

SUPPORTING THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

# Supporting effective government policy-making and delivery



## Our new structure

The Cabinet Office works in partnership with No.10 to provide a comprehensive service to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the supreme committee of government. They bring together a combination of policy, resilience, security, and communications expertise, to advise and deliver the Government's priorities.

With the arrival of the new Prime Minister in June 2007, we have made some structural changes which have enhanced the policy and security and intelligence functions. The roles of Adviser to the Prime Minister on European and Global Issues, on Foreign and Defence Policy, and on Domestic Policy all moved to the centre of the Cabinet Office from No.10.

At the same time, relationships between No.10 and Cabinet Office have been strengthened. The No.10 private office, the No.10 policy unit – staffed by Special Advisers – and the No.10 press office, work more closely with core Cabinet Office units and the Prime Minister's advisers to create a total policy, security, delivery and crisis management service.

With the appointment of Jeremy Heywood in January 2008, No.10 now has a Permanent Secretary for the first time. Jeremy is helping to ensure a greater sense of cohesion between No.10 and the other Cabinet Office units engaged in supporting the Prime Minister. It's a more coordinated, coherent centre of government, which results in improved policy formulation, decision making and delivery.

## Policy formulation and decision making

The Cabinet Committee structure was also re-organised, to streamline the system and align it with the new set of 30 Public Service Agreements (PSAs).

PSAs are at the centre of departments' performance management systems. They are three-year agreements, negotiated every two years between each of the 17 main departments and HM Treasury during the Spending Review process. Each PSA sets out the department's high-level aim, priority objectives and key performance targets.

The Cabinet Committee system is supported by the Cabinet Secretariat and the Intelligence and Security function, working with the Strategy Unit and the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (now in HM Treasury). The Secretariat plays a neutral but valuable role in: bringing people together, communicating the Prime Minister's views, brokering agreement on difficult issues, and preparing policy proposals for Ministers to consider and decide on.

## Economic and Domestic Secretariat (EDS)

EDS is primarily responsible for organising Cabinet and also organises the majority of Cabinet Committees. It provides policy advice to the Prime Minister on a wide range of domestic issues and works with departments on policy proposals. EDS also has a range of other responsibilities which include:

- coordinating government policy on public sector pay with HM Treasury;
- providing advice to Gus O'Donnell, Head of the Home Civil Service, and the Prime Minister, on machinery of government issues; coordinating the business of devolved administrations across Whitehall; and
- supporting the Joint Ministerial Committee in which senior Ministers meet with their counterparts from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

EDS also provides the secretariat for the Public Services Forum (PSF), which engages trade unions in dialogue with government on workforce reform issues such as learning and skills, staff engagement, diversity and health and well-being. This year private and third sector employers have been included in PSF work. The PSF has also agreed a Joint Statement on Access to Skills, Trade Unions and Advice for staff working on central government contracts.

## Draft Legislative Programme

The new Prime Minister wanted to improve the way that Britain is governed, by revitalising democracy and listening to the public. One of his first actions was to publish a Draft Legislative Programme (DLP). This set out for the first time, the details of the Bills that would appear in the Queen's Speech in November. For the first time, the public, as well as Parliament, were asked what they thought about them, and the Government were able to consider their views before deciding what legislation should go before Parliament.

As part of the DLP consultation, East Midlands Minister Gillian Merron, went to Nottingham to meet with heads of business, community leaders and local policy makers from across the region. She said:

"I want to find out whether people think these themes are the right ones, what other issues they think the Government should be considering, and how they would like to be involved in shaping these priorities in the future. The views of local people will feed back into our thinking, paving the way for better laws which are more closely aligned to the services that people in the East Midlands want and need."

## Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007

This year the Cabinet Office also set up the independent UK Statistics Authority to replace the Office of National Statistics, in order to increase public confidence in official statistics.

Speaking at the launch of the Authority on 31 March 2008, the Chair of the Authority, Sir Michael Scholar, outlined his commitment:

"The UK Statistics Authority comes into being tomorrow, an independent statutory body, supported by all parties in both Houses of Parliament, and in all the devolved administrations, with powers and with the obligation to promote, to improve and to safeguard official statistics across the UK.

