FOREWORD

Hilary Armstrong MP,

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Minister for the Cabinet Office and Social Exclusion

I am pleased to present the *Cabinet Office Departmental Report 2006*. This document sets out the Department's achievements over 2005–06, including progress against Public Service Agreement targets and expenditure plans, as well as priorities for the coming year.

The Department has achieved success in leading on key cross-cutting issues across government. These successes include launching *Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology*, a government-wide strategy on improving public value through more effective use of IT and leading a successful UK Presidency of the European Union. The Department has also taken forward the new Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill, which aims to simplify legislation and the processes that impact on businesses, the public sector and the voluntary sector.

"The Department has achieved success in leading on key cross-cutting issues across government."

Planning for and responding to emergencies – both at home and abroad – continues to be a key Cabinet Office responsibility. The Department operated the central crisis machinery facilities, the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), and the News Coordination Centre, in response to the London bombings in July 2005. This was the most visible example of the Department's work to coordinate the Government's efforts on civil contingencies and counter-terrorism.

The launch of *Delivering a Diverse Civil Service – A 10-Point Plan* in November 2005 provides a tough framework for improving diversity in the Civil Service talent pool and gaining a greater insight into the society we serve.

Professional Skills for Government (PSG) was launched across the Civil Service by the Cabinet Office in September 2005. The programme provides a framework of skills and experience to help staff develop their careers in a structured manner, in line with future requirements. This aim was helped by the launch in June 2005 of the National School for Government, which aligns development opportunities more closely with government aims. PSG will be taken forward by Government Skills, the new Sector Skills Council for central government, launched in February 2006.

Alongside improvements in individuals' skills, the Cabinet Office is working towards improving departmental performance, with the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit leading a series of departmental reviews across government. Reviews began in 2005 and should be concluded by the middle of 2007.

Hazel Blears, Minister without Portfolio and Labour Party Chair

> ‘The launch of *Delivering a Diverse Civil Service – A 10-Point Plan* provides a tough framework for improving diversity in the Civil Service.’

The Department successfully achieved re-certification as an Investor in People in April 2005. It has also taken positive steps to support the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, having received over 1,300 FOI requests with 88% being met within the 'In time' deadline.

Looking to the future, key tasks for the Cabinet Office in 2006–07 will be to refocus the Government's efforts to tackle social exclusion, and to improve the contribution that the Third Sector makes to our public services and wider society. My department will also be implementing the Transformational Government strategy, moving forward on shared services across the public sector and looking at how savings can be achieved while also enabling better and more customer-focused services across government.

John Hutton MP successfully led the Cabinet Office from May to November and Jim Murphy MP since May 2005. I now look forward to working with Hazel Blears, the new Minister without Portfolio, Pat McFadden and Ed Miliband, Parliamentary Secretaries, and the Department's staff to add to the many successes already achieved.

Ed Miliband,
Parliamentary Secretary

Pat McFadden,
Parliamentary Secretary

> "Looking to the future, key tasks for the Cabinet Office… will be to refocus the Government's efforts to tackle social exclusion."