

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Strategic Leadership in the Civil Service, HC 1536

Tuesday 7 May 2019

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Members present: Sir Bernard Jenkin (Chair); Ronnie Cowan; Mr Marcus Fysh; Dame Cheryl Gillan; Kelvin Hopkins; Dr Rupa Huq; Mr David Jones.

Questions 245-341

Witnesses

I: Stephen Lovegrove, Chair, Civil Service Learning and Leadership Board and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Rupert McNeil, Civil Service Chief People Officer and Head of the Civil Service Human Resource Profession, Clare Moriarty, Permanent Secretary, Department for Exiting the European Union and Chair of the Civil Service Talent Board, and Nick Borwell, Interim Director, Civil Service Leadership Academy.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Stephen Lovegrove, Rupert McNeil, Clare Moriarty and Nick Borwell.

Q245 **Chair:** I thank our very distinguished panel of witnesses for joining us this morning. Could you each say who you are for the record, please?

Rupert McNeil: I am Rupert McNeil, Government Chief People Officer.

Stephen Lovegrove: I am Stephen Lovegrove, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Defence.

Clare Moriarty: I am Clare Moriarty, permanent secretary at DExEU and chair of the leadership and talent board.

Nick Borwell: I am Nick Borwell, interim principal of the Civil Service Leadership Academy.

Q246 **Chair:** Thank you. Because there are four of you and we have a lot of questions, it will be very helpful if your answers are as crisp and to the point as possible. We will try to keep our questions equally crisp.



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This inquiry is on the civil service building future capacity, and we are particularly interested in the way civil service learning and development has developed and is developing. My first question, which may give you an opportunity to make some more general comments, is this. We talk about learning and development, but what do we mean by learning and development? What is distinctive between learning and development? Who would like to start?

Rupert McNeil: Shall I try to say how we tend to think about it? Learning and development are actually complementary parts of a process by which people build capability. People have to have a learning experience to acquire the skills or capability they need. That leads to their development and then the virtuous circle of moving on to the next stage of learning. So in our operating model for learning we break it up into three elements: 10%, which we believe is about the right proportion of learning which should be formal, whether classroom-based, online or in some other formal setting; 20%, which is constructive, applied action learning; and 70%, which is reflecting on that and embedding that on the job and in the role with the support of line management. They are part of an important process which collectively delivers capability.

Q247 **Chair:** I listened very carefully to that answer. You said there are three elements: learning in the classroom and e-based learning; 20% action-based; and reflecting on that—

Rupert McNeil: On the job, in the workplace. That is the 70%, which we see being done, because actually at any moment—

Q248 **Chair:** When is reflection done away from the workplace?

Rupert McNeil: That is a very good question. In all of our formal learning we expect that to be part of it, whether through the preparation for going on learning intervention or through reflection after it, or the way in which the courses are constructed. The 20% is where people are, for example, doing learning in groups. It might be through our accelerated development programmes, where people are learning through doing a collective project across the civil service. That is very much one of the things done through the programmes done through the academies and other places.

Stephen Lovegrove: This is very far from a hard and fast distinction, and I know you will want to talk about the leadership academy in due course, but there is more of an emphasis on development in the leadership area. The learning is a bit more formal and often there are professional disciplines that allow that to happen. The development of our people as civil servants and leaders in the civil service is an area where there is a greater focus. So if there was to be a binary distinction, I would say that development has a bigger leadership component to it.

Q249 **Chair:** I come back to the same question: where is reflection done on what you learn in your job? Where in the system do you reflect on experiential learning?



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Stephen Lovegrove: The leadership academy has a very, very big part to play in that. Most of the time we spend with colleagues in the leadership academy is reflecting on the kinds of challenges, experiences and skills that we need to be better at for doing our job. There is a good component of reflection in the leadership academy.

Q250 **Chair:** Doesn't reflection benefit everybody in the civil service? Do you need to be an aspiring senior civil servant before you are allowed to reflect on your experiences in your job?

Rupert McNeil: I think—

Chair: Where does everybody else do reflection?

Rupert McNeil: Reflection is actually a component of all the learning which happens, whether it is—

Q251 **Chair:** Where is the safe space for that really open reflection? Where does it occur in your day-to-day life?

Rupert McNeil: It occurs within Departments and within professions at all levels in the way in which we design the learning. So all civil servants will experience some form of learning intervention which will be either individual or collective. Increasingly with professions and functions, and in what we are expecting of line managers, they should be encouraging that experiential reflection. If I take the most common example of that, after a particular experience or activity or project closes, the good practice would be to look at that, see what the lessons learned have been and reflect how it might have been done differently.