"I give you this promise, on behalf of myself and all my colleagues in the Authority, that we will do our utmost to achieve this objective, in the hope that, with time and hard work, we will make some serious progress in rebuilding public trust in UK official statistics."

Right: Gillian Merron MP, former Minister for the East Midlands and Alan Bishop, Central Office of Information Chief Executive



## The European and Global issues Secretariat (EGIS)

EGIS, which was restructured in 2007, is responsible for the coordination of the Government's European and International economic policies, and directly supports the Prime Minister's own involvement in these policy areas. This includes preparation and support to the Prime Minister at European Council and G8 meetings.

In addition to direct support to the Prime Minister, EGIS has also coordinated broader government work on key European and international dossiers including: the Future of Europe; the Single Market Review; the Lisbon Reform Programme; and the international response to climate change.

### Over the past year EGIS has supported the Prime Minister at:

- the June and December 2007 European Councils;
- the October 2007 Lisbon Informal Council;
- the March 2008 Spring European Council;
- the June 2007 G8 meeting in Bad Doberan; and
- the Prime Minister's January 2007 Downing Street Summit with other European G8 Leaders.

## Foreign and Defence Policy Secretariat (F&DPS)

The Foreign and Defence Policy Secretariat supports and advises the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, ensuring coherence, quality and delivery of foreign, defence and security policy across government departments. Its primary role is to support the work and decision-making of the National Security and International Development Committee (NSID) and its supporting sub-committees. Specifically, F&DPS:

- Ensures that collective foreign, defence and security policy decisions are facilitated and supported by timely, well-informed and objective advice.

- Helps to organise deliverables for the PM's overseas visits.
- Communicates the Prime Minister's views to Whitehall and to advisers to other countries' Heads of Government.

Its key roles include: coordinating the Government's bilateral and multilateral policies; anticipating crises and managing any coordinated interventions; and driving the Government's defence and security policy.

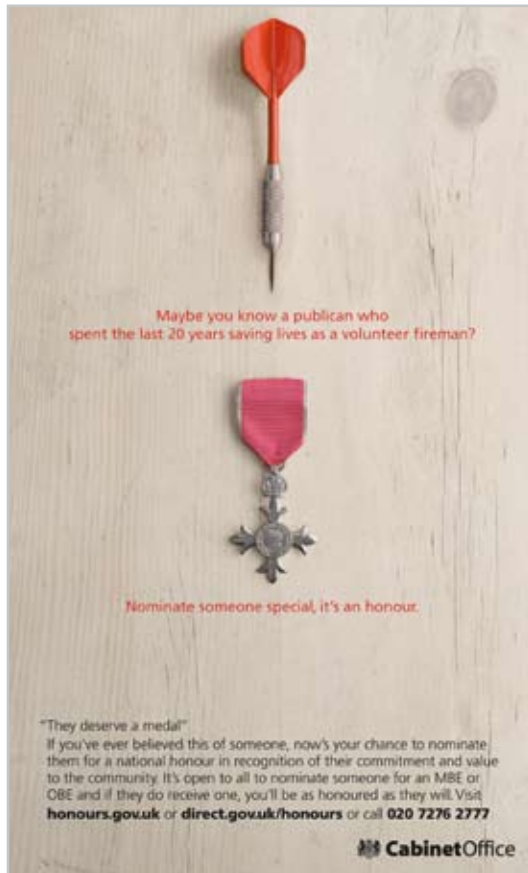
Some recent examples of such work over the past year include:

- A revision of the cross-government Afghanistan strategy which is recognised as providing an improved framework for Her Majesty's Government's efforts to build an effective Afghan state.
- Negotiation of the Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty – negotiated and signed before the change of Prime Minister against tight deadlines.
- Delivery of the National Security Strategy.

## Honours and Appointment Secretariat

The Honours and Appointments Secretariat is responsible for both the policy and the operation of the national honours and medals systems. The new independent honours committee system has been in place for three years, and its independence and the transparency of the new processes are becoming widely known.





