



Government by  
task force  
a review of the reviews

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a  
Catalyst  
Paper  
by  
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Platt

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# Executive summary

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After only a year in power, New Labour has already set up more than 192 different policy reviews, task forces and advisory groups. At the time of writing, one or two new ones are still being announced each week. In this review of these reviews, details of the purpose and membership of these new bodies have been brought together for the first time (see table in Appendix).

This has not been easy since there is no central register of these reviews and no government agency has overall responsibility for monitoring them. The sheer volume of new reviews means that many are effectively unaccountable. Even parliamentary questions have so far only elicited an incomplete list. The mushrooming of task forces and review bodies is thus a new phenomenon which raises serious questions about the New Labour's style of government.

Although the government claims to have been innovative and democratic in its inclusion on task forces and advisory bodies of people from outside the usual circles of central government, in practice neither women, nor ethnic minorities, nor young people, nor organised labour are adequately represented. On the available figures, the best represented interest group is business and the private sector. In general, directors and managers of goods and services have a voice, whereas producers and consumers do not.

The government's apparent commitment to inclusiveness and pluralism has other limits too. The task forces and review bodies have been designed to foster support for its policies, rather than debate about them. Their main objective is to neutralise political opposition and to create a new national consensus around the central tenets of Blairism.

This ignores the fact that on some contentious issues consensus is simply not possible. Despite the government's rhetoric of involving the public in the working of government, the reality is that principles have been abandoned and debate repressed. The result is government by elite, which bypasses not only the general public but also parliament. New Labour's project is merely to widen the range of elites represented in government in order to deliver its policies more efficiently. Power remains strongly concentrated at the centre.



# Introduction: Power to the people?

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After a year of New Labour in government, no less than 192 different policy reviews, task forces, advisory groups – and one Royal Commission – have been initiated by Tony Blair's ministers. A veritable mountain of worthy reforms in the making, do they reflect the backlog of 18 years of Conservative government or are they evidence of buck-passing on a monumental scale? Are they proof of New Labour's commitment to an open, inclusive approach to government – or are they a pluralistic charade that takes power away from parliament without giving it to the people?

In both its scale and its involvement of people from outside the usual Westminster and departmental circles, the new government's policy review process is a significant break with the past. It has an importance for the governance of Britain that goes well beyond the specific decisions and policy changes brought about by any individual policy review or the particular actions initiated by any task force. It is, in a very real sense, a new type of government process, hiving off issues that might formerly have been the exclusive preserve of ministers and MPs, and putting them out for wider consideration. But who are these new reviewers of policy; and who reviews the reviewers? What does the sprouting of myriad task forces and advisory groups tell us about New Labour's approach to the formulation and implementation of public policy? What does it mean for parliamentary democracy itself?



# A landslide of reviews

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The reviews came thick and fast almost from the very moment of election victory in May 1997. Here was a review of the operation of the National Lottery to turn it into New Labour's promised "People's Lottery"; there was a review of the millennium celebration arrangements, which confirmed the construction of the Millennium Dome as their centrepiece. Here a minister announced a review of animal welfare controls on live exports; there a minister announced a review of breast screening. These and others were done and dusted almost before the votes had been counted in the Labour landslide. Other reviews put off major and potentially divisive decisions until well into the future.

Some reviews bordered on the parochial: the review of toll charges on the Skye bridge, the review of services at Edgware hospital. Others – the strategic defence review, the Welfare to Work/New Deal Task Force – involved the work of entire departments or combinations of departments. Underlying (and overriding) them all was the Big Yin – the comprehensive spending review, under which all government departments are required to review all aspects of their work with an eye on the efficiency and cost of their service delivery.

This pamphlet is the first attempt to outline details of all the reviews, task forces and advisory groups established since the 1997 election. It has involved a trawl of all government departments, information officers, press releases, parliamentary questions and other sources to produce the most comprehensive listing possible (other than would only be obtainable, as the jargon of unanswered parliamentary questions has it, at disproportionate cost). Even so, it will almost certainly be outdated by the time of publication. New reviews are currently being announced at the rate of one or two a week; previously announced ones are reporting in increasing numbers. And yet no one is keeping a central record or check on the whole process.

Indeed, it is difficult to elicit comprehensive information about which reviews are underway even within an individual department, let alone across all areas of government. Inter-departmental co-ordination and cross-referencing depends largely on the common membership of overlapping review teams. Where this does not exist, different reviews operate in isolation from, and sometimes ignorance of, each other. The left hand might know what the right hand is doing at the very highest ministerial level (and by that we mean the Prime Minister, the Chancellor and, within the areas covered by his extensive remit, the Deputy Prime Minister). But on the ground the impression is one of confusion, patchy reporting within departments, inadequate reporting between departments and an overall reporting to the outside world that has as much to do with news management as the effective communication of information.

The nearest that parliament has come to getting an overview of the policy review process has been in response to parliamentary questions, put exclusively by opposition politicians. One such was a question by the Conservative peer, Lord Chesham, in the House of Lords in February 1998 (*Hansard*, HL 222 and 223, Written Answers, 12 February 1998). This

elicited a list of most (but not all) of the reviews, task forces and so on then in train, but provided no details of their terms of reference, membership or modus operandi. It is the *only* information readily available to MPs, the media and members of the public that attempts to provide any guide to the policy review situation overall – and, in a large number of cases, it comprises the only readily available information about individual policy reviews as well.

As might be expected, the work of the major task forces is relatively well tracked and documented. (This is particularly so in the case of those with the highest public profiles, such as the Football Task Force chaired by David Mellor or the most recent addition to the task force family, the 33-strong Panel 2000, “Ambassadors of Cool” charged with invigorating Britain’s image overseas.) The work of many smaller or lower profile reviews has all but vanished into the Westminster woodwork.

## Information and accountability

The first issue raised by this explosion of government reviews and advisory bodies, then, is the basic democratic one of information and accountability. This is not to say that there is any deliberate attempt to “bury” potentially controversial policy reviews, but the sheer volume of those underway inevitably means that attention will be distracted from large numbers of them; in effect, they are “lost” under the mass of other government activities. Even MPs, ministers and departmental officials are unaware of many reviews with which they are not themselves directly concerned; the wider public is even more in the dark.

At the very least, therefore, a central register of reviews, task forces and advisory groups should be established, listing each one by department and including essential information about their terms of reference, membership, consultation procedures and reporting timetable. Details should also be publicly available about who is conducting each particular review, who it reports to and how it connects with other reviews underway at the same time. The reviewers should themselves be subject to review; the mechanisms for public and parliamentary scrutiny must be readily accessible and transparent.

## Public involvement

Different reviews have established different standards of public involvement and consultation. A handful, such as the Football Task Force, have gone out of their way to encourage the public to have their say – in this case by means of open public meetings around the country to which football fans have been invited. Most, however, meet only in private. Many keep all their deliberations confidential. (This includes bodies such as the informal Housing Sounding Board forum, where none of the usual justifications for secrecy – such as national security and commercial confidentiality – can be said to apply.) Hardly any hold public discussions.

As far as public membership of the review bodies is concerned, the response to Education Secretary David Blunkett’s appointment of an “ordinary parent” to the Literacy Task Force

tells its own story. In appointing Diane Wright to join the likes of Professor Michael Barber, head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit at the Department for Education and Employment, and Ken Follett, the novelist, in advising on the implementation of the country's literacy strategy, Blunkett brought a maelstrom of media interest on the head of his nominee. The media were drawn by the novelty value of the appointment; there has been nothing comparable in any of the 190-odd other bodies set up since May 1997. Whatever Blunkett's original intention, it is difficult to resist the suggestion that in practice this amounted to little more than a public relations gimmick.

The same might be said of some of the "star name" appointments to various advisory groups and task forces, not least in the case of the Panel 2000 members, who include the *Gladiators* star Judy Simpson, fashion designer Stella McCartney (Paul's daughter) and Channel 4 broadcaster Zeinab Badawi. In this case, the public relations imperative may be excused since a major reason for their appointment is to promote Britain as "a dynamic, self-confident, outward-looking society" to the rest of the world. In other cases, there is less justification for the preference accorded to the "star turn" over less well-known "ordinary" members of the public.

### Under-represented groups

Yet the government's commitment to a wider, more representative membership of public bodies is well established. The Nolan Committee's first report endorsed the proposals of a review by the Public Appointments Unit which concluded that the presumption should be that all posts in executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPB is the preferred government term for quangos) be advertised. And in January 1998, the Environment minister Angela Eagle took this one step further by advertising more than 200 part-time posts on bodies such as housing action trusts, regional development agencies and advisory groups that come under the auspices of the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR).

This drive to open up membership of the DETR's 36 executive and 24 advisory NDPBs (involving appointments typically requiring one or two days paid work a month) was aimed particularly at "under-represented groups". "I want to see our public bodies truly reflect Britain as it is today," said Eagle at the time. "This is an excellent opportunity for people from all walks of life to come forward for appointment. I want to stress that broad life experience, possibly gained through community or voluntary work, is just as valid a qualification as an MBA, and particularly urge more women, ethnic minorities, disabled and younger people to consider seriously making an application." No figures are currently available to give an indication of the outcome of these efforts.

The same rationale has underpinned other government initiatives. Hosting a series of "local democracy seminars" around the country in the first months of 1998, Local Government minister Hilary Armstrong said, "We want to put local people in the driving seat on local government – so that they are in charge of what the priorities are and how councils spend their money. That means modernising the democratic process – so that it properly reflects



how people live now. We want councils involving their citizens a lot more in establishing priorities.” The Health minister, Baroness Jay, has called for an end to what might be termed the “culture of gratitude” felt by many people with regard to the health service: “The British people endorse the public service values of our NHS. The issue is how to involve people in decision-making about their own care, how services are developed, and more widely, how to involve people in deciding how the NHS is run.” And the Public Service minister, David Clark, launching, in January 1998, the 5,000-strong “People’s Panel” (which will be run by the opinion pollsters MORI “to find out what people think about how public services are delivered and how that delivery can be improved”) dismissed suggestions that it amounted to “government by focus group”. He said, “I want to look at the services government provides from the point of view of the citizen, and make improvements to the delivery of those services which suit ordinary people rather than the system.”



# Under-representative task forces

Yet, with the single exception of David Blunkett's appointment of Diane Wright to the Literacy Task Force, "ordinary people" are conspicuous only by their absence from the policy review and advisory bodies. A survey of 30 major task forces and advisory groups set up since last May (1) reveals that, of the "under-represented groups" singled out for special attention by Angela Eagle, women comprise a little over one in four of their members, while a rough count of black and Asian members (2) suggests that they make up less than 3 per cent of the total membership – and are not represented at all on more than half of the bodies. Disabled and younger people are absent from the majority of policy review or advisory groups – a measure of the latter's absence can be gauged by the fact that of 165 people for whom age details were readily obtainable, only two were under 30.

