

# Foreword

**Hilary Armstrong MP,  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
and Minister for the Cabinet Office and Social Exclusion**

**I am very pleased to introduce the Cabinet Office Departmental Report 2007. It sets out the Cabinet Office's main achievements over 2006–07, including progress against our Public Service Agreement targets and expenditure plans, in addition to our priorities for the new financial year.**



Hilary Armstrong visiting Rosslyn Infant and Junior School, Aspley



The Cabinet Office has a unique coordinating and strategic role across government. Its overarching purpose is to 'make government work better'.

It sits at the centre, to support the Prime Minister in defining and delivering the Government's objectives; support the Cabinet by driving the coherence, quality and delivery of policy and operations across departments; and strengthen the Civil Service by ensuring it is organised effectively and has the capability in terms of skills, values and leadership to deliver the Government's objectives.

This year, we have made substantial achievements in respect of our key cross-cutting governmental responsibilities. Our work to support the most disadvantaged in society saw the creation of the Social Exclusion Task Force in June 2006. Working closely with other interested departments, we published *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion* in September. The Plan explains our strategy to renew a cross-government effort to tackle persistent and deep-rooted exclusion and the role of the Cabinet Office to drive this from the centre. It represents our commitment to social justice, and to early identification and action on behalf of the individuals, families and communities who are particularly at risk.

The creation of the Office of the Third Sector in May 2006, with Ed Miliband as Minister, marked the beginning of a new dialogue between government and the charities, voluntary and community groups and social enterprises. We recognise the benefits of a meaningful partnership with the third sector in terms of pursuing social justice, reforming public service delivery and building strong communities. The publication of two key documents: our *Social Enterprise Action Plan* and

*Partnership in Public Services: an Action Plan for Third Sector Involvement* were important milestones in this ongoing relationship.

In common with our many other partners, the third sector has also benefited from the Better Regulation Executive's pursuit of our radical agenda for regulatory reform. We have worked closely with other government departments, in our strategic capacity, to drive this agenda forward so that reductions in outdated or bureaucratic regulation have been made across government.

Lastly, the Cabinet Office has led the way in ensuring that government is equipped to meet the challenges of the future in a way that is relevant and represents excellent value to the public we serve. In addition to our Transformational Government Strategy and ongoing work on the departmental Capability Review programme, Pat McFadden, Parliamentary Secretary, and Ed Miliband are leading a landmark Policy Review programme, allowing us to invite and consider diverse views on some of the key challenges we will face over the next decade. These will quite rightly feed into the negotiation of the next generation of Public Service Agreements and the priorities of the next Comprehensive Spending Review period.

I would like to thank my colleagues Hazel Blears, Ed Miliband and Pat McFadden, as well as the many dedicated staff at the Cabinet Office, for some impressive achievements over the last year and I hope that we will continue to make a real difference to improving citizens' lives.