In 2007 the Prime Minister set the challenge of identifying and honouring more people who are giving outstanding service to their local communities. These people are going the extra mile in support of the local community and often doing so on a voluntary basis. 80% and 76% of candidates at OBE and MBE in the Honours Lists, published at New Year and The Queen's Birthday 2008, are in this category. A publicity campaign ran in four regions in January, to increase representation of these groups even further.

## Intelligence, Security and Resilience Group (ISR)

The Prime Minister's Security Adviser is responsible for providing advice on strategic issues relating to the security of the UK to the Head of the Civil Service and Prime Minister. The ISR Group supports the Prime Minister's Security Adviser, Permanent Secretaries, and Ministerial Committees in coordinating the policy, funding and delivery of security, intelligence and resilience.

The Group provides advice to the Prime Minister on the full range of national security issues, including counter-terrorism. It provides the Secretariat for the National Security Committee and a number of its sub-committees, including those dealing with extremism, protective security and resilience. It is also responsible for the United Kingdom's crisis management arrangements; for the maintenance of associated facilities; and supporting the operation of the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR), including providing any crisis secretariat.

It is currently working to implement the Prime Minister's National Security Strategy, published in March 2008, and provides support to the new National Security Forum.



We need to mobilise all the resources available to us: the power of our military, police and security services; the persuasive force and reach of diplomacy; the authority of strengthened global institutions which, with our full support, can deploy both 'hard' and 'soft' power; and because arms and authority will never be enough, the power of ideas, of shared values and hopes that can win over hearts and minds.

THE RT HON GORDON BROWN MP, PRIME MINISTER



## The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC)

The JIC is responsible for providing coordinated inter-departmental intelligence assessments on issues of immediate and long-term importance to the UK's national interests – primarily in the fields of foreign affairs, defence and security.

The JIC's members are senior officials from across government: the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Ministry of Defence; Home Office; Department for International Development; HM Treasury and Cabinet Office; the Heads of the three intelligence Agencies and the Chief of the Assessments Staff. Other departments attend JIC meetings as necessary.

The JIC Chairman is responsible for supervising the work of the JIC and is charged specifically with ensuring that the committee's warning and monitoring role is discharged effectively. Like the Agency Heads, he has direct access to the Prime Minister. Present Chairman Alex Allan says: "JIC assessments provide vital underpinning for the key decisions the Government has to make on foreign and defence policy, on counter-terrorism and on counter-proliferation. With the deployment of British troops overseas and the continuing threat from international terrorism, the volume of reports produced by the assessment staff in 2007–08 was the highest for several years. I took over as Chair in January this year, and was immediately struck by the depth of cross-departmental expertise around the JIC table, and the tradition of informed and challenging debate. This helps make sure that JIC judgements are respected and authoritative."

In June 2007, the post of Prime Minister's Adviser on Security was separated from that of the Chairman to underline the clear separation of intelligence assessment from policy advice. The JIC Chairman is also Head of the Cabinet Office Joint Intelligence Organisation, which comprises the Assessments Staff, the Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis and the JIC Secretariat.



Above: Alex Allan, JIC Chairman

### Intelligence, Security and Resilience Group

The Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) has to ensure the resilience of the UK at every level, central, regional and local, and leads on emergency planning and training (more on this in the article on p.24).

The Counter-terrorism and Crisis Management Team works closely with CCS to maintain the effective coordination of government response in the event of civil emergencies, terrorist incidents and international crises.