Table 1 Membership of 30 leading task forces and advisory groups

Total membership	449	
Men	324	(72%)
Women	125	(28%)
Business/private sector	129	(29%)
Trade unions	26	(6%)

Apart from those who are appointed for their direct experience or expertise in the relevant policy areas, representatives of business and the private sector predominate among members of these bodies. In all, the private sector accounts for 29 per cent of their total membership, five times more than the trade unions. (There are also more members drawn from business than there are women.) Trade union representation, moreover, is concentrated in a small number of task forces and advisory groups, with just four bodies accounting for three-fifths of their total representation. Eighteen of the 30 bodies surveyed here include no trade union representatives at all; in contrast, only six lacked at least one representative from the private sector. Significantly, among those bodies which excluded any trade union representation was the Panel 2000 Task Force – the country which gave the world trade unionism clearly has no desire to promote the fact as part of its modern image.

## No producers, no consumers?

This limitation of trade union involvement is not the result of any apparent pro-consumer bias. Indeed, consumer interests have virtually no independent representation on any of these bodies. There are no parent representatives on the National Schools Standards Task Force, no tenants on the Housing Sounding Board, no claimants on the New Deal bodies, no pensioners on the long-term care commission. Uniquely, the Football Task Force goes out of its way to take account of football's consumers – the fans – but even in bodies such as the film and creative industries task forces, which cover comparable areas, it is as though the likes of the film-goer or music-buyer do not exist. (Similarly, while the Football Task



Force includes representatives of players, referees and managers, as well as of the clubs and the football authorities, there is no sign of anyone who works in the film and creative industries on their respective task forces. It is as though the government's view of the industries is one in which the entrepreneurs and star turns do everything themselves, including physically producing and personally purchasing their end products.)

Where producer voices are represented, it is generally as individuals rather than trade union representatives. Hence the National Schools Standards Task Force, for example, contains a large majority of people employed in the education service, but does not include a single representative of a teaching union. This is not for the want of a certain kind of inclusiveness, since the task force has as its vice-chairs two men who were previously thought to hold irreconcilable views – Chris Woodhead, HM Chief Inspector, Ofsted, and Professor Tim Brighouse, Birmingham's Chief Education Officer. As well as including the obligatory businessman (John Baker, Chair of National Power) and star name (Lord Puttnam), it also includes a fair sprinkling of seven head teachers among its 24 members, as well as, unusually, one "ordinary teacher", Janet Major from Bungay High School. There are, however, no parents.

### The fingers of one foot

In the health service, Health Secretary Frank Dobson has utilised both "star name" outsider appointments – such as that of Greg Dyke, Chief Executive of Pearson TV, to give the NHS a new charter for its 50th anniversary – and, working alongside them, its own experts and managers. Dobson has also announced a task force on involving staff in improving efficiency and working practices in the NHS, which he says will include non-professional staff such as porters, maintenance workers and cooks as well as doctors, nurses and managers.

"I want the task force to involve staff, professional bodies and employers," Dobson said in January 1998. "And when I say staff, I mean staff. Not just the usual suspects. I want nurses who are still nursing, surgeons who are still cutting, people who are still pushing trolleys or cooking meals. Not just the great and the good. I also want some people from outside the NHS. The process of implementing the White Paper has to be a team process. It will require top class management but this inclusive approach can't be confined to the 'management team'. It's got to involve everybody. The doctors and nurses and midwives and medical scientists and therapists. Medical secretaries, receptionists, telephone operators, cleaners, kitchen staff, security staff, maintenance staff."

Unfortunately, on the available evidence, the sum total of medical secretaries, receptionists, telephone operators, cleaners, kitchen staff, security staff and maintenance staff appointed to the various health service review bodies, task forces and advisory groups can still be counted on the fingers of one foot.



# The limits of pluralism

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The commitment to inclusiveness and pluralism in appointments to these various bodies has other limits too. Diversity of opinion among their members has been kept within fairly narrowly defined bounds. When Alan McGee of Creation Records, a member of the Creative Industries Task Force, denounced Labour's welfare to work plans in March 1998 as "soul-destroying, incredibly naive, unfair and Draconian . . . penalising the lifeblood of our cultural future", he responded to questions about his position on the task force in the light of these views by saying: "They shouldn't have appointed me if they didn't want me to say what I think." Some members of the government, however, were clearly shocked that someone on one of their advisory bodies should think the way he did. The appointments were not meant to work like that at all.

For these are not advisory bodies in the sense that their members are chosen to advise the government on the whole range of public opinion on a subject. Nor are they policy review bodies in the sense that their members are expected to review the whole range of policy options. Anyone joining a policy review group in the expectation that they would be given free rein to develop their own views on what policy ought to be would be very much mistaken. This government's review process, advisory groups and task forces are about the implementation of policy, not policy-making. What the great bulk of the reviews are meant to do is to determine how best to implement a policy the broad parameters of which have already been decided upon.

In many cases, this is stated quite explicitly – and may indeed be the only sensible approach. Nothing would ever get done if every review body was given the opportunity to go back to policy basics on everything they discussed. Hence, no one is left in any doubt that the principal purpose of the Task Force on Youth Justice, for example, is "to provide advice on taking forward an action plan as agreed by the interdepartmental ministerial group on youth justice". This is clearly the task force's primary, overriding purpose regardless of those parts of its remit which mention its ability to "propose to the Home Secretary action on any other youth justice issue". As the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, remarked in launching the government's plans for the reform of youth justice, "All those working in the youth justice system must have a principal aim – to prevent offending." The task of the task force is to support the government in achieving this objective, not to review youth justice policy as a whole; it has been set up to assist in the delivery of policy, not in determining it.

## Predetermined objectives

It is telling that in another context, when rejecting the idea of a Royal Commission to examine current drugs legislation, Jack Straw said that "Governments set up Royal Commissions when they are uncertain what to do about something. We are not uncertain about this." Only one Royal Commission – on long-term care – has been set up by this government. In the great majority of cases where the government has set up reviews, task forces and advisory groups, it is a reasonable assumption that it has a fair degree of

certainty about what outcomes it is seeking. To this extent, the impression of inclusiveness and consultation is an illusion; as Alan McGee may have been only the first to discover, in appointing people to these bodies, the government is choosing them not so much for their independence of thought as for their ability to help the government in fulfilling its predetermined objectives.

There are several advantages to the government in adopting this approach apart from the obvious one of bringing in additional experience and expertise to help find solutions to practical problems and implementing government strategies. Appointments reward friends and supporters. They serve to keep potential critics quiet (although this clearly hasn't worked too well with some representatives of the music and arts world – in addition to McGee's outburst, for example, Lord Puttnam has used his position on the schools standards task force to weigh in with some trenchant criticism about arts teaching being "sacrificed at the altar of numeracy and literacy targets"). And they help to bind those who are appointed into the government's overall political project.

The inclusion of the likes of David Mellor on the Football Task Force and Michael Heseltine's continuing role vis-a-vis the Millennium Dome has helped to neutralise potential political opposition in both of these areas. And whatever other questions might be raised about the extent of business representation in areas such as the Tax and Benefits Task Force (where Barclays Chief Executive Martin Taylor has been given one of the biggest challenges in modern government on two days per month) or the Low Pay Commission (where three employers' representatives match three from the trade unions), it will be difficult for those business representatives to come out against policies that they have themselves had a role in devising and implementing.

## Blairite consensus

But there is no room in this new participatory model for too much free-thinking, maverick opinions or advocates of alternatives to the preferred government strategy. The pluralism of government by review stops well short of permitting any serious challenges to centrally determined policy. Underpinning it all, the unifying principle is to be found in the search for a new national consensus around the central tenets of Blairism. The policy reviews, task forces and advisory bodies comprise Blair's much-vaunted "third way" in action – the involvement of people with all shades of (centrist) opinion in coming together to produce the "best" solution to any given problem; an assembly of the "brightest and best" to come up with the answers to any of society's ills.

This ignores one simple fact: that there are some issues on which consensus simply cannot be achieved. Any attempt to contrive a consensus in such circumstances ends up being either dishonest or unworkable – or both.

This has not stopped the government from trying – or from adopting the flimsiest arguments in pursuit of this objective. No more so has this been the case than in relation to the Strategic Defence Review, in which the Ministry of Defence has been attempting to

create some spurious national agreement on the basis of simply ignoring the most irreconcilable schisms – over nuclear weapons or the overall level of defence spending, to cite the two major examples – that have riven defence policy for decades.

The Defence Secretary, George Robertson, has said: “When I launched the strategic defence review at the end of May [1997], I said that I wanted it to be open and inclusive, unlike the secretive and partisan reviews of the past. I firmly believe that there is a consensus on defence within the British nation, and I want this review to reflect that common agreement. I am sure that it will be possible to establish a wide base of support for the conclusions which the review will eventually reach.”

A “wide base of support” is not a consensus. But Robertson is single-minded in pursuit of this illusion: “The aim is clear cut; to build on the developing consensus on defence and to establish the widest possible shared vision about Britain’s future security needs and the tasks of its armed forces. The achievement of a national consensus on defence is not an impossible goal. It exists in many other countries. In the United States, a periodic defence review is an established part of their planning machinery, not a political football. This review gives us a unique opportunity to produce a non-partisan approach to Britain’s defence in the next century. I do not want this to be a Labour strategic defence review, I want it to be Britain’s defence review.”

### The limits of consensus

The notion that a “national consensus” on defence exists in the United States requires a wilful dismissal of large bodies of opinion that are not represented in the governing elites of that least inclusive of democratic systems. Agreement on a narrow range of defence issues among the political ruling classes at the head of the Republican and Democratic parties is a long way from general national agreement about defence policy as a whole.

The only way in which any review can be “non-partisan”, as George Robertson seeks, is by the abandonment of issues of principle and by ignoring any strongly held, conflicting opinions. The claim for a “developing consensus” on defence in Britain – a country that has been bitterly divided (for example) over its possession of nuclear weapons for at least 40 years – is a nonsense. This is all the more so coming from a man whose own Scottish Labour Party voted, at its 1998 conference, in favour of scrapping Trident, a policy that is anathema to the present national leadership.

Above all, it displays a disregard for the fact that there are simply some issues that are not amenable to practical or technocratic consensus, and on which *any* decision will have a powerful body of opinion ranged against it. The business of government in such circumstances is not the pursuit of some spurious “third way” between one side to a disagreement and another, but the taking of decisions based on the underlying principles – or ideology – that brought it to power.



# Conclusion: Underlying principles

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One of the key problems with the current policy review process, however, is that there is no underlying set of principles against which policy can be set or judged, whether these be economic, moral or whatever. Pragmatism alone is not sufficient. Merely asking the question “What works?” does not provide an adequate basis on which to choose between alternative answers. In order to make their “hard choices”, governments of all persuasions need also to answer questions such as: who gains? Who loses? Is this fair? Does it increase choice and freedom? Does it provide wider opportunities and greater equality?

