation;
- providing an opportunity to learn from peer and share relevant experiences;
- providing legitimacy and much greater sign up to the actions that flowed from the peer review; and
- providing an opportunity for the personal development of the reviewers.

We were also able to identify common features of the process (see Figure 22) that were crucial to success.

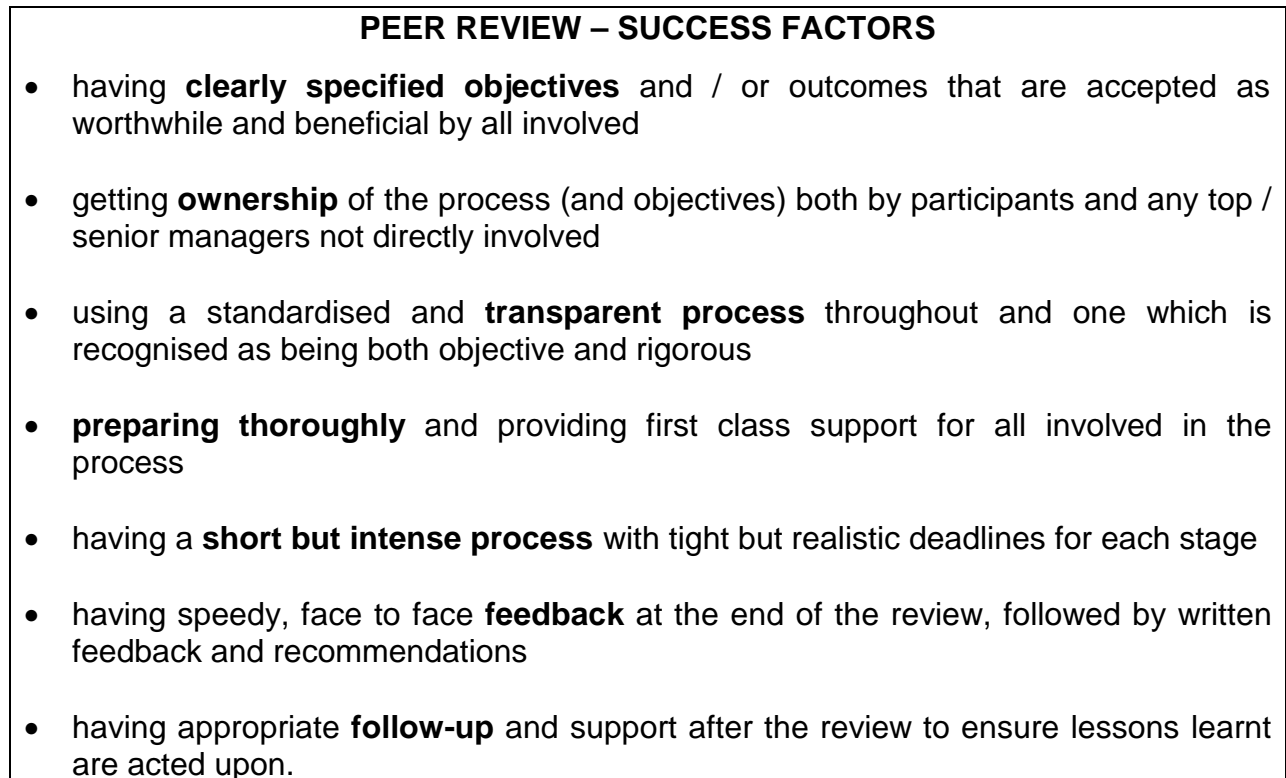
PEER REVIEW – SUCCESS FACTORS

- having **clearly specified objectives** and / or outcomes that are accepted as worthwhile and beneficial by all involved

- getting **ownership** of the process (and objectives) both by participants and any top / senior managers not directly involved

- using a standardised and **transparent process** throughout and one which is recognised as being both objective and rigorous

- **preparing thoroughly** and providing first class support for all involved in the process

- having a **short but intense process** with tight but realistic deadlines for each stage

- having speedy, face to face **feedback** at the end of the review, followed by written feedback and recommendations

- having appropriate **follow-up** and support after the review to ensure lessons learnt are acted upon.

Figure 22

11.5   The limited work we did on peer review was sufficient to convince us that, if used in accordance with the good practice principles identified above, it has the potential to be a very powerful engine for change. There is a question – yet to be resolved – as to how far it is possible to develop an integrated approach to peer review which would embrace policy making, evaluation and other elements of the modernising government agenda.   The CMPS are developing this work and the Modernising Government Project Board has already agreed that peer review of departmental action plans should go ahead.