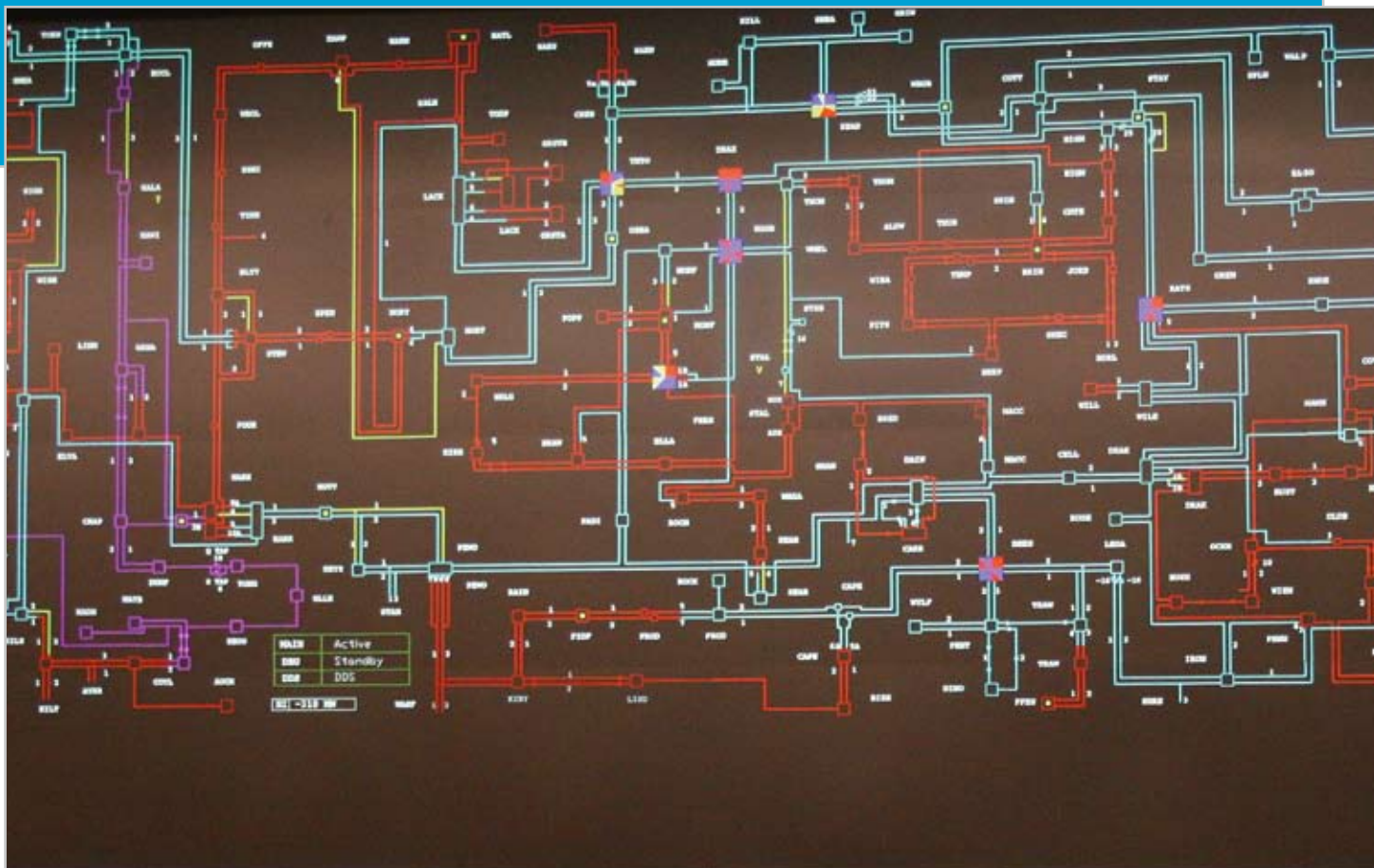
The Directorate of Security and Intelligence provides strategic leadership and coordination of government activity to manage risks to government assets; and support to the Prime Minister, Ministers, and the Prime Minister's Security Adviser on cross-cutting issues regarding the intelligence community.



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# Working together to protect Britain's people

The security challenges facing the UK are increasingly complex and unpredictable, ranging from disease to cyber warfare.



**The White Paper *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Security in an interdependent world* is the first government document to draw together all the potential threats, along with the structures put in place to deal with them.**

A White Paper document issued by a government department, containing detailed proposals for legislation, is the final stage before the Government introduces its proposals to Parliament in the form of a Bill.