The absence of these more ideological underpinnings to policy formulation and review does not usher in some new golden age of utilitarian pragmatism. Instead, it ducks the difficult decisions that lead people to take different political standpoints in the first place. At its worst, this results in policy being reduced to a series of ad hoc decisions made by people who share no underlying objectives. Sooner or later, this false “consensus” will fall apart. Government by review, advisory body and task force is an attempt to take the conflict out of politics. But in the end there are always winners and losers. And if you don't have the conflict in the policy-making process, it will only erupt elsewhere.

## Parliament and the people

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Behind the government's rhetoric about pluralism and inclusion, and all the talk of creating a new national consensus, there lies an older, familiar reality: one of government by elite. Representation on the various review bodies, task forces and advisory groups is so heavily skewed in favour of those in positions of wealth, power and influence – in favour, in other words, of the status quo – that it marks not so much a new direction in government as a remodelling of the existing order. Even where the intention is to improve the position of those who were previously excluded or disadvantaged in society, it is by paternalistic means (the experts know best, things being done *for* people rather than *by* them) rather than direct empowerment.

Real inclusion would involve the messy, much riskier democratic business of devolving power away from government – and, in the context of this pamphlet, permitting people to propose or do things that may not always be what the government wants. Instead, real power is being kept at the centre – and what's more, it is being kept at the centre of the government, not in parliament.

Parliamentary scrutiny of the various policy reviews, task forces and advisory groups is virtually non-existent. And it is highly significant, moreover, that apart from the direct ministerial and departmental representation on these bodies, no role has been provided for MPs. Martin Bell, the independent MP for Tatton, who has been appointed to the Panel 2000 Task Force, is the *only* backbench member on any of these 192 bodies. When the Minister Without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson, spoke recently of the decline of representative democracy and its replacement with new forms of consultation and decision-making, he could not have pointed to a clearer example.

Part of the *raison d'être* of New Labour's love affair with the idea of government by review and task force lies in a growing belief that in a wide range of policy areas it is possible, in effect, to take the politics out of politics. To a significant extent, it is also taking parliament out of politics, not to give power back to the people, but to enlist a wider range of elites in using it more effectively from the centre.





# Appendix: government reviews and taskforces

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<b>Review/task force</b>	<b>Date announced/ reported/ due to report</b>	<b>Details of review</b>	<b>Membership of review body, consultation procedures, etc.</b>
Air quality	Announced 12 February 1998	Originally planned for 1999, the review of the National Air Quality Strategy (published in March 1997) was brought forward to look at every aspect of air quality policy. The Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards is also to be reviewed as part of this process.	Setting up an Air Quality Forum, the Environment Minister, Michael Meacher, said: "I see the role of the Forum as a mechanism by which stakeholders can put their views to government on the review of the Strategy. Stakeholders will also be able to provide feedback on progress on local air quality management. The Forum would not be a policy-making body but a forum for the exchange of ideas and information."
Admission charging by national museums	Announced autumn 1997	An interim announcement was made on 8 December 1997 after the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport decided that further consideration was required. The March 1998 budget made additional funds available to ensure free admission to museums and galleries.	
Alcohol and tobacco duties	Reported spring 1998		
Animal welfare controls on live exports	Announced 20 May. Reported September 1997		Conducted by Animal Welfare Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
Anti-social behaviour		Review of measures to deal with anti-social behaviour. Implemented as part of Crime and Disorder Bill.	
Arms exports	Reported 28 July 1997	Review of the criteria used in considering licence applications for the export of conventional arms.	

Better Regulation Task Force	Chair appointed 3 July 1997. Task Force launched 17 September 1997. First annual report expected in September 1998	<p>The Task Force's terms of reference are to advise the government on action which improves the effectiveness and credibility of government regulation by ensuring that it is necessary, fair and affordable, and simple to understand and administer, taking particular account of the needs of small businesses and ordinary people.</p> <p>First piece of work published 21 January 1998 – a set of principles of good regulation. Task Force is applying the principles to the first four issues it is currently examining: employment law (under working group leader Pamela Meadows), consumer affairs (Peter Salisbury), charities and the voluntary sector (Sue Slipman) and social services (Chai Patel). It will subsequently move on to examine company law and corporate governance, environmental legislation, food, leisure and tourism, and European regulation.</p>	Appointments are for two years and unpaid, made by the Public Service Minister and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Dr David Clark, and assisted and advised by the Better Regulation Unit of the Office of Public Service: Christopher Haskins (Chair), Chair, Northern Foods plc; Teresa Graham (Vice-Chair) Partner, Baker Tilly (chartered accountants); Stephen Alambritis, Head of Press and Parliamentary Affairs, Federation of Small Businesses; Sarah Anderson, Director, Mayday Staff Services (employment agency); Allan Charlesworth, Deputy Chief Constable, West Yorkshire Police; Hugh Field, BCB International (suppliers of medical and food products); Ram Gidoomal, Winning Communications (business consultants); Sir Simon Gourlay, farmer and President, National Farmers Union 1986-91; Pamela Meadows, economist; Robert Purry, Head of tax, Grant Thornton (accountants); Chai Patel, Chai Patel Associates; Peter Salisbury, Managing Director, Marks & Spencer; Helena Shovelton, Chair, National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux; Sue Slipman, Director, Gas Consumers Council; Ed Sweeney, General Secretary, Banking Insurance and Finance Union.
Breast implants	Due to report April 1998	Review of the evidence relating to silicon breast implants.	
Breast screening	Reported 3 November 1997	Review of the breast screening programme in Devon and the implications for the breast cancer screening programme as a whole.	
Bribery and corruption	Report early 1998	Review of the law relating to bribery and corruption.	
British Board of Agreement	Announced 3 February 1998. First stage of review due within four months	The review is being carried out as part of the government's requirement that all executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies should be subjected to regular and detailed scrutiny, usually at five-year intervals.	

Bureaucratic burden on teachers	Set up 18 July 1997. Reported 16 January 1998		Members: Peter Owen (Chair), Director General for Schools, DfEE; Denis Allnut, Director, Analytical Services, DfEE; Nick Sanders, Director, School Curriculum, Funding and Teachers, DfEE; Peter Smith, Association of Teachers and Lecturers; Nigel de Gruchy, National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers; Rowie Shaw, National Association of Head Teachers; John Bangs, National Union of Teachers; David Jones, Professional Association of Teachers; Colin Broomfield, Headteacher and Secondary Heads Association; Pat Petch, Chair of National Governors Council; John Fowler, Local Government Association; Greg Hill, Metropolitan Borough of Solihull; Michael Collier, Chief Executive, Funding Agency for Schools; John Taylor, Office for Standards in Education; Tony Mills, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority; Stephen Hillier, Teacher Training Agency; Colin Muid, Central IT Unit, Cabinet Office; Graham Walker, Senior Partner, Arthur Andersen; Tony Cann, Chair, Promethean Ltd.
Buses	Announced 25 June 1997	Review of all aspects of buses, including bus priority measures, passenger information and ticketing, regulatory measures and financial issues.	
Business Forum: business rates		At the end of July 1997 the government announced that it would carry out a review of the local government finance system to consider how best to deliver the government's manifesto commitments on local government finance. As part of that review the DETR is looking at options for localising business rates. The Business Forum was set up by local government minister Hilary Armstrong to assist that process.	The Forum comprises representatives of the Confederation of British Industry, the Institute of Directors, Association of British Chambers of Commerce, British Property Federation, British Retail Consortium, Engineering Industries Association, Chemical Industries Association, Machinery Users Association, Property Managers Association, Alliance of Independent Retailers, Federation of Small Business, Forum of Private Business and Small Business Bureau.
Capital gains tax	Announced 2 July 1997	In his mini-budget on 2 July 1997, Chancellor Gordon Brown said: "The objective behind our two year long corporate tax review – begun in opposition – has been to develop a tax system that encourages personal savings, favours higher levels of investment, rewards long-term investment, and is fair to all. Our consultations on capital gains tax will be completed in time for the next Budget."	Carried out by Inland Revenue Capital and Valuation Division.
Careers Service Special Needs Task Force	Due to report December 1998		Appointments to the Task Force will be drawn from a representative group of careers services, LEAs and both special and mainstream schools. The group will be chaired by a senior official from the DfEE.

Charities taxation	Consultation document spring 1998		
Charter programme	Report due spring 1998		
Chemicals in environment	Due to report end 1998		
Child employment law	Announced 11 December 1997. Due to report by the end of 1998	The review will look at rules which restrict the hours and work children are allowed to do. It will be able to recommend proposals to safeguard children's health, safety, welfare and development. And, early next year, current regulations will be updated to set clear national rules.	The review will be done by a group of officials from the departments of Health, Trade and Industry, Education and Employment, the Cabinet Office and the Health and Safety Executive. Expert practical advice will be provided by the National Child Employment Network.
Civil justice and legal aid	Reported October 1997	The main outcome was the proposal for the abolition of legal aid for cases where there is a claim for damages, moving these on to a "no win-no fee" basis.	Led by Sir Peter Middleton, Vice-Chair of Barclays plc and Chair of BZW.
Civil protection	Consultation phase completed	Review of the future role of local civil protection in England and Wales.	
Clean coal technology		An announcement will be made about the outcome of this review when ministers have had time to consider the review's recommendations alongside those from the comprehensive spending review.	
Coalfields Task Force	Report due April 1998		
Code of practice on newspaper supply	Reported 26 September 1997	Establishes basis on which new entrants to newspaper retail trade should be supplied. Review decided to make no changes.	
Commission on local government and Scottish parliament	To report to the first minister of the Scottish parliament on his/her election		
Common Agricultural Policy payment system	Announced 9 February 1998	Review of efficiency of existing CAP procedures and payments.	Coopers & Lybrand management consultants working with MAFF and the Efficiency Unit of the Cabinet Office.
Community fire safety	Completed		
Community safety		Review of measures on community safety. Implemented as part of the Crime and Disorder Bill.	

