

Overview

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The past year has been one of significant change for the Cabinet Office in each of its three key functions:

- Supporting the Prime Minister
- Supporting the Cabinet
- Strengthening the Civil Service

It has been the dedication and professionalism of the people who work at the Cabinet Office that has enabled us to meet the challenges of change within government, and also to help coordinate the Government's response to increasing challenges domestically and internationally. I would like to pay tribute to them.

Supporting the Prime Minister

The first part of the year was dominated by preparations for the first change of Prime Minister in a decade. The Department, with the assistance from colleagues across government was able to deliver high quality support to the outgoing Prime Minister in critical areas like the 2007 G8 agreement on climate change, and the European Treaty. At the same time, we were able to use the period prior to Mr Blair's retirement to undertake preparatory work with Mr Brown and his team. This enabled the Department to have structures and staff in place to support the new Prime Minister from the first day, and ensure the effective delivery of key priorities quickly, for example on constitutional reform.

Supporting the Cabinet

At the centre of government, the Cabinet Office is responsible for the coordination of responses to national emergencies through the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. The summer period saw a number of challenges, including the failed terrorist attacks in London and Glasgow, the outbreak of foot and mouth, and flooding in various parts of England. The effective and professional work of the Department in response to these events is something the Department can be particularly proud of.

More generally, the Department has worked hard in the past year to increase the effectiveness of the coordination of government business and the development of policy and strategy. Last year, the Cabinet met more often than at any time in the past two decades and there has also been

a strengthening of the Cabinet Committee system. Policy and strategy development has been boosted by some excellent work by our Strategy Unit, most notably with the publication of *Realising Britain's Potential: Future Strategic Challenges for Britain* in February.

The Department has led cross-government work on a number of areas, including strengthening the UK's border protection, and developing measures to improve the security of personal data held across government. The effective implementation of the data handling review will be a key priority for the Department in the months ahead. We are also working in close partnership with HM Treasury on the Government's response to increasing global economic challenges, and more generally we have developed a formal compact agreement with the Treasury to coordinate more effectively how the centre of government works with our stakeholders.

Strengthening the Civil Service

Over the past few years the Department has undertaken a great deal of work to help transform the Civil Service. The Department's Transformational Government Unit continues to work with departments to improve delivery and put the citizen first. This is delivering real results at less cost to the taxpayer and in a way that is more convenient for them: 10 million people are now renewing their car tax online and 3 million people are filing online tax returns.

The Department can also be proud of its role in building the capacity and capability of its leaders, and people, to deliver the Government's objectives. In particular, the Civil Service Capability Group has been leading work to continue to develop a more diverse organisation which will help to equip us for the future and better represent the society we serve. The Civil Service Live event in April illustrated how much good work there is to celebrate within the Civil Service.

Conclusion

The Cabinet Office has much to be proud of in the past year. Looking ahead, we will need to develop our skills further to support the Government in meeting the profound challenges of the future, while continuing to deliver value for money for the taxpayer. I am confident that the dedicated and professional staff in the Department will meet this challenge.