Published by the Cabinet Office in March 2008, this strategy highlights the new security challenges and illustrates the range of knowledge and activity across departments, agencies and armed forces, helping people to go about their daily lives freely, and with minimal risk.

The White Paper also argues that globalisation and an increasingly interdependent world bring massive opportunities – which the UK, as an outward-facing nation with global links and a focus on skills, is well placed to exploit.

One of the many security initiatives highlighted in the White Paper is the creation in April 2008 of the UK Border Agency, which brings together in one organisation the work previously carried out by the Border and Immigration Agency, the border control work of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and UKvisas, a joint operation of the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

### Improving the UK's border controls

The case for establishing the agency is outlined in *Security in a Global Hub – Establishing the UK's new border arrangements*, a Cabinet Office review commissioned by the Prime Minister.

The UK's economic and social well-being depends to a great extent on its international links, as well as on flows of people and trade, which are increasing. But the UK needs to be prepared to respond to threats, such as organised crime and terrorism.

The Cabinet Office team, including staff from all of the agencies involved in security and border control, examined how those



aims could be best approached – particularly through:

- early action to address risks;
- targeting of activity;
- management of bottlenecks at points of entry to the UK;
- maximising the UK's depth and breadth of protection; and
- providing visible reassurance and deterrence.

The published report sets out how the new UK Border Agency should be structured, and what its approach should be to deliver benefits to the UK population.

"In establishing the UK Border Agency, we are being given a huge and important responsibility to protect the UK public by securing the border and controlling migration," says Lin Homer, Chief Executive of the UK Border Agency. "The Cabinet Office review provided the critical framework on which to build the new agency. By setting out some of the early priorities that we needed to focus upon, the review ensured a clear direction and momentum for our new organisation."

### Managing internal crises

Within its borders, Britain has faced emergencies as diverse as terrorist plots, flooding and bird flu over the past year.

Local services have risen to the challenge of dealing with these crises as they occurred.

Opposite page:  
The National Grid



COBR is at the heart of government's response to a national crisis. Cabinet Office supplies the secretariat and the back-up to ensure that we can prepare for and react to any kind of crisis and ensure that the Prime Minister and ministerial colleagues have the best information and advice to deal with these events.



BRUCE MANN, DIRECTOR, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES SECRETARIAT

The Civil Contingencies Secretariat at the Cabinet Office has played a key role in developing resilience – planning and coordinating strategies to ensure the UK is well equipped to deal with civil crises. The Cabinet Office also plays a crucial role in coordinating the overall government response and in supporting the Prime Minister and other Ministers.

A key part of the Department's contribution has been in activating the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR), set up to prepare for national emergency. During the past year the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, working with the Crisis Management and Counter Terrorism team, has set COBR in motion over 10 times to coordinate efforts across government and to channel rapid support to local frontline services.

A COBR activation can entail anything from one-off meetings to multiple meetings for long-running events. Government colleagues convene national experts at short notice to make fast paced and focused decisions aimed at protecting Britain's people.

Every emergency situation, however well handled, brings with it the opportunity to learn important lessons. These lessons are used to deliver continuous improvements across government and are shared with key stakeholders in anticipation of future scenarios.

## Training for emergencies

The Emergency Planning College at Easingwold, based in the heart of the Yorkshire countryside, has built up an international reputation for training people in emergencies and their effects – prevention, preparation, responses and recovery.

"Since becoming part of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat five years ago, we've transformed ourselves into a world class civil protection college," says Chief Executive Michael Charlton-Weedy – recruited from the Army in 2003 to get the £7 million transformation programme off the ground.

"Last year we trained some 7,000 people from across the UK who occupy key positions in civil protection and public safety.

"Working across government as part of the Cabinet Office has been critical to transforming the quality of civil protection training. We provide training that directly benefits the safety of the UK; and we earn substantial income from our commercial activities. That represents real value for the taxpayer."