Competitiveness Advisory Group		The remit is to advise the President of the Board of Trade on the needs of business at home and abroad so that they may be taken into account by government when developing and implementing policies to improve UK competitiveness.	The members of the advisory group receive no payment. The group reports to and is accountable to the President of the Board of Trade. Members: Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade (Chair); Sir Jeremy Beecham, Chair, Local Government Association; C K Chow, Chief Executive, GKN plc; Sir Terence Conran, Chair, Conran Holdings Ltd; John Edmonds, General Secretary, GMB; Dr Chris Evans, Director, Merlin Scientific Services Ltd; Sir Richard Evans, Chief Executive, British Aerospace plc; Ian Gibson, Managing Director and Chief Executive, Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd; Anthony Greener, Chair, Guinness plc; Jan Hall, European Chief Executive, The GGT Group plc; Terry Leahy, Chief Executive, Tesco plc; Judy Lever, Director, Blooming Marvellous Ltd; Tony Marchington; Chief Executive, Oxford Molecular Group plc; John Monks, General Secretary, Trades Union Congress; Rosemary Radcliffe, Head of Economics, Coopers & Lybrand; Bryan Sanderson, Managing Director, BP plc; Cob Stenham, Chair, Arjo Wiggins Appleton plc; Sir Richard Sykes, Chair and Chief Executive, Glaxo Wellcome.
Competitiveness in Europe Interdepartmental Task Force		The remit of the Task Force is to advise on the implementation of the government's manifesto objectives to complete the Single Market and promote flexible labour markets across the EU.	The Task Force reports to Cabinet ministers and is accountable to Department of Trade and Industry ministers. Members: Lord Simon of Highbury, Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe (Chair); plus ministerial and official representatives of the DETR; HM Treasury; Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Home Office DfEE; DTI; MAFF; Scottish Office; Ministry of Defence; Department of Social Security.

Comprehensive Spending Review	Due for completion summer 1998	<p>The big one around which all others revolve: "The Comprehensive Spending Review aims to allow the government to bring public spending programmes into line with its priorities and objectives. It will be truly comprehensive, embracing all items of public expenditure. It will also be focused on the long term, looking at the shape of public spending to the end of the century and beyond. Ministers have agreed that they will examine each and every item in his or her department, to consider whether it meets the public interest, whether it contributes to the achievement of the government's objectives, whether it is the most effective way of achieving those objectives, and whether there is scope for improving efficiency and effectiveness. This will include a thorough look at whether the best use is being made of public assets, with a view to disposing of those which are surplus and which could be used more productively elsewhere and making more use of public/private partnerships. The Review will be thorough. As well as looking at departments' spending it will also address issues that stretch across departmental boundaries. There will be several self-standing cross departmental reviews, including reviews of the criminal justice system, the local government finance system, the countryside and rural policy and housing. In addition, each department will examine jointly with other departments those areas where important issues cut across departmental boundaries, such as aid and trade provision, science and simplifying government. This will be a far-reaching look at what the government spends peoples money on. It will ensure that public spending promotes opportunity and employment, investment and fairness. Its conclusions will be the basis for spending plans for the future that reflect our priorities and meet the country's needs." (Chief Secretary to the Treasury Alistair Darling)</p>	<p>Composed of two elements: separate departmental reviews and cross-departmental reviews (looking at issues that reach across departmental boundaries); and a review of the government's spending as a whole – a Cabinet sub-committee called PX will appraise the results of the separate reviews and make recommendations to Cabinet.</p>
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Compulsory competitive tendering	Reported July 1997. New regulations laid November 1997. New circular issued December 1997	Review of compulsory competitive tendering regulations and guidance.	
Confiscation of criminal assets	Report due May 1998	Review of arrangements for confiscation of criminal assets.	
Construction Task Force	Set up in October 1997. "Halfway" progress report issued 16 February 1998	Set up to advise Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott on improving productivity in the construction industry.	Members: Sir John Egan, Chief Executive of BAA plc (Chair); Ian Gibson, Managing Director, Nissan UK; David Gye, Advisory Director, Morgan Stanley & Co Ltd; Professor Daniel Jones, Director of Lean Enterprise Research Centre, Cardiff Business School; Anthony Mayer, Chief Executive, Housing Corporation; Sir Nigel Mobbs, Chief Executive, Slough Estates plc and Chair, Bovis Homes; Sir Brian Moffatt, Chief Executive British Steel plc; Alan Parker, Managing Director, Whitbread Hotels; Mike Raycraft, Property Services Director, Tesco Stores Ltd; David Warburton, Senior National Officer of GMB Union.
Contaminated land	Completed 22 December 1997	Concluded that proposed statutory regime set out the right framework; cost implications for local authorities to be considered as part of comprehensive spending review.	
Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning National Advisory Group	Report 11 November 1997		
Corruption in public life	Announced 9 June 1997	Remit includes investigating allegations about the bribery of MPs.	
Creative Industries Task Force		The remit is to maximise the economic and employment potential of the creative industries.	Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Chair); Peter Mandelson, Minister Without Portfolio; ministerial representatives of the DETR, HM Treasury, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, DfEE, DTI, Scottish Office, Northern Ireland Office, Welsh Office; representatives of the British Council, No 10 Policy Unity, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; plus industry advisers: Lord Puttnam; Richard Branson; Alan McGee; Paul Smith; Gail Rebeck; Eric Salama; Janice Hughes; Waheed Alli.
Crown Prosecution Service	Due to report spring 1998		Led by Sir Iain Glidewell, retired Lord Justice of Appeal, with Sir Geoffrey Dear, former HM Inspector of Constabulary.
Defence Bills Agency	Announced 20 March 1998	A review into the performance and future management of the DBA.	



Defence: Strategic Defence Review	Launched May 1997. Once all work on the review has been considered by ministers, it is envisaged that a White Paper will be published in the first half of 1998	Wide-ranging strategic review in which Defence Minister George Robertson emphasised the importance of openness and consultation, and promised "a ruthless search for greater efficiency to deliver full value for money and to ensure that Britain [has] flexible, modern, high-capability forces able to meet the challenges of the 21st Century". Robertson stressed the government's belief that through wide consultation a national consensus could be achieved on defence issues.	Consultation produced over 450 contributions by November 1997 and has included open seminars to which members of the public have been invited in addition to MPs, academics, businessmen, journalists and representatives of non-governmental organisations. An 18-member panel of experts includes Sir Michael Alexander, Chair of the Royal United Services Institute; Field Marshal the Lord Vincent, former Chief of the Defence Staff; Sir Michael Quinlan, former Permanent Under Secretary at the MoD; Simon Jenkins, columnist for the <i>Times</i> and the <i>Evening Standard</i> newspapers; and Trevor Phillips, Executive Producer of Factual Programmes at London Weekend Television.
Dependent territories		Review of policy towards the remaining UK dependent territories.	
Disability discrimination	Due to report late spring 1998	Review of the threshold exempting employers with fewer than 20 employees from the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.	

Disability Rights Task Force	Early recommendations due March 1998. Full report in July 1999	The Task Force will "consider how best to secure comprehensive, enforceable civil rights for disabled people; make recommendations on the role and functions of a Disability Rights Commission by March 1998 and provide a full report on wider issues no later than July 1999; take full account of all the costs as well as the benefits of any proposals."	Members: Stephen Alambritis, Head of Press and Parliamentary Affairs, Federation of Small Businesses; Bob Benson, Director of Disability Scotland; Jane Campbell, Member of the National Centre for Independent Living and British Council of Organisations of Disabled People; Caroline Gooding, Member of Trades Union Disability Alliance; David Grayson, Chair of the National Disability Council, Business Links National Advisory Panel, a director of Business in the Community; Rachel Hurst, Chair of Rights Now; David Jenkins, General Secretary of Welsh TUC; Su Jenkins, Legal Adviser, J Sainsbury plc; Brian Lamb, Assistant Director and Head of Public Affairs, SCOPE; Colin Low, Vice-Chair of Royal National Institute for the Blind; Tracey-Jane Malthouse, Employment Research Executive, Institute of Directors; Joe Mann, General Secretary, National League of the Blind and Disabled; Bert Massie, Director of Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation; Denise Platt, Head of Social Services, Local Government Association; Brian Pomeroy, Senior Partner, Deloitte & Touche Consulting Group; Philippa Russell, Director of the Council for Disabled Children; Liz Sayce, Policy Director, Mind (National Association for Mental Health); Susan Scott-Parker, Chief Executive, Employers' Forum on Disability; Ranjit Sondhi, Former Vice-Chair of Commission for Racial Equality; James Strachan, Chief Executive, Royal National Institute for Deaf People; Richard Taylor, Chief Executive, Lifespan NHS Trust; Keith Welton, Group Chief Executive, Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ltd; Monica Wilson, Chief Executive of Disability Action; Richard Wood, Chief Executive, British Council of Organisations of Disabled People.
Double taxation relief for companies	Announced 17 March 1998	Review of the functioning and the fairness of the existing system, its effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the relief and business's compliance costs, while having regard to the overall cost of the relief.	Inland Revenue International Division. Consultation planned with business and other interested parties about any proposals for change.
Drugs strategy	Report due spring 1998		
Edgware hospital	Announced 19 May 1997	Review of services, excluding previous controversial decisions on transfer of Accident and Emergency services.	Carried out by Barnet Health Authority.

<p>Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools Advisory Group</p>	<p>Announced 19 November 1997</p>	<p>The Group will give advice on how schools can teach their pupils about the nature and practices of participation in democracy and the duties, responsibilities and rights which individuals have as citizens. It will offer initial advice through the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in March 1998 and final recommendations by the end of July 1998, identifying opportunities for effective education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools.</p>	<p>Chair: Professor Bernard Crick, Emeritus Professor of politics, Birkbeck College, University of London; members: Lord Kenneth Baker, former Secretary of State for Education and Home Secretary ; Sir Stephen Tumim, former HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in England and Wales; Michael Brunson, political editor, ITN; Alex Porter, Lecturer in Education (politics) at the Institute of Education, University of London; Phil Turner, Former Assistant Education Officer at London Borough of Redbridge, Deputy Chief Education Officer in Devon and Adviser for SEN in Haringey; Jan Newton, Chief Executive of the Citizenship Foundation; Elizabeth Hoodless, Chief Executive of Community Service Volunteers; Usha Prashar, Chair of the Parole Board and Vice-Chair of the National Literacy Trust; Elaine Appelbee, member of the General Synod; Tom Bentley, Demos; Marianne Talbot, Lecturer in Philosophy at Brasenose College, Oxford; Mavis Grant, Headteacher; Graham Robb, Headteacher; Heather Daulphin, Director of Post-16 Studies at Hampstead School.</p>
<p>Electricity trading arrangements</p>	<p>Announced 23 October 1997. Final terms of reference published 24 March 1998. Due to report July 1998</p>	<p>"I want the review to deliver a better deal for large and small consumers. I want it to recommend a workable model which will deliver competitive electricity prices to the consumer from an efficient and transparent market. The new structure must be sustainable in the constantly changing energy market place and provide stability well into the next century." (Science, Energy and Industry Minister John Battle)</p>	<p>Director of Electricity Generation and Supply.</p>
<p>Electoral Procedures</p>	<p>Announced 20 January 1998</p>	<p>The Home Office Working Party on Electoral Procedures aims to secure "more open and fairer electoral procedures". It will involve early non-statutory improvements, where possible, and longer-term analysis that may lead to legislative changes. Research is being carried out on issues such as registration of the homeless; access to polling stations for the disabled and other disability issues; absent voting arrangements; automated voting and counting; a rolling or a continuous electoral register; and citizenship education. The Working Party is looking primarily at parliamentary elections but will also consider arrangements for local and European elections.</p>	<p>Chair: Home Office minister George Howarth; members: Janet Rutherford, Local Government Association; Madeleine Williams, Association of London Government; Richard Lester, Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors; Robin Wendt, National Association of Local Councils; C Nigel Stewart, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; Pat Bradley, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland; David Monks, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives; John Turner, Association of Electoral Administrators; Paul Gribble, Legal Consultant, Conservative Central Office; Mike Penn, National Constitutional Officer, Labour Party; Chris Rennard, Director of Campaigns and Elections, Liberal Democrats; Andrew Whetnall, DETR; Gareth Thomas, the Welsh Office; Kay Barton, the Scottish Office; Peter Gilbert, Northern Ireland Office.</p>

