

## A Policy Checklist

The following is a useful checklist which encapsulates much of the advice in this website about policy development – and more besides.

Good policies have the following characteristics:

- P** They specify the real world outcomes they were designed to achieve, and the outputs necessary along the way.
- P** They are based on a thorough understanding of the situation Ministers want to change, why it had proved resistant to any previous efforts to make a difference, and the likely dynamics of bringing change about.
- P** They are based on evidence, using data sources both within the department and across the research community, and also taking account of international experience accessed through visits, dialogue, the Internet and symposia.
- P** Each policy should clearly fit within the overall government and departmental strategy, and its contribution to meeting Ministerial goals and targets should be clearly specified.
- P** Ministers should have been involved early in the policy process, across a number of departments where appropriate, and involving key players both within the department and outside experts when brainstorming ideas.
- P** End users, delivery partners and other key stakeholders should be involved in policy development alongside colleagues right across the department and elsewhere in Whitehall, to develop strategies which are workable, linked, innovative and in line with best practice across the world.
- P** There should be effective use of widespread consultation, utilising the latest techniques and approaches, including the People's Panel.
- P** There should be a thorough appraisal of alternatives (including the most radical – and including doing nothing).
- P** Evaluation should be built in from inception, through delivery to outputs, with regular feedback, to ensure the policy stays focused on the outcomes it aimed to achieve.
- P** Communication and presentation are integrated into, and seen as critical to the success of, the whole of the policy process.
- P** All significant consequences – including unintended consequences – are taken into account. Particular care must be taken to consider diversity/equality issues and the impact on business and the environment, and also make sure that you

think 'outside the box' – will your programme improve the problem or merely shift it elsewhere?

- P** The policy process should be managed using project management techniques (e.g. setting a clear timetable; planning for interdependencies; identification of necessary resources, both financial and human; risk analysis and contingency planning).
- P** Policies should be deliverable, and implemented with determination and persistence as to the key principles and objectives, but with a willingness to pilot, learn and adapt as to the practical details in the light of experience.
- P** There should be benchmarking of the policy process against the best across Whitehall and beyond.
- P** Service delivery should be designed around the needs of end-users, rather than departmental bureaucracies, or the convenience of delivery institutions.
- P** We should make the most effective use of technologies – for example the Internet – to design, consult on and deliver policies, to link government to intermediaries, and to the citizen.