Below: The Emergency Planning College at Easingwold, Yorkshire



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# Adding value through innovative strategy



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**Britain is one of the world's most prosperous nations, but keeping up with the pace of change globally and domestically is a continuous challenge. This demands decisive action on a number of fronts, including the promotion and development of skills to tap into the varied talents of the UK population.**

These are the conclusions of *Realising Britain's Potential: Future Strategic Challenges for Britain* – a comprehensive report detailing the long-term strategic challenges facing the UK, published by the Strategy Unit in the Cabinet Office in February 2008.

Commissioned by the Prime Minister in late 2007, the report represents the most in-depth analysis of future challenges and opportunities yet produced by government, covering everything from globalisation to an ageing population and climate change.

### The nine key strategic challenges facing Britain

- Globalisation
- Ensuring economic prosperity
- Tackling the barriers to opportunity
- Population change
- Building stronger families and communities
- Public safety
- Personalised public services
- Climate change
- Modernising democracy

"While the report is not a statement of government policy, it is helping to define strategic policy work across government and will help to frame the next Spending Review," says Strategy Unit Director Stephen Aldridge. "Because the Strategy Unit operates from the centre of government, we're strongly placed to influence strategy and policy on a wide range of issues which cut across government departments. We do a lot of 'heavy lifting' for government in terms of analysis; our approach is to think across, as well as within departmental boundaries, while grounding our research firmly in evidence."

Helping government departments build effective strategies and policies is a key role for the Strategy Unit. It works in partnership with other departments on a range of projects covering education, children and families, health and social care, home affairs, life chances, welfare reform and skills, public service improvement, food policy and local communities.

The landmark *Children's Plan: building brighter futures*, published in December 2007, is a good example of partnership working across government, with the plan setting out world class ambitions for all Britain's children. Although the plan is owned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), policy colleagues from DCSF worked closely with Cabinet Office to develop it, with the Strategy Unit adding value by helping to analyse issues and define policies for short and long term improvements.



We do a lot of 'heavy lifting' for government in terms of analysis; our approach is to think across as well as within departmental boundaries while grounding our research firmly in evidence.

STEPHEN ALDRIDGE, STRATEGY UNIT DIRECTOR



Right: Anne Bonson-Johnson, Assistant Information Manager, Strategy Unit



The Strategy Unit is also making government work better by using innovative approaches to encourage thinking ‘outside the box’ on fundamental issues affecting all UK citizens. One such issue is food – the subject of a high profile analytical discussion paper published in January 2008.

“*Food: an analysis of the issues* was broad-ranging and highly innovative,” says Stephen Aldridge. “It brought together some excellent analysis on food in a range of contexts, from diet and health to climate change and food safety. Like most of our work, it involved collaboration with other government departments, notably Health and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as well as the Food Standards Agency. Because food issues had not been approached in that way before, it was well received across government and is influencing cross-government thinking in a number of areas.”

As well as working on time-limited projects, the Strategy Unit has a number of standing teams covering core policy areas such as education, home affairs, health and public service improvement.

David Knott is a policy analyst in the health standing team. “I work closely with the Department of Health, most recently on Lord Darzi’s 60th anniversary review of the NHS,” he says. “There’s a strong focus on how we can encourage more preventative action in health, building partnerships between government, the NHS, society and individuals.” David also did some analytical work for a Prime Minister’s speech in January, which set out the early intervention health agenda. “A key part of our remit is to give strategy and policy advice to the Prime Minister and No.10 and we work closely with special advisers in the No.10 Policy Unit.

“I also recently authored *Achieving Culture Change: A policy framework*, a cross-cutting discussion paper. This looked at the impact of our choices on such issues as obesity, climate change and higher education retention rates – as well as the lessons learned from customer insight and behavioural science in addressing these issues. It was fascinating work, with a focus on how the Government can play an enabling role in helping people reach the better outcomes both they and we want to see.

“There are about 45 core staff in the Strategy Unit but there’s a lot of flexibility, as people are brought in for specific projects as well as loaned or seconded out to other departments and to the private, third and wider public sectors. The teams work well together and we’ll often bring our collective analytical skills to bear on strategic issues.