Electricity suppliers	Announced 11 February 1998	Review of the 14 public electricity suppliers over the next two years, including price control, supply standards, competition, separation of activities, metering, prepayment meters and meter reading.	Led by the Director General of Electricity Supply, Professor Stephen Littlechild: "As in previous reviews I envisage appointing consultants for parts of the price control work, and a panel of senior advisers with extensive business experience."
EMU advisory group	Announced 24 July 1997. Reported 30 January 1998	An advisory group to examine the practical implications of EMU for business, which will arise whether or not the UK joins the single currency. Eight working parties were set up to consider detailed practical questions.	
Energy efficient materials and low income households	Reported November 1997	Review of the revenue effect of a reduced rate of VAT on energy efficient materials and alternative options for targeted relief to help those on low incomes to save energy	
Energy efficiency requirements in building regulations	Announced 17 February 1998	Comprehensive review of building regulations to see how they could contribute to reducing CO <sub>2</sub> emissions.	It is a statutory requirement that when substantive changes to the Building Regulations are proposed there should be consultation with the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) and with all parties who may have an interest. This is normally achieved through the input of a BRAC Technical Working Party to the development of the proposals followed by a three-month long consultation on the proposals with all interested parties. This review is to go much further than this by consulting widely to seek ideas in the first instance, both through workshops and a published discussion paper. The proposals generated will then be assembled into detailed proposals for amendments to the Building Regulations.
Energy sources for power generation	Announced 3 December 1997. Due to report before 30 June 1998	A review of energy sources for power generation, including fuel diversity, sustainable development and the role of coal, and how this should affect consents for new power station developments.	Merx and McLellan Consultants appointed by competitive tender to provide advice on effects of high levels of gas-fired generation on the security and stability of the national grid; Wood MacKenzie appointed to advice on the outlook for gas supplies to 2020. Over 80 representations (closed on 14 February 1998) have been received from local authorities, companies, trade unions and other interested parties, and these are presently being considered.
Environment Task Force advisory group	Announced 25 March 1998	Brief to advise on the Environment Task Force option in the New Deal.	Chair: John Baker, Chair of Groundwork and former Chair of National Power.

Export Forum		Remit is to carry out a full assessment of how well the UK's export programmes work, by looking at the strengths and weaknesses of official support for trade fairs, trade missions, identifying leads, export market research, UK firms bidding for overseas projects, and other export promotion activities; and examining the current arrangements for inter-departmental consultation, the current arrangements for consultation with business, the interface between the overseas trade services and business links, the present system for establishing market and sectoral priorities, and the marketing and branding of official export promotional services.	The forum reports and is accountable to DTI and FCO Ministers. Membership: Tom Harris, Department of Trade and Industry (Chair); Sir Andrew Burns, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Alternative Chair); Peter Godwin, British Overseas Trade Board; Robert Beresford, Overseas Project Board; Ken Jackson, Trades Union Congress; Tony Bastock, Chemical Industries Association; Glenys Goucher, Business Link, North Derbyshire; Ron Taylor, British Chambers of Commerce; Ian Campbell, Institute of Export; Emmanuel Cotter, North London Business Development Agency; Richard Brown, Aston Fittings Manufacturing Ltd; Dorothy MacKenzie, Dragon International Consulting; Garry Campkin, Confederation of British Industry; Ted Dilley, Cable and Wireless; Hector Munro, British Council; Roy Leighton, British Invisibles; Victor Lunn-Rockcliffe, Export Credits Guarantee Department; David Orchard, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Richard Wood, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions; Mark Conaty, HM Treasury; Martin Briggs, Government Office for the East Midlands; David Fawcett, Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
EU Presidency Task Force		The remit is to ensure a co-ordinated and coherent policy approach to the UK's presidency of the European Union (1 January to 30 June 1998); to maintain the right balance between the achievement of UK national objectives and chairing the EU's business in an efficient and impartial way; to set a presentational strategy for the presidency; and to respond rapidly to any unexpected crisis during the presidency.	Membership: Robin Cook, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Chair); Ministers of State from other government departments, with the flexibility to invite others with an interest in presidency business.
Film policy	Report due early 1998		Joint Chairs: Tom Clarke, Film Minister and Stewart Till, President of Polygram International; 12 other members, including 10 from the private sector.
Financial regulation in Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man	Announced 20 January 1998 as a six-month review	A wide-ranging review of the financial legislation and regulatory systems in the islands.	Conducted by former senior Treasury official Andrew Edwards alongside Home Office officials and the island authorities.
Fire-fighters pension scheme	A consultation document was issued in February 1998		
Fishing vessel licensing	Due to report December 1998		

Football Task Force		The remit is to investigate and recommend new measures to deal with the public's concerns on issues such as racism, ticket prices, access for the disabled and the increasing commercialism of football.	The Football Trust provides the secretariat to the Task Force, which reports and is accountable to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Members: David Mellor (Chair); representatives of the Football Trust, the Football Association, the Professional Footballers Association, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Local Government Association, the University of Liverpool Football Research Unit, the English Sports Council, the Football Supporters Association, the National Federation of Football Supporters Clubs, the League Managers Association and the Association of Premier and Football League Referees and Linesmen.
Foresight Programme	Reported October 1997	An audit of the Foresight Programme, which brings together businesses, government and academia to identify market and technology opportunities for the future.	
Further Education Student Support Advisory Group	First meeting 17 December 1997. Due to report to the minister by the end of March 1998	Set up to make recommendations on new arrangements to replace Local Education Authority discretionary awards in further education. The Teaching and Higher Education Bill, introduced in the House of Lords on 26 November 1997, seeks to repeal the 1962 Education Act under which these awards are made.	Chair: Cllr Graham Lane (LGA Education Chair); members: Dr John Brennan, Director of FE Development, AoC; Sue Cara, Associate Director, Programmes and policy, NIACE; Geoff Hall, Director of Funding and Strategy, FEFC; Lynne How, Principal, Redcar and Cleveland College; Dr Philip Hunter, Director of Education, Staffordshire County Council; Cllr Jeff Jones, Education Spokesperson, Welsh LGA; Cllr Peter Lawrence, Buckinghamshire County Council; Dr Anne Sims, Research Officer, Student Financial Support, NUS; Nigel Trim, Administrative Assistant for Financial Services, City of Manchester Council; Anette Zera, Principal, Tower Hamlets College; Beverley Evans, Divisional Manager, 16-19 Student Support, DfEE; Nick Tooze, Team Leader, Individual Learning Division, DfEE.
Gaelic broadcasting	Report February 1998		
Gene Therapy Advisory Committee	Announced 10 December 1997	The aim of the review is to analyse the GTAC's functions and consider how they can best be delivered.	Chair: Marcia Fry, Department of Health; members: Kay Davies, Professor of Genetics, Oxford University; Dr Brian Davis, Medicines Control Agency; Professor Jim McEwen, Multicentre Research Ethics Committee Chair, Scotland; Dr Peter Rigby, National Institute for Medical Research; Indarjit Singh, member of British Medical Association Ethics Committee; Dr Richard Tiner, Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.
Government information	Reported July 1997	Review of the Code of Practice on access to government information.	

Hedgerows regulations	Hedgerows Regulations Review Group first met 29 July 1997. Due to report end December	Intended to strengthen protection of hedgerows.	Members of the review group include the Country Landowners Association, the Countryside Commission, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Electricity Association, English Heritage, English Nature, the Farmers Union of Wales, the Local Government Association, the National Farmers Union, Wales Wildlife and Countryside Link, and Wildlife and Countryside Link. The DETR chairs the group, with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Welsh Office also being members.
Hill livestock	Announced 22 December 1997	Review of the Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance Scheme.	
Home Buying Process Task Force	Announced 26 September 1997. Full report due in September 1998	Aimed at improving the home buying process. Includes major research study. Lord Chancellor's department also reviewing the specific problem of gazumping.	A special ministerial task force comprises Geoff Hoon, Parliamentary Secretary at Lord Chancellor's Department; Consumer Affairs Minister Nigel Griffiths and Local Government Minister Hilary Armstrong. Research is commissioned from PS Martin Hamblin researchers.
Home-Grown Cereals Authority	Announced 29 August 1997	Announcing the review, the Farming and Food Industry Minister, Lord Donoughue, said: "Reviews of non-departmental public bodies are carried out every five years and this gives us an excellent opportunity to examine all aspects of the HGCA's work and responsibilities. I can assure you it will be a thorough review which will start by asking whether there is a continued need for the Authority at all."	Consultation with main trade and consumer organisations finished 17 October 1997.
Housing Sounding Board	Announced 15 December 1997	A new informal forum for discussing the key issues in housing.	Members: Chris Holmes, Director, Shelter; Alan Kilburn, Chief Executive, Home Housing Association; Steve Mycio, Director of Housing, Manchester City Council; Mike Ockenden, Managing Director, Barclays Mortgages; Dr Anne Power, London School of Economics; Heather Rabbatts, Chief Executive, London Borough of Lambeth; Steve Wilcox, Centre for Housing Policy; Neale Coleman and Steve Hilditch, Paddington Consultancy Partnership. Discussions within the Board will be confidential. Members of the Board will be unpaid.
Human rights	Announced 3 July 1997. Review is expected to take about a year and will report information as it becomes available	Review of the UK's position under various international human rights instruments.	
Immigration advisers	Consultation document published 22 January 1998	Review of the control of unscrupulous immigration advisers.	

