

THE CIVIL SERVICE

INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE CONSTITUTION

THE SCALE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

THE CIVIL SERVICE IMPACT ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELFARE

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Advises Ministers on policy and legislation

Manages public services

Oversees expenditure

Collects taxes

HOW IS IT ORGANISED?

24 ministries

300 agencies

500,000 staff

Who are they?

40 permanent secretaries

50,000 senior civil servants

400,000 executive and clerical staff

WHO RUNS IT?

**Ministers – all career politicians or from the House of Lords
take major decisions**

**Senior civil servants – career professionals
develop and implement policy**

**Agency CEOs - manage executive operations on policy set
by ministers and senior civil servants**

EXPENDITURE

The Civil Service is responsible for:

tax collection

defence

direct transfer payments: pensions, welfare,

payments by public services: education, health

other government policies : transport, agriculture etc

Total annual expenditure for central government c £750billion

PUBLIC SERVICES

Other organisations, established by law are funded and regulated by the civil service – directly or indirectly: eg

Quangos,

Non Departmental Public Bodies,

Public Corporations

Research Councils

Regulators

- and elected Local Authorities

THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE CONSTITUTION

The Civil Service is the permanent centre of Government.

Its primary role is to maintain the Queen's government.

**The Cabinet Office will deal with Constitutional difficulties
e.g. coalition government**

**Senior officials are responsible for expenditure as
Accounting Officers**

**The Cabinet Secretary handles disagreements between
politicians and civil servants.**

MOVING FROM CONVENTION TO REGULATION

Legislation in 2010 established principles of Civil Service work:

Career civil servants should act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

The Cabinet Office maintains a Code of conduct for Ministers:

Establishing how ministers should behave and deal with conflicts of interest

Ministers can do very little without the Civil Service

POWER IS DIVIDED

Decisions have to be taken formally by Ministers

Ministers can take no action without the Civil Service – they do the implementing.

Civil Servants can do little without express or implied decisions from Ministers. They need agreement

Civil Servants can stop Ministers spending, they are accountable for the money.

Ministers are accountable to Parliament for the policy – but not the expenditure.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

Difficult phase: uncomfortable political outlook

Different staff

Sharp decreases in funding

Pressure to change structure and skills of CS

Push from potential of digital operations

POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL TRANSACTIONS

Pace and possible scale of 'digital government'

Service delivery

Communications

Cost reductions

Better data

HOW FAR CAN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS GO?

Debate:

Role and structure of departments

Shift policy making from head office to front line

What happens informs decisions directly – and changes solutions

Alters the balance of political debate

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

How much value is there in the theories of public management in such a changing situation?

Does it make sense to move fast to take the digital possibilities or should the public service go carefully?

Does this alter the role of the traditional generalist policy maker?

Do we fuss too much about probity?

Is there really a digital revolution?