“As well as liaising across government, we work across the Cabinet Office on strategic issues affecting other units – social exclusion and sustainability, for example. We also have an active seminar series where we invite high profile public figures into the Cabinet Office to discuss the key issues of the day – we encourage all units to attend.”

Adam Sharples, Director General of Work Welfare and Equality at the Department for Work and Pensions, says that the Strategy Unit has added value to strategic work in his department. “In my experience the Strategy Unit can complement and strengthen policy thinking in departments. I am always hugely impressed by the unit’s ability to draw on a wide range of research, bring fresh insights and distil complex issues into excellent presentations.”

For further information about the work of the Strategy Unit go to:

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy)

# Reducing future risk

Due to high-profile security breaches placing government data handling procedures under intense scrutiny, it is now more vital than ever for the public to have trust in how their personal information is handled.



**The Government is responsible for processing massive amounts of both sensitive and personal data on a daily basis. This includes the general public's social security details, tax returns and patient health records, as well as a large amount of data relating to national security.**

Following the widely publicised loss of child benefit data last November, the Prime Minister asked Cabinet Secretary Gus O'Donnell to work with security experts to review data handling procedures across government. The two-stage review was led by Robert Hannigan, Head of Intelligence, Security and Resilience at the Cabinet Office, to examine:

- data protection procedures in all government departments and agencies;
- consistency with government-wide policies and standards; and
- arrangements for ensuring the appropriate procedures are implemented in full.

The interim report, published in December 2007, analysed current procedures and systems across government, detailing the ongoing actions in place to reduce risk and highlighting areas for further improvement.

The second stage review, published in June 2008, focuses in detail on how current standards could be improved across government. It also considers how government could provide greater transparency about its responsibilities to protect public data. The new measures are already being implemented across Whitehall.

In January 2008 the Cabinet Secretary wrote to all Permanent Secretaries across central government, to ensure that electronic devices containing personal data were kept safe until they could be appropriately protected through encryption.

Encryption effectively scrambles data to make it unintelligible to unauthorised users. This new measure is in addition to the password and user ID authentication already required by staff and extended to any government electronic storage device including laptops, portable email devices and memory stick hard drives.

“The Cabinet Office is playing a leading role with the support of departments and technical experts to embed across government a culture that values information as a key business asset,” says Roger Styles, the Central Sponsor for Information Assurance at the Cabinet Office. “We need clear accountabilities and responsibilities at all levels of government, as well as improvements to training and awareness across the whole Civil Service. To be really effective, there needs to be much greater consciousness of the value of data across the whole public sector and, indeed, the whole of the UK.”

## What we're doing as a Department

While the Cabinet Office processes smaller amounts of personal information than some government departments, it is ensuring that high levels of protection apply to the information it does hold.

CabNet, the department's corporate IT network, has 'Confidential' accreditation and the Cabinet Office is ensuring rigorous compliance with Whitehall-wide security measures in every aspect of its work.

A revised security policy has also been put in place to remind all staff working in the Department that they must ensure that they:

- handle, distribute and keep safe personal information and classified assets, protectively marking any documents they create appropriately; and
- ensure compliance with all current rules relating to the protection of information on laptops and mobile devices.

To view the data handling review, visit: [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

# Constitutional renewal: our role

The change of Prime Minister last year has meant that the Cabinet Office is now leading government on two major proposals for constitutional renewal.



**The two proposals for the Cabinet Office, outlined in *The Governance of Britain*, and published for further consultation and debate in the July 2007 Green Paper were:**

- legislation for the Civil Service; and
- increased Parliamentary scrutiny of key public appointments.

The Propriety and Ethics Team at the Cabinet Office developed proposals for Civil Service legislation which will embed the core values of impartiality, objectivity, honesty and integrity within statutory law.

The team consulted key stakeholders such as the Civil Service Commissioners and the Civil Service trade unions throughout the process, and also had the benefit of a full public consultation on the prospect of Civil Service legislation. Lisa Harlow, a member of the team, says: "The work involved going back to the first principles of the Civil Service – its role, governance and values – and understanding the full scope of the draft legislation such as the management of the Civil Service, the role of the Civil Service Commissioners and how these would sit with wider proposals in the draft Constitutional Renewal Bill."