Immigration and asylum appeals	Review completed. A consultation document is being prepared		
Inequalities in health	Due to report summer 1998	Review of the latest information available on inequalities in health.	Being undertaken by Sir Donald Acheson, former Chief Medical Officer for England.
International Development Policy	Reported 5 November 1997	White Paper published.	
Landfill tax	Report February 1998		
Literacy Task Force	Ongoing task force, published report 'The Implementation of the National Literacy Strategy' on 15 September 1997		Chair: Professor Michael Barber, Head of Standards and Effectiveness Unit, DfEE; members: John Botham, Headteacher; Ken Follett, novelist; Simon Goodenough, Chair of Governors, Queen Elizabeth Community College, Devon; Mary Gray, retired headteacher; David Pitt-Watson, Deloitte & Touche; David Reynolds, Professor of Education, University of Newcastle; Anne Waterhouse, Headteacher; Diane Wright, parent.
Liverpool Blood Centre	Announced 14 August 1997. Interim report in September 1997, full report due spring 1998	Review of clinical concerns about transfer of blood processing and testing.	Led by Professor John Cash, President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and former Director of the Blood Transfusion Service.
Local Government Commission	Announced 17 November 1997	"This review will be conducted in two stages. The first will be a 'prior options' study focusing on whether the functions carried out by the LGC are needed and, if so, whether those functions are best undertaken by the LGC or some other body. Subject to the outcome of this first stage, the second stage will consist of a more detailed review of the LGC's structure, funding, financial management and methods of operation." (Local Government Minister Hilary Armstrong)	Robert Hazell, Director of the Constitution Unit in the School of Public Policy at University College London, was appointed to undertake the prior options study. To oversee the review, an Advisory Group was set up, including representatives from the Local Government Association, departmental officials and the Chair and Chief Executive of the LGC.
London's health services	Reported 18 November 1997	Intended to review services London-wide, paying particular attention to the future of Queen Mary's and Barts hospitals in the context of different health authority and NHS trust plans.	Chaired by Sir Leslie Tumberg of the Royal College of Physicians, with four other expert members.



Long-term care	Announced 4 December 1997. Due to report within one year	A Royal Commission looking at how long-term care for elderly people is funded.	The Chair of the Royal Commission is Sir Stewart Sutherland, the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh University. Members: Professor Dame June Clark, University of Swansea Department of Nursing; Sir Nicholas Goodison, Vice-Chair, Lloyds TSB group; Dr Iona Heath, Vice-Chair of Royal College of GPs; Joel Joffe, lawyer and founder director of Allied Dunbar Assurance; David Lipsey, political editor of <i>The Economist</i> ; Professor Mary Marshall, Director of the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling; Claire Rayner, writer and broadcaster; Paula Ridley, Director of Merseyside Development Corporation; Professor Robert Stout, Queen's University, Belfast; Robin Wendt, former Secretary of the Association of County Councils (1989-97); Len Woodley QC.
Low Pay Commission	Due to report May 1998	The remit is to recommend to the government the initial rate at which the minimum wage might be introduced and other matters referred to it by ministers.	The Commission will make its recommendations to the Prime Minister with the DTI acting as its sponsoring department. Members: Professor George Bain, Principal, London Business School (Chair); David Metcalf, Professor of Economics, London School of Economics; Stephanie Monk, Director of Human Resources, Granada Group; Paul Gates, General Secretary, Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trades Union; John Cridland, Director of Human Resources Policy, Confederation of British Industry; Rita Donaghy, National Executive Council, UNISON; Lawrence Dewar, Chief Executive, Scottish Grocers Federation; Bill Callaghan, Head, TUC Economic and Social Affairs Department; William Brown, Professor of Industrial Relations, University of Cambridge.
McCullagh Group	Report March 1998	Reviewing growth barriers for industry and enterprise.	
Milk Development Council	Announced 10 June 1997. Reported October 1997	Review of future of the Milk Development Council.	Consultation with industry bodies.
Millennium arrangements	June 1997	Review of arrangements for celebrating the millennium. Led, most notably, to the decision to continue with the Millennium Dome project.	
National Lottery	Review led to publication of White Paper, 21 July 1997		

National Schools Standards Task Force		The remit is to unite the various educational interests in the new drive to raise standards in schools; be advocates for the spread of good practice to achieve higher standards; advise the Secretary of State for Education on the development and implementation of policies to improve school standards; keep the Secretary of State abreast of best practice nationally and internationally; and work with national agencies and others to achieve the national targets for literacy and numeracy.	The task force reports through and is accountable to DfEE Ministers. Members: David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment (Chair); Stephen Byers, School Standards Minister, Education and Employment (Vice-Chair); Professor Tim Brighouse, Chief Education Officer, Birmingham (Vice-Chair); Chris Woodhead, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Ofsted (Vice-Chair); Professor Michael Barber, Standards and Effectiveness Unit, DfEE (Secretary); Lord Puttnam, Chair, Enigma Productions; John Baker, Chair, National Power; Anthea Millet, Chief Executive, Teacher Training Agency; Dr Nick Tate, Chief Executive Designate, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; William Atkinson, Head, Phoenix High School, Shepherds Bush; Carole Evans, Head, Priory School, Slough; Janet Warwick, Head, Rhyn Park School, Oswestry; David Winkley, Headteacher, Grove Primary School, Birmingham; Carol Adams, Chief Education Officer, Shropshire; David Bell, Chief Education Officer, Newcastle upon Tyne; Chrissie Garrett, Assistant Principal, Banbury School, Banbury; Professor David Hargreaves, School of Education, University of Cambridge; Professor Stephen Heppell, Ultra-Lab, Anglia Polytechnic University, Chelmsford; Jill Kieran, Deputy Head, Whiteheath Infant School, Ruislip; Professor Simon Lee, Liverpool Hope University College, Liverpool; Janet Major, teacher, Bungay High School, Bungay; Dr Heidi Safia Mirza, South Bank University, London; Professor John McBeath, Strathclyde University; Peter Owen, Schools Directorate, DfEE.
New and renewable energy	Due to be completed December 1998		
NHS Charter Advisory Group	Report due summer 1998		
NHS Efficiency Task Force	Launched 11 June 1997	Brief is to explore more effective and efficient ways of delivering high-quality patient care across the NHS.	Chair: Health Minister Alan Milburn; members: David Fillingham, St Helens and Knowsley Health Authority; John Flook, Executive Director of Finance, County Durham Health Authority; Peter Homa, Chief Executive, Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS Trust; Dr Ian Rutter, Westcliffe Surgery, Shipley; Philip Hunt, Chief Executive, NHS Confederation; Mike Marchment, Chief Executive, Warwickshire Health Authority; Lionel Joyce, Chief Executive, Newcastle City Health NHS Trust; Peter D Lees, Southampton General Hospital.
NHS regional task forces (8)	Permanent bodies which report as and when necessary	Set up to support the NHS Waiting List Action Team.	

NHS Task Force on involving staff	Announced 19 January 1998	Brief is to advise ministers on how to "involve staff more effectively and make best use of their unique knowledge. Its chief role will be to spread successful practice between NHS organisations."	"I want the task force to involve staff, professional bodies and employers. And when I say staff, I mean staff. Not just the usual suspects. I want nurses who are still nursing, surgeons who are still cutting, people who are still pushing trolleys or cooking meals. Not just the great and the good. I also want some people from outside the NHS." (Health Secretary Frank Dobson)
NHS Trusts in Wales	Due to report April 1999	Review of area and number of NHS trusts in Wales.	
New Deal Task Force		The remit is to give advice to the Cabinet committee on welfare to work, chaired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the key issues of programme policy and design; to market the New Deal, particularly to the business and voluntary sectors and to stimulate action and commitment in their sectors; to receive regular reports on, and advise on, progress implementation of the New Deal, to flag up emerging issues and to advise on their resolution.	The task force reports through and is accountable to DfEE Ministers. Members: Sir Peter Davis, Group Chief Executive, Prudential; Shami Ahmed, Joe Bloggs Jeans Ltd; Christopher Haskins, Chair, Northern Foods plc; Ian McAllister, Chair, Ford UK; Stephanie Monk, Group Human Resources Director, Granada Group plc; John Roberts CBE, Chief Executive, The Post Office; Michael Wemms, Managing Director, Operations, Tesco plc; Rodney Bickerstaffe, General Secretary, Unison; Sir John Harman, Leader, Kirklees Metropolitan Council; Jenny Shackleton, Principal, Wirral Metropolitan College; Helen Edwards, Chief Executive, NACRO; Bill Morris, General Secretary, Transport and General Workers Union; Victor Adebowale, Chief Executive, Centrepoint; Alison Millward, Chair, Groundwork Black Country; Tom Shebbeare, Director, Prince's Trust; John Baker, Chair of Groundwork and former Chair of National Power.

New Deal Task Force Advisory Group	Announced 22 August 1997. Appointed for two years initially, with a review in May 1999	The Advisory Group advises the New Deal Task Force on the design and delivery of the New Deal, engaging the commitment of the business and wider community, and monitoring the progress of the New Deal on the ground.	Members (all unpaid): John Bright, Director of Field Operations, Crime Concern Trust; Rita Britton, Director, Pollyanna; Christine Carling, Director of National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service; Paul Convery, Director of the Unemployment Unit and the Training and Enterprise Network; Andrea Cook, Director of National Energy Action; Jeremy Crook, Director of Black Training and Enterprise Group; John Davidson, formerly Chief Executive Groundwork Trust; Annmarie Dixon-Barrow, Programme Director, Project Fullemploy; David Eade, Principal of Bamsley College; Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive of National Council for Voluntary Organisations; Dan Finn, University of Portsmouth; Carolyn Hayman, Chief Executive of Foyer Federation for Youth; Chris Humphries, Chief Executive of TEC National Council; Amanda Jordan, Senior Executive, Public and Community Affairs, NatWest Group; Professor Richard Layard, London School of Economics; Bert Massie, Director, Royal Association for Disability And Rehabilitation; Samantha Peters, General Secretary of British Youth Council; Iain Roxburgh, Chief Executive of Coventry City Council; Judith Rutherford, Director of London TEC Council; Alan Sinclair, Chief Executive, Wise Group; Michael Ward, Director for the Centre for Local Economic Strategies; Howard Williamson, School of Social and Administrative Studies, Cardiff University; Chris Woodcock, Head of Corporate Affairs, Kellogg's; Shelagh Woolliscroft, General Secretary of Careers Services National Association.
Northern Ireland economic development strategy	Due to report autumn/winter 1999	Fundamental review of the economic development strategy in Northern Ireland.	
Northern Ireland industrial development support services	Due to report March 1998		
Northern Ireland information services	Reported 5 November 1997		
Northern Ireland New Deal Task Force	Ongoing group reporting as and when necessary		
Northern Ireland training and further education	Reported February 1998	Review of training centres and further education colleges.	
Northern Ireland trust ports	Report due March 1998		
Northern Ireland voluntary sector	Report due December 1998	Review of the 1993 strategy for support of the voluntary sector and for development in Northern Ireland.	

