

New Developments in Public Service Reform **Conclusions from the Hunton Park Seminar**

Most useful points:

1. The opportunity to share best practice not only from the UK but from the experiences of other countries.
2. Exposure to the practical experience of reform in the UK – good and bad.
3. Exposure to a variety of ideas including: devolution from central control, the need to improve financial management, performance measurement and the process for setting performance targets, the arrangements for monitoring performance, developing a customer focus for services.
4. The opportunity to learn from each other about the problems that exist in the different countries.
5. The democratic approach to reform that is the UK experience.
6. The provision by the various presenters of additional sources of information beyond the presentation itself.
7. The variety of speakers, that is from the very senior officials responsible for the development of policy to those who had to implement the policy.

What could have been done better:

1. The case studies were seen by only the few persons in the groups to which they were presented. A presentation in plenary sessions would have been more useful. If this had meant reducing the number of case studies perhaps this could have been done by developing themes for the case studies.
2. The personnel in the groups should have been changed during the course of the seminar.
3. More emphasis on what had not gone well in terms of policy reform would have been helpful.
4. The seminar programme was very intense and more flexibility in the programme would have been helpful. More free time would have been appreciated.
5. The venue was satisfactory but could have been improved by the availability of an internet connection and laundry facilities.
6. There was about 50% support for a two week seminar to allow for more in-depth coverage and also more relaxation.

Comments on the overall balance of the programme:

1. More focus on individual topics although this would require a longer programme.
2. There was no real discussion of the legal basis/context of reform in the UK and this would have been helpful.
3. A discussion of the methods of putting pressure on the political leadership would have been very valuable.

Comments on the messages to take back home:

1. There has to be a consistent approach to the development of democracy.
2. Learnt that ideas can be implemented and the speakers have demonstrated how this can be done.
3. There is a need for top level political commitment, vision, appropriate structures and drive.
4. Performance management can be made to work but an important element is the quality of staff. The staffing of the civil service should be based on competency and that should therefore determine recruitment policies.
5. To achieve success, no matter what the vision and political commitment, an ability to communicate is essential and from the top to the bottom of the organisation. Put another way, there has to be an active marketing of the top level policy vision for it to be successful.
6. Devolution of power and responsibility and the dispersion of power and responsibility are extremely important.

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