Joint training:

11.6   In carrying out this project, we have focused very closely on policy making and how to do it. In doing so we are in danger of overlooking one key element of the policy process, namely the relationship between policy makers and Ministers. Ministers are very much in the driving seat when it comes to policy making but they have to rely heavily on the map that policy makers provide to get where they want to go. To work really well, the relationship needs to be based on mutual understanding. For policy makers this should be part of understanding the 'political context' mentioned in Chapter 2. For Ministers it means recognising the limitations of what civil servants can achieve and the constraints within which they work. It was with this kind of issue in mind that the White Paper proposed joint training on policy making for Ministers and officials.

11.7   Since publication of the White Paper, we have carried out a training needs analysis to identify what elements joint training needs to cover. That work has revealed that there is strong support from both Ministers and policy makers for the proposal for joint training on policy. There is also substantial agreement on the two priority areas to be addressed in joint training: cross-boundary working and integrating policy making and delivery. The research showed that the majority of Ministers have received no training for their policy-making role. Existing training of officials is patchy, with a mix of activities undertaken and an equally mixed range of views on their value. Our analysis also revealed a lack of consistency between departments on the training of policy makers in aspects of policy making. These findings suggest it would be helpful to develop a 'route map' of training for policy makers and to review and revise existing policy and senior management training to ensure that it reflects the new priorities. Our research identified a number of training needs and suggests that what is needed is a modular programme with a range of joint ministerial / official events. This should include establishing a 'senior government network' in which Ministers, including Secretaries of State, Permanent Secretaries and other senior policy makers can meet for focused seminars on cross-cutting and top-level management issues. A full report of our work has been sent to CMPS which is responsible for drawing up a programme of joint events for Ministers and policy makers.

Policy making benchmark:

11.8   Like any other part of the public sector, policy making should be delivered in a way which represents value for money. The Modernising Government White Paper set out the Government's commitment to review *all* civil service activities over the next five years.   These Better Quality Services reviews look systematically at present arrangements for delivering a service or function and at options for the 'best supplier'. This process has already been widely applied to service delivery functions but this is the first time policy making is to be considered.

11.9   The primary aim of our descriptive model outlined in Chapter 2 is to describe the characteristics of professional, 'modernised' policy making.   Having tested the model with policy makers, we realised that it could potentially be used by departments to assess their current policy-making capability against the standard outlined in the White Paper. Because it is similar in approach to the EFQM Excellence Model, we also identified that the model could be developed for use by departments to benchmark the effectiveness of their policy making as part of the Better Quality Services initiative. This proposal is now being taken forward by MPS in the Cabinet Office.   The plan is to produce a guide to the use of the Excellence Model in policy making, drawing on this report and our model. This approach has three advantages:

- it builds in the work done as part of this project, thereby taking into account the specific demands of the policy making function;
- it retains the Excellence Model in its pure form, tried and tested over several years and in many different organisations; and
- it provides a mechanism for managing improvements in the policy making function over time.

In addition to allowing departments to benchmark their policy making activities for the first time, it will also encourage a culture of continuous improvement in central government.

Knowledge pool:

11.10 The thinking behind the knowledge pool is set out in Chapter 7. As envisaged there, it would allow policy makers to find out about related policy work going on elsewhere, to engage in discussion and debate with fellow policy makers and to have access to key pieces of evidence. It would give the CMPS the tool with which to develop its role as the guardian and promoter of good practice in policy making. Again, if developed successfully as a cross-departmental system, the knowledge pool has the potential to bring significant benefits to the policy function.

Departmental priorities

11.11 Departments are already working on their plans to implement the Modernising Government White Paper and will have a clearer view than we can of where they need to make changes. We hope that this work will give departments a template against which they can informally assess where they now stand in terms of 'modernising' their policy making (though more formal benchmarking will have to wait until our descriptive model has been developed further). Otherwise, we see potential early wins for departments coming from the introduction of project management disciplines into policy making (as a number of them are already doing) and from experimenting with the policy researcher role outlined in Chapter 7. The other area departments will need to address as a matter of priority is developing in their policy makers the skills they need to be effective in the new policy environment.