Northern Ireland youth service	Report due December 1998	Policy review of the Northern Ireland youth service.	
North Sea fiscal regime	To complete 1998		
Numeracy Task Force	Preliminary recommendations reported 21 January 1998	The remit is to review the existing international and national evidence about achievement in mathematics, teacher effectiveness in mathematics and school effectiveness in mathematics; to investigate the educational and social factors which are determinants of that performance; propose appropriate policies for all parts of the education service to tackle under-achievement including classroom teaching, whole school practice, teacher training and development and action by local and national government and its partners.	The task force reports through and is accountable to DfEE Ministers. Members: Professor David Reynolds, Professor of Education, University of Newcastle (Chair); Martin Armstrong, Deputy Headteacher, Marlwood School, South Gloucestershire; Professor Margaret Brown, Professor of Mathematics Education, King's College, London; Professor David Burghes, Professor of Education, Centre of Innovation in Mathematics Training, University of Exeter; Margaret Dawes, KPMG; Carol Robinson, Headteacher, William Ford Primary School, Barking and Dagenham; Professor Christopher Robson, Professor of Pure Mathematics, University of Leeds; Anita Straker, Director, National Numeracy Project; Ann Waterhouse, Headteacher, Asmall County Primary School, Lancashire.
Open-cast coal planning issues	Announced 4 March 1998	Further to a consultation paper on open-cast coal mining published in July 1997, it was decided that a full review of Minerals Planning Guidance Note 3 on Coal Mining and Colliery Spoil Disposal should run in conjunction with the review of energy policy.	
Organic farming	Announced 29 July 1997. Reported to ministers in December 1997	Review of the rates and structure of aid to farmers converting to organic farming.	Consultation with industry representatives ended 26 September 1997.

Panel 2000 Task Force	Announced 1 April 1998. Due to produce an interim report in summer 1998	The so-called 'Committee of Cool', charged with leading a "full frontal attack on the myth of a tired Britain" (Robin Cook). Their task is to examine ways of updating the way Britain's image is presented to the rest of the world.	Members: Waheed Alli, Managing Director of TV production company Planet 24; Zeinab Badawi, broadcaster; Martin Bell; Baroness Chalker; Frances D'Souza, Executive Director of Article 19; David John, British Oxygen Company; Mark Leonard, Demos; Lord Levy, MG Records; Ruth Mackenzie, General Director, Scottish Opera; Sir Colin Marshall, Chair of British Airways; Stella McCartney, designer; Lord Paul, Chair, Caparo; Shahwar Sadeque, IT consultant; Judy Simpson, athlete and <i>Gladiators</i> star; Martin Sorrell, Chief Executive of WPP; John Sorrell, Chair, Design Council; Harriet Ware-Austin, Amnesty International; Baroness Blackstone, Higher Education Minister; Lord Clinton-Davis, DTI; David Drewry, Director General, British Council; Mark Fisher, Arts Minister; Andrew Fraser, Invest in Britain Bureau; Tom Harris, DTI; Roger Liddle, No 10 Policy Unit; Peter Mandelson, Minister Without Portfolio; David Quamby, British Tourist Authority; Baroness Symons, parliamentary under-secretary, Foreign Office; Sir John Kerr, permanent under-secretary, FCO; Sir Michael Jay, British ambassador in Paris; Claire Fulton, EU and International Fisheries Desk, FCO; Vivien Life, Latin American Department, FCO.
Parliamentary privilege	Announced 9 June 1997	To review the purpose and extent of parliamentary privilege, including the relationship between parliament and the courts.	MPs and members of House of Lords.
Partnership law	Announced 24 November 1997	Wide-ranging review of the law of partnership to meet modern business needs.	Conducted by the Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commission on behalf of the DTI.
Pension provision group	Report February 1998		
Pensions	Due to publish initial framework by 30 June 1998	A wide-ranging review of all aspects of pensions.	Led by Tom Ross of Alexander Clay and vice-president of the National Association of Pension Funds.
Pensions Education Working Group	Report January 1998		
Pesticides	Due to report December 1998	Review of the future funding of regulatory arrangements for pesticides.	
Pilotage Act	Due to report March 1998		
Police pensions	A consultation document was issued in February 1998		Inter-departmental review.
Police training	Report due April 1998	A strategic review of national police training.	

Politically-restricted posts in local government	Announced 30 September 1997	Review of the detail of regulations governing politically-restricted posts in local government.	
Post Offices	The first phase of this review, a consultation exercise and scoping study, has been completed.	The government is currently considered the next step.	
Prescribing, supply and administration of medicines	Submissions invited 20 June 1997. Report due spring 1998	Review intended to enable nurses and other health professionals to undertake new roles in patient care.	Dr June Crown, Chair of the review team, is President of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine and Director of the South East Institute of Public Health. Other members represent a wide range of professional, patient and other NHS interests.
Prestwick Task Force	Probable report date October 1998	Set up to assist in the economic development of Prestwick in the light of recent job losses.	
Prison and probation services	Announced 16 July 1997. Consultation document due end 1997	To look at options for closer and more integrated work between the two services, arrangements for sharing information about prisoners and co-ordination of risk assessment, resettlement planning, programmes to reduce offending and dealing with problems of drug and alcohol abuse.	Reporting to Joyce Quin, the Minister for Prisons and Probation.
Prisoners released on early licence	Report due mid-1998	Review of the operation of the release of prisoners on early licence.	
Prisons investigation strategy	First report April 1998		
Prison nursing service	Report February 1998		
Prison service drug strategy	Report due March 1998		
Prison service health care	Report due mid-1998	Review of long-term future of prison service health care.	
Private finance machinery	Announced 8 May 1997. Reported 23 June 1997. Step-by-step guide to PFI published 28 July 1997		Carried out by Malcolm Bates.

Private Finance Task Force		The remit of the task force, which comprises a projects arm and a policy arm, is to advance the private finance initiative and public/private partnerships across government. The projects arm, which is structured as a limited company under Treasury guarantee, will assess and support departments' efforts in securing good quality new transactions in the PFI field and help to deliver significant existing projects. It is envisaged that the company will have a limited life of two years, by which time expertise should be sufficiently well spread across the public sector. The policy team provides key policy advice to Ministers on the private finance initiative and public/private partnerships, and has lead responsibility for developing rules and promoting best practice in these areas.	The task force reports and is accountable to the Paymaster General. Membership: Projects arm: Adrian Montague (Chief Executive of projects), former co-head of Global Project Finance at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson; eight other members representing the private sector. Policy arm: Peter Wanless (Head of the Treasury Private Finance Unit); Ben Pryn, Price Waterhouse; Tony Whitehead, Coopers & Lybrand; Official representatives of HM Treasury.
Qualifications appeals system	Report due May 1998		
Quangos	Consultation paper published 11 November 1997. Final report due spring 1998	Government objective to make quangos (formally referred to as non-departmental public bodies) more open and accountable. At the same time as the publication of the consultation paper, the government also published a report on the main objectives and achievements of the 53 largest NDPBs, which account for an annual expenditure of about £18 billion – nearly 90% of the total expenditure incurred by all 309 executive NDPBs.	
Quarantine	Due to report late spring 1998	Review of the rules on quarantine for imported pet animals.	
Raw Waste Meat Disposal Laws	Announced 6 October 1997. Aims to report by summer 1998	Aimed initially at the possible large-scale burial of raw waste meat, then longer-term policy.	Initial consultation by MAFF (ended November 1997) to be followed by wider consultation on consolidation of existing legislation on animal waste.
Railway Safety Standards Arrangements	Announced 25 March 1998	Review of Railtrack's role in setting and enforcing railway safety standards.	To be carried out by the Health and Safety Commission.
Risk assessment and management for environmental protection	Report due June 1998	A joint DETR/Environment Agency task force.	



Roads	Announced 19 June 1997. Conclusions due in spring 1998	A "far-reaching and broadly based strategic roads review to determine the role which roads should play in an integrated transport policy and to establish a forward investment programme for the trunk road network", looking afresh at the environmental impact of roads.	
Rolling stock leasing market	Report due April 1998		
Salmon and freshwater fisheries	Announced 7 July 1997. Expected to report February 2000	A comprehensive review, intended to produce ideas for the future management and conservation of salmon and freshwater fish.	Members of review group announced in autumn 1997
Scotland Action Group on Standards in Scottish Schools	A permanent body that provides advice as and when necessary		
Scotland countryside access	Due to report December 1998	Review of countryside access legislation in Scotland.	
Scotland food-related scientific services	Due to report September 1998	A comprehensive review.	
Scotland land ownership and management	Due to report December 1998	A review of the system of land ownership and management in Scotland.	
Scotland national parks	Due to report March 1999	Review to identify areas appropriate for designation as national parks in Scotland.	
Scotland owner occupation	Reported December 1997 and being considered	Review of Scottish Homes' support for owner occupation.	
Scotland rented accommodation	Report due March 1998	Review of Scottish Homes' support for rented housing.	
Scotland roads programme	Due to report summer 1998		
Scotland rural water and sewerage	Report due summer 1998	Review of rural water and sewerage grant scheme.	
Scotland transport policy	Due to report spring 1998		
Scotland water industry	Reported to parliament in December 1997		

Scottish Advisory Task Force on the New Deal		The remit is to give advice to the Secretary of State for Scotland on the key issues of programme policy and design of the New Deal in Scotland; to promote the New Deal in Scotland, particularly to the business and voluntary sectors, and to stimulate action and commitment in their progress on the implementation of the New Deal, to flag up emerging issues and to advise on their resolution.	The task force reports and is accountable to the Secretary of State for Scotland. Members: Ian Robinson, Chief Executive, Scottish Power (Chair); Jim Stretton, Chief Executive, Standard Life; Fred Goodwin, Chief Executive, Clydesdale Bank plc; Hugh Henry, Leader, Renfrewshire District Council; Keith Geddes, Leader, City of Edinburgh Council; Michael Leech, Principal, Stevenson College; Alan Sinclair, Chief Executive, The Wise Group; Raymond Young OBE, Director, Forward Scotland; Martin Sime, Chief Executive, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; John Rafferty, Director, National Lottery Charities Board (Scotland); Anne Clark, Executive Director, Highland Community Care Forum; Carmen McAteer, Regional Officer, Manufacturing Science and Finance Union; Avril Ross Dewar, Chief Executive, Ross Campbell Consultants; John Gallacher, Managing Director, Cruden Estates Ltd; Archie Bethel, Managing Director, Motherwell Bridge Holdings Ltd.
Scottish Awards Agency	Report due April 1998	Report of the Awards Agency for Scotland.	
Scottish enterprise strategy	Completed October 1997		
Service personnel compensation	Announced 8 December 1997. Consultation document due summer 1998	Review of the arrangements for compensating service personnel (or their dependants) and for the payment of death and invalidity benefit.	The review will be conducted jointly by the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Social Security.
Sex offenders		Review of measures to deal with the protection of communities from known sex offenders who pose a continuing risk. Implemented as part of the Crime and Disorder Bill.	
Shipping Working Group	To report in time to feed into a White Paper, which will be published in 1998, on integrated transport	Set up to consider measures to revive the UK shipping industry and to increase employment in training British seafarers.	