Others in the team, such as Rob Wall, have been looking at how the Government will strengthen the role of Parliament in the

public appointments process. This will involve candidates for key public appointments appearing before Parliamentary select committees before being appointed. It's been a major piece of work for the Propriety and Ethics team, involving partnership working with other government departments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments and Parliament, to establish a process and to agree a list of suitable appointments. "The Government is committed to strengthening the role of Parliament in certain key public appointments and increasing democratic scrutiny of the public appointments process," says Rob Wall. "Looking at how the Government will deliver this commitment has been a major focus for the Propriety and Ethics team. We've worked in partnership with other government departments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments and Parliament to establish policy and draw up a list of suitable key appointments.

Rob says: "This is a new and innovative approach in making public appointments. The aim is to increase scrutiny of the public appointments process and provide greater public reassurance that those appointed to key public offices are appointed on merit."



Looking at how the Government will deliver this commitment has been a major focus for the Propriety and Ethics team.

ROB WALL, CABINET OFFICE PROPRIETY AND ETHICS TEAM



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# Transforming public services

CabinetOffice intelled



**You can already tax your car in seconds online – although the choice is still there to complete the transaction face-to-face or over the phone.**

This is just one example of transformational government, which is about using technology to make services simpler, faster and more convenient for users. It is also about giving people real choice; centred around what customers want.

Over the next three years, the Cabinet Office will drive forward an ambitious programme of public service reform. This will require a highly skilled IT workforce, capable of developing innovative solutions. The scale of the challenge they face is immense: the UK government runs many of the world's largest computer systems and spends some £12 billion a year across the public sector, and also operates in over 140 countries.

## Going with the Fast Stream

The next generation of IT leaders in the public sector will benefit from the new Technology in Business Fast Stream. Starting in 2007, this Cabinet Office-led graduate entry scheme, hand picks participants for their potential to plan, deliver and manage technology-based change centred around the needs of UK citizens.

Nicola Joiner was one of six people selected from 350 applicants for the inaugural year of the programme. With her fellow recruits she follows a four year programme of specialist training and managed placements. She is currently based at the Department for International Development (DfID).

"I'm working on an improved search facility for DfID staff, which has the potential to be used on other departmental systems," says Nicola. "Most of DfID's work involves helping people in developing countries; I've already been to Delhi to recruit additional staff, increasing the capacity of our helpdesk function to support offices in South East Asia and parts of Africa. I found that hugely rewarding and, again, will be able to use the skills I've developed in other contexts."

Opposite page: Alexis Cleveland, Director General, Transformational Government and Head, Cabinet Office Management at Tower 08

## Moving Forward

Working in partnership to deliver public services, genuinely supported and enabled by information technology, was also the theme of *Tower 08 – Moving Forward*. Organised in March by the Cabinet Office and Intellect, the UK technology industry trade association, it brought together public sector officials from across Britain and around the world. Contributors included Cabinet Secretary Gus O'Donnell; Cabinet Office Minister for Transformational Government Tom Watson; and Sir David Varney, the Prime Minister's Adviser on Public Service Transformation.

Sir David Varney's service transformation review, published in December 2006, spells out the challenges faced by public services in the future. His recommendations are being implemented across government following the publication of the Service Transformation Agreement (STA), and alongside the pre-Budget Report in October 2007.

For more on transformational government, visit [www.cio.gov.uk](http://www.cio.gov.uk)

### Recommendations from the Varney review include:

- piloting a service called 'Tell Us Once' that enables citizens to tell public services just once about birth, death and change of address;
- reducing the number of government websites and moving their citizen and business content to two single access websites, Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk. Of the 1,499 websites identified for closure in departmental website reviews by March 2008, 441 have already closed, with a further 538 planned closures by 2011;
- reducing the number of times citizens and businesses need to contact call centres and local offices; and
- empowering citizens to influence the services they receive, including design and delivery.