Skills needed to deliver professional 'modernised' policy making:

11.12 The key to success in 'modernising' policy making is not a simple process change. It is also essential to equip policy makers with new skills. Policy makers will continue to need many of the 'traditional' policy-making skills – from drafting clearly and concisely, to chairing meetings effectively, to synthesising and absorbing large amounts of information quickly and accurately. In addition though, they will need new skills to meet the demands of 'modernised' policy making. The work we have done indicates that these should include:

- **understanding the context** - organisational, political and wider - in which they are working. This should include some first hand experience of the way the policy area in which they are working affects the wider world;

- **managing complex relationships** with a range of key players, relinquishing the residual command and control culture that still exists in some policy making areas;

- well developed **presentational skills**, not just the usual written and oral communication skills, but the ability to work with others to explain and to gain ownership of their ideas by different groups;

- a broader **understanding of information technology** and how it can be used to facilitate and support policy making;

- a **grounding in economics, statistics and relevant scientific disciplines** in order to act as 'intelligent customers' for complex policy evidence;

- understanding of and familiarity with using **project management disciplines** to keep work on track;

- willingness to experiment, **managing risks** as they arise; and

- willingness to continue to **learn new skills** and acquire new knowledge throughout a career in policy making and elsewhere.

11.13   Some of these skills can be acquired on the job or by planned placements in different policy areas and outside the civil service, but others will require formal training. Not all policy makers will need all of the skills in equal measure but there will be a need to develop balanced teams of policy makers that cover the full range. Managing and motivating teams will be a key skill for senior policy makers. The CMPS will have a major part to play in providing the training policy makers will need to deliver the White Paper's requirements but will clearly need to work closely with departments to provide a 'route map' for the development of effective policy makers.

Conclusion

11.14   Pulling together all the elements of change described in this report will amount to a major programme of change for most policy makers.   As with the rest of the Modernising Government agenda, change in policy making will need to be led from the top and the involvement of ministers as well as top managers and policy makers – through joint training – will be essential to success.   We hope that the thinking and ideas contained in this report will contribute to the debate and help both departments and the centre to identify effective action to bring about the White Paper 'vision' for policy making.

<div align="right">**ANNEXE A**</div>

A DESCRIPTIVE MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL POLICY MAKING

Background:

1.   This model was developed as part of a project carried out in the Cabinet Office to consider the changes that are needed to the policy making process if it is to match the 'vision' for policy making set out in the Modernising Government White Paper. The structure of the model is based on that used in the Local Government Improvement Project to describe and benchmark the overall performance of local authorities. The local government model was itself based on the Business Excellence Model.

2.   The 'features', 'themes' and 'competencies' have been based on the Modernising Government White Paper, and the ideas for 'evidence' have been suggested by policy makers from a range of departments.

3.   The model is intended to describe what an ideal policy making process would look like. It seeks to set the standard of professional, 'modernised' policy making by defining what professional policy makers should be able to do. It is intended to guide the policy making process, not to evaluate the policy which is the outcome of the process, although evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy itself is part of the policy making process. We accept that it is possible to produce effective policy without following the policy making process described here, but would argue that the chances of producing effective policies are greatly improved by doing so.

4.   The model does not attempt to be prescriptive about the type of management structures that are used in policy making. However, we have found that the disciplines of project management and the techniques it provides are effective in encouraging policy makers to consider many of the issues highlighted here as part of professional, 'modernised' policy making. For example, doing a stakeholder analysis helps policy makers to ensure that they have identified and included all stakeholders. Having a project board and steering group provides a means of bringing in others and joining up.

Techniques such as risk analysis help to provide a less risk averse environment in which innovative and creative ideas can flourish. And having to specify precise outcomes, products, success criteria and milestones helps policy makers to build evaluation into the policy making process from the outset.

The model:

5.   The model comprises:

- nine **features** of a policy-making process which should produce fully effective policies;

- three **themes** that a fully effective policy-making process will need to encompass;

- core **competencies** that relate to each theme; and

- **definitions** of the core competencies with an indication of the evidence that might be relevant to showing that the competencies are being met.

The evidence based indicators are intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive. It will be for departments to provide indicators that best suit their own circumstances.

Features of professional policy making:

A policy-making process which is fully effective:

- clearly defines outcomes and takes a long term view, taking into account the likely effect and impact of the policy in the future five to ten years and beyond;

- takes full account of the national, European and international situation;

- takes a holistic view looking beyond institutional boundaries to the government's strategic objectives;

- is flexible and innovative, willing to question established ways of dealing with things and encourage new and creative ideas;

- uses the best available evidence from a wide range of sources;

- constantly reviews existing policy to ensure it is really dealing with problems it was designed to solve without having unintended detrimental effects elsewhere;

- is fair to all people directly or indirectly affected by it and takes account of its impact more generally;

- involves all key stakeholders at an early stage and throughout its development;

- learns from experience of what works and what doesn't through systematic evaluation.