Skills Task Force	Announced 10 November 1997	Brief to advise on the development of the National Skills Agenda, identifying where there are skills gaps and how they can be bridged.	Will consult widely, including through a series of regional seminars. Chair: Chris Humphries, Chief Executive of the TEC National Council and Director General-elect of the British Chambers of Commerce; members: Gary Allen, Chair of IMI plc; Llew Avis, Personnel Director, Siemens, Newcastle; Rita Britton, Pollyanna, Bamsley; Tony Dubbins, General Secretary of the GPMU; John Edmonds, General Secretary of the GMB; Denise Hall, General Manager, Education, BT; Ken Jackson, General Secretary of the AEEU; Eddie MacIntyre, Principal, Birmingham College of Food, Tourism & Creative Studies; John Palmer, Chair of Steel Training Ltd; Peter Rainbird, Chair of Essex TEC; Ian Roxburgh, Chief Executive, Coventry City Council; Julia Tinsley, Pitman Training Centre, Sheffield; Adair Turner, Director General, CBI; Anne Weinstock, Rathbone CI
Skye Bridge tolls	Reported July 1997, implemented January 1998		
Special Educational Needs Advisory Group	Green Paper published 22 October 1997	Remit includes advising on the content of a Green Paper to be published in September; advising on and participating in an autumn consultation exercise following the Green Paper; overseeing implementation of an action plan for special educational needs based on the results of the consultation; advising on the development and implementation of policies to improve standards in special education more generally; monitoring the special educational needs implications of national policies for improving standards in schools; and keeping ministers informed of best practice in special education.	Chaired by Schools Standards Minister Estelle Morris. The Vice-Chair is Paul Ennals, Director of Education and Employment at the Royal National Institute for the Blind and Chair of the Council for Disabled Children. Members: Gordon Bull, Principal, Newbury College; Clive Danks, Headteacher; Gillian Dawson, SEN Co-ordinator, Sandford Primary School, Leeds; Michael de Val, Director of Education, Torfaen County Borough Council; Professor Alan Dyson, Special Needs Research Centre, University of Newcastle upon Tyne; Tim Exell, Headteacher; Chrissie Garrett, secondary school SEN Co-ordinator and member of the Standards Task Force; Moira Gibb, Director of Social Services, Kensington and Chelsea; Paul Lincoln, Director of Education, Essex LEA; Pauline Maddison, Chief Education Services Officer, Bexley; Vincent McDonnell, Principal Education Officer, Staffordshire LEA; Kate McRae, Headteacher; Richard Rieser, teacher; Philippa Russell, Director, Council for Disabled Children; Dela Smith, Headteacher; Sandra Tomlinson, Vice-Chair, National Governors Council; Vanessa Wiseman, Headteacher. Observers from the Teacher Training Agency, Ofsted, Department for Health, Welsh Office, SCAA, OHMCI (Wales) and SEN Tribunal will also attend meetings.
Sugar Beet Research and Education Committee	Five-yearly review announced on 12 June 1997	A "non-departmental public body prior options review" of the SBREC covered all aspects of its work. Led to decision on 29 January 1998 to set up Sugar Beet Development Council.	

Surrogacy	Announced 11 June 1997. Due to report summer 1998	Review of existing surrogacy law.	Review team of three experts: Margaret Brazier, Professor of law at Manchester University; Professor Susan Golombok, of City University; and Professor Alastair Campbell, of the University of Bristol.
Sustainable development	A revised sustainable development strategy is to be published by the end of 1998		
Tax and Benefits Task Force	Due to report June 1998	The remit is to examine the interaction of the tax and benefits systems so that they can be streamlined and modernised to fulfil the objectives of promoting work incentives, reducing poverty and welfare dependency, and strengthening community and family life.	Reports to the Chancellor. Members: Martin Taylor, Chief Executive, Barclays plc (chair, employed for two days per month). Official representatives of HM Treasury, DfEE, DSS and Inland Revenue.
Tax leakage and avoidance of direct taxes	Rolling review, first report spring 1998		
Terrorism	Report due autumn 1998	A joint Home Office and Northern Ireland Office review to consider permanent UK-wide anti-terrorist legislation.	
Transport policy	Report due spring 1998	Fundamental review.	
Utility regulation	Announced 30 June 1997. Report due early 1998 (originally due by end 1997)	The terms of reference for the review are to consider whether changes are required to the system of regulation of the utility industries in order to ensure open and predictable regulation, fair to all consumers and to shareholders, and which promotes the government's objectives for the environment and sustainable development, while providing sufficient incentives to managers to innovate, raise standards and improve efficiency.	The review is led by the Department of Trade and Industry, but reporting to an inter-departmental ministerial committee chaired by Margaret Beckett.
Utting Report on Ministerial Task Force	Announced on 19 November 1997	Set up to co-ordinate the government's response to the Utting Report.	
Venture capital and enterprise investment	Report spring 1998	Review of the venture capital, trust and enterprise investment schemes.	
Voluntary transport provision	Announced 17 July 1997. Report due summer 1998	Review of non-profit transport provision in rural and urban areas, and what government can do to encourage it.	Being carried out by consultants Steer Davies Gleave with widespread voluntary sector input.

Wales Childcare Strategy	Working Party announced 14 November 1997. Publication April 1998	Given brief to "secure and promote a strategy for affordable and sustainable childcare in Wales which will put the development and well-being of children to the fore and which will also enable parents to take up training and employment opportunities".	Working party membership includes representatives of the voluntary sector, local authorities and employers, working closely with Welsh Office officials.
Wales economic regeneration	Reported October 1997	Review of economic regeneration in Wales.	
Wales Education and Training Action Group	Announced 20 November. Will remain in existence for "no longer than 12-18 months".	"A new initiative to tackle inefficiency and incoherence. It is deliberately designed as a novel approach to bringing in new ideas to shape advice on a clear strategic direction for education and training in Wales." (Education and Industry Minister Peter Hain)	"It is a task force with a limited lifespan, not another Quango, and its members will be unpaid." (Peter Hain). It has 14 members, including representatives of private companies and training and educational organisations.
Wales National Curriculum	Interim report March 1998, full report June 1998		
Wales New Deal Advisory Task Force	Appointed for initial period of two years, ending August 2000	Remit is to advise the Secretary of State for Wales on the design of the New Deal, assist with marketing and with monitoring and evaluation.	The task force will report and be accountable to the Secretary of State for Wales. Chair: Graham Hawker, Group Chief Executive of Hyder plc. Members: Graham Benfield, Director, Wales Council for Voluntary Action; Sheila Drury, Chief Executive, Kemitron Ltd; Haydn Edwards, Principal, Coleg Menai, Bangor; Margaret Evans, Director, Prince's Trust Volunteers, Cardiff; Gareth George, Wales Director, Barclays Cymru/Wales; Jane Hutt, Director, Chwarae Teg; David Jenkins, General Secretary, Wales TUC; Roger Jones, Managing Director, Penn Pharmaceuticals Ltd; Paul Loveluck, Chief Executive, Countryside Council for Wales; John Newton-Jones, Chief Executive, Farmworld; Anne Poole, Director, NIACE Cymru; Adam Price, Executive Manager, Menter a Busnes; Sue Price, Executive Director, Groundwork; Huw Vaughan Thomas, Chief Executive, Denbighshire County Council; Rev Kevin Watson, Representative of CYTUN (Churches in Wales Together); Wendy Yates, Director of Personnel, City and County of Swansea.
Wales trunk road programme	Report due spring 1998	Strategic review of the trunk road programme in Wales.	
Water abstraction	Consultation paper early 1998	Review of the water abstraction licensing system.	
Water charging	Launched 25 June 1997. Consultation paper due early 1998	Review of charges for both measured and unmeasured systems and debt recovery arrangements.	Conducted jointly by DETR and the Welsh Office in consultation with the Office of Water Services.

Welsh Language Board	Due to report spring 1998	Review of the role of the Welsh Language Board in Welsh education.	
Witnesses	Report due March 1998	Intra-departmental review of the treatment of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.	
World War II prisoner of war pay deductions	Reported 24 July 1997	Confirmed previous governments' view that POW pay deductions were dealt with properly at the time.	
Young prisoners	Announced as underway on 19 November 1997 when HM Chief Inspector of Prisons published a report, 'Thematic Review of Young Prisoners'	A comprehensive spending review looking at the whole range of secure accommodation for young people. The aim is to ensure that the resources employed in the accommodation and care of accused, convicted and other juveniles who need secure accommodation are used to the best effect. This includes meeting educational needs and tackling offending behaviour.	
Youth justice	Reported December 1997	Review of government proposals for youth justice.	
Youth Justice Task Force	Announced 21 May. First meeting 20 June 1997. First two reports published in August and October 1997.	Charged with "driving forward the government's proposed changes for dealing with young offenders. It will help me and other ministers bring about change where it matters, at the local level."	Norman Warner, Senior Policy Adviser, Home Office (Chair); William Atkinson, Headteacher; Jonathan Black, Magistrates Clerk; Cathryn Bowker, Youth Court prosecutor; Tony Butler, Chief Constable, Gloucestershire; Paul Cavadino, Penal Affairs Consortium; Anne Fuller, lay magistrate; Cedric Fullwood, Chief Probation Officer, Manchester; Ian Johnston, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police; David Norgrove, Marks & Spencer plc; Denise Platt, Local Government Association; Teresa Reynolds, Victim Support; Joan Webster, Chief Superintendent, Gwent; Geoffrey Wicks, stipendiary magistrate; Andrew Williamson, Director of Social Services, Devon; John Lyon, Home Office; Tom Luce, Department of Health; Jenny Rowe, Lord Chancellor's Department. The Secretary to the Task Force is Mark Perfect.



# Notes

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- (1) The survey looked at membership of 30 task forces and advisory groups set up by the government since its election in May 1997, including all the most important and highest profile bodies. The full list is as follows (the members of all these bodies are detailed in the appendix): Better Regulation Task Force, Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers Task Force, Competitiveness Advisory Group, Construction Task Force, Creative Industries Task Force, Disability Rights Task Force, Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools Advisory Group, Electoral Procedures Working Party, Export Forum, Film Task Force, Football Task Force, Further Education Student Support Advisory Group, Gene Therapy Advisory Committee, Housing Sounding Board, Literacy Task Force, Long-term Care Royal Commission, Low Pay Commission, National Schools Standards Task Force, NHS Efficiency Task Force, New Deal Task Force, New Deal Task Force Advisory Group, Numeracy Task Force, Panel 2000 Task Force, Private Finance Task Force, Scottish Advisory Task Force on the New Deal, Skills Task Force, Special Educational Needs Advisory Group, Surrogacy Review, Wales New Deal Advisory Task Force, Youth Justice Task Force.
  
- (2) No official monitoring has been carried out. A crude count based on surnames, personal knowledge, biographical information and enquiries to government press officers and departmental officials identified 13 black and Asian people among the 449 members of the task forces and advisory groups covered in this survey (that is, 0.29 per cent of the total).