Themes

To demonstrate all of the characteristics listed above policy-making will need high levels of achievement in each of these three areas:

- Vision

- Effectiveness

- Continuous Improvement

Core competencies

Theme	Competency	Definition and evidence
Vision	Forward looking	*Definition* – Policy makers clearly define the outcomes the policy is designed to achieve and, where appropriate, take a long-term view based on statistical trends and informed predictions of social, political economic and cultural trends, for at least five years into the future of the likely effect and impact of the policy. *Evidence* – Statement of intended outcomes prepared at early stage; contingency planning; scenario planning; evidence of taking into account the Government's longer term strategy. Used DTI's Foresight programme and/or forecasting work done by other government departments available on the GSI etc. Took into account lessons from evaluations of previous, related policies.
Vision	Outward looking	*Definition* – Policy makers take account of influencing factors in the national, European and international situation; draw on experience in other countries; and consider how policy will be communicated with the

Theme	Competency	Definition and evidence
		public. *Evidence* – Worked closely with international divisions, agencies etc, use made of OECD, EU mechanisms etc. Looked at how other countries dealt with the issue Worked closely with colleagues in Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland Offices. Carried out international benchmarking; recognised regional variation within England. Communications/presentation strategy prepared and implemented
Vision	Innovative and creative	*Definition* - Policy makers are flexible and innovative, questioning established ways of dealing with things; encouraging new and creative ideas; and, where appropriate, making established ways work better. Wherever possible, open to comments and suggestions of others. Risks are identified and actively managed. Experimentation and diversity are encouraged through use of pilots / trials. *Evidence* – used alternatives to the usual ways of working (brainstorming sessions etc); took the issue back to the beginning; examined evidence to get a better idea of the problem itself including why previous policy solutions failed; and defined success in terms of outcomes already identified. Effective use of pilots / trials. Consciously assessed and managed risk; took steps to create management structures which promoted new ideas and effective team working. Appropriate use made of IT systems; people brought in to policy team from outside.
Effectiveness	Evidence based	*Definition* – Policy makers' advice / decisions are based upon the best available evidence from a wide range of sources; all key stakeholders are involved at an early stage and throughout the policy's development. All relevant evidence, including that from specialists, is available in an accessible and meaningful form to policy makers. *Evidence* – Commissioned new research where appropriate and considered existing research; consulted relevant experts and/or used internal and external

Theme	Competency	Definition and evidence
		consultants appropriately. Considered range of properly costed and appraised options.
Effectiveness	Inclusive	*Definition* - Policy makers take account of the impact on and/or meet the needs of to all people directly or indirectly affected by the policy; and involve key stakeholders directly in the policy process. *Evidence* – Consulted those responsible for service delivery / implementation and those who would be at the receiving end or otherwise affected by the policy. Schemes including *Listening to Women* and *Consulting Older People* used where appropriate. Range of impact assessments made and included in evidence leading to decisions. Feedback on operation of policy sought from recipients and front line deliverers.
Effectiveness	Joined up	*Definition* – Policy makers take a holistic view, looking beyond institutional boundaries to the government's strategic objectives and seek to establish the ethical, moral and legal base for policy. Consider appropriate management / organisational structures needed to deliver cross-cutting objectives. Develop a rewards and incentives system that encourages and maintains cross-cutting working. *Evidence* – Cross cutting objectives clearly defined at the outset; joint working groups or other arrangements with other departments clearly defined and well understood; barriers to effective joined up working clearly identified with strategy to overcome them. Information shared at every stage of the policy process with those who need to know. Implementation considered part of the policy making process and developed in close collaboration with operational staff. Policy contained negotiability to enable meaningful discussions with others who may have had competing priorities. Clear links with PSAs.
Continuous Improvement	Review	*Definition* – Existing/established policy is constantly reviewed to ensure it is really dealing with problems it was designed to solve, taking account of associated effects elsewhere.

Theme	Competency	Definition and evidence
		Evidence – Ongoing review programme in place with a range of meaningful performance measures. Mechanisms to allow service deliverers to provide feedback direct to policy makers set up. Redundant or failing policies scrapped.
Continuous Improvement	Evaluation	*Definition* – Systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of policy is built into the policy making process. *Evidence* – Clearly defined purpose for the evaluation set at outset, i.e. policy makers know what they want to learn. Success criteria defined. Means of evaluation built in to the policy making process from the outset; commitment to publish outcomes of evaluation. Pilots, where appropriate, used to influence final outcomes. Evaluation reports tailored to their audience to enable lessons to be learned.
Continuous Improvement	Learns lessons	*Definition* – Learns from experience of what works and what doesn't. *Evidence* – Information on lessons learned and good practice disseminated. Account available of what was done by policy makers as a result of lessons learned. Clear distinction drawn between failure of the policy to impact on the problem it was intended to resolve and managerial/operational failures of implementation.

ANNEXE B

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED LEVERS FOR CHANGE TO POLICY MAKING

Features of policy making	Departmental actions	Central actions
Long-term and forward-looking policy making	• 'Join up' work on scenarios and learn lessons from experience in other departments by revitalising the Whitehall Futures Network	• Consider ways of overcoming barriers to policy makers using long-term work done in departments (PIU – strategic challenges study)
Outward-looking policy making	• Encourage policy makers to 'think Europe' by ensuring that all policy jobs have explicit references to Europe in the job description and objectives • Improve understanding of and influence over the EU negotiation process by making use of Cabinet Office guidance on better European regulation • Ensure communication becomes an integral part of policy making by looking for new ways of communicating with those affected by policy	• Strengthen links with policy makers in other EU countries by extending bi-lateral exchange arrangements with individual EU countries (Cabinet Office – CSMC)
Innovation and flexibility	• Become less insular by bringing in staff from relevant outside organisations either on short- and long-term secondments; by making access to the internet readily available to policy makers; and setting up networks with policy makers from other departments where interests overlap • Learn lessons from recent experience of piloting new policies by evaluating success of pilot phases of Sure Start, New Deal for Young People and other area based initiatives • Become more open about risk and how it is managed by publishing departmental risk frameworks	• Propose action to overcome accountability barriers to innovation and risk-taking (PIU – study on accountabilities and incentives) • Improve awareness of risk and how to manage it by drawing up a policy statement setting out the Government's approach to risk (Cabinet Office – RIU) • Improve understanding of risk management by developing revised training (Cabinet Office – RIU / CMPS)
Use of evidence	• Improve department's overall approach to research by preparing departmental research strategies related to PSA	• Address concerns about the quality of department's economic modelling capacity (PIU – study on economic-modelling)

Features of policy making	Departmental actions	Central actions
	objectives • Improve cross-departmental co-ordination of research by considering giving one department responsibility for government strategy on research; and by setting up a network of those responsible for departmental research strategies • Ensure that departments' continue to have access to the specialist expertise they need by making use of inward and outward secondments; considering the particular development needs of specialist staff ; and co-ordinating career development activities for them • Improve research skills in departments by developing a specialist 'policy researcher' role	• Improve the availability of evidence by encouraging departments to contribute to and use the Centre for Evidence-based Policy (Cabinet Office – CMPS) • Improve the accessibility of policy evidence by investigating and taking forward action to set up a policy-making 'knowledge pool'
Inclusiveness	• Streamline impact assessment process by using 'rapid checklist'	• Improve understanding of good practice in involving outsiders in the policy process by sharing lessons about what works (Cabinet Office – CMPS) • Improve understanding of impact assessment by developing training; and working with DETR to develop the 'rapid checklist' into a single impact assurance document (Cabinet Office – RIU)
Joining up policy making	• Improve *vertical* joining up by improving communication between policy makers and service deliverers / implementers; seconding service deliverers / implementers into policy teams; and / or encouraging policy makers to shadow the jobs of service deliverers for limited periods	• Clarify the 'ground rules' for successful joining up by identifying levers and incentives to overcome the difficulties of accountability, budgeting and organisational culture (PIU – study on accountability and incentives) • Improve the definition of cross-cutting outcomes contained in PSAs (Treasury / Cabinet Office) • Develop a greater sense of 'corporacy' across the civil service by building on the work done by the four sub-groups of the Civil Service Management Committee (Cabinet Office – CSMC)
Learning lessons	• Adopt a strategic approach to learning lessons by developing	• Foster an evaluation culture by asking a Cabinet Office / Treasury

Features of policy making	Departmental actions	Central actions
	an evaluation programme that corresponds to the priorities set out in PSAs; and ensuring that policy makers agree clear, unambiguous statements of desired outcomes at the start of the policy process • Ensure adequate skilled people are available to evaluate policies by developing HR policies that facilitate this	Minister to take responsibility for improving use of evaluation (Cabinet Office / Treasury) • Provide an incentive for departments to evaluate by considering funding allocated specifically for the purpose (Treasury) • Raise standards in evaluation by carrying out peer review; and developing a 'centre of excellence' in evaluation (Cabinet Office – CMPS)
Cross-cutting actions	• Improve the overall management of the policy process by adopting project management disciplines for all policy work	• Raise standards in policy making by carrying out peer review of the policy process between and / or within departments (Cabinet Office – CMPS) • Raise standards in policy making by developing the 'descriptive model' of policy making into a benchmark for use in the Better Quality Services initiative(Cabinet Office – MPS) • Improve awareness of good practice by developing joint training of Ministers and policy makers (Cabinet Office – CMPS)