Q252 **Chair:** But that is not offsite, residential, mixing with different people with different experiences, which is what most people regard as reflective learning.

Clare Moriarty: Can I add a comment? As a practitioner I think building reflective practice is one of the most important things that we do. My experience is that it exists at all sorts of levels. So there is encouraging people individually to acquire the habit of reflecting on things that happen. There is an individual component to that and I have talked to groups at all levels. The operational delivery profession has been quite interested in how people do—

Q253 **Chair:** And you have been something of a pioneer of that, if I may say so.

Clare Moriarty: Yes. Encouraging people to do it individually: I think there is a lot that can be done within Departments—again, building it into the way that teams work together. When I was at DEFRA we very much focused on what we called double duty, which was every intervention should do something in its own right. We would help people think about how they would do a piece of work, but also, at the same time, think about how they were doing it—so building in the habit of thinking as a team about how we do things. Now, none of that is offsite. I think there is a place for offsite reflection and certainly both the leadership academy and lots of other opportunities that people have, through things like our



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accelerated development programmes and other programmes that individual Departments run for people at first line manager level, provide that opportunity; but I think I would see it as sitting along a spectrum. So if we think of reflection as something that only happens when we take people offsite then we won't build the reflexes. What I really want to see is everybody getting into the habit of doing that and then doing it as an individual. I constantly say to people, "Every time you walk from A to B that is a good opportunity for doing some reflection." So individually, in teams, across Departments and then across wider cohorts—it is really who you do it with, more than the particular environment that you do it in.

Q254 **Chair:** Apart from in the Civil Service Leadership Academy, where do civil servants get the opportunity to do reflective learning offsite in a residential setting?

Stephen Lovegrove: Most teams will make space for that kind of activity.

Q255 **Chair:** That requires money, though.

Stephen Lovegrove: It does require money. For instance, when I ran the shareholder executive, which was a part of BIS at the time, we had a budget for learning and development, because a lot of it is delegated, obviously, to the Department, and then sub-delegated to groups within the Department; and we put aside money for the teams to be able to go away off site, to be able to do learning and development. So it is not the case that only central civil service interventions are the places at which offsite reflective learning and activity happen.

Chair: Anything to add, Nick Borwell?

Nick Borwell: Not at this stage.

Q256 **Chair:** What about from your military background? You would do lots of experimental learning and exercising and trying new things?

Nick Borwell: Yes.

Q257 **Chair:** How do you find the civil service is at that kind of learning?

Nick Borwell: I think there is a scale issue, and there is also a departmental issue, if you like. "Issue" is the wrong word. The physics of it means that Departments at a lower level are responsible for the learning and development for their people. That is perfectly right, and actually a lot of the learning comes from each other, directed by people within their hierarchy within the Department. What we are looking at in the Civil Service Leadership Academy—and I appreciate we are jumping ahead a little bit—is building out and down from the SCS. So we have got 4,500 SCS altogether to develop into a cohort system, and we are providing this immersive learning for them, so they develop and then they can flow that down. That doesn't mean we are not doing things at a lower level, but it does mean that we are concentrating that level to then be able to make more use of that experience further down the chain.

Q258 **Chair:** This whole conversation kind of confirms that the civil service has



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historically favoured on-the-job learning, and been more sceptical about formal training programmes. How much is that changing, and why?

Rupert McNeil: I think it is changing quite significantly, Chairman, for several reasons. We have had the creation, over the past three to four years particularly, of a set of functions and professions that allow those professions to look at the way in which learning occurs, the curricula that happen, the standards that they are training against and the way they deliver that at all levels. You heard Sir Chris Wormald talking about that in the context of the policy profession, but that is replicated in finance, operations, legal and a range of functions and professions—in fact, I would say in all the 23 professions in Government.

There is a general view, as Clare has alluded to, that the place where it happens is less important than how it happens and giving people the opportunities. One thing that we are very aware of is that there are civil servants who are carers or parents for whom the traditional residential training, for example, may not be the most appropriate way to do it. We are looking for a range of ways, perhaps through online training, which includes the element of reflection.

We have a network through Civil Service Local where individuals from different Departments can come together at all grades to experience leadership development training and talk about other common topics. There is also a programme in the summer months, which has been running for a number of years, called Civil Service Live, which is very much a training opportunity for over 10,000 civil servants to come together across the country in different locations and experience training on a range of different topics.

On top of that is the fact that our learning ecosystem is becoming more developed. It has several components. It has a learning platform—we are about to upgrade that, actually, which will make it even easier for people to access—and a large proportion of online learning, which has been made free at the point of use. That was a learning for us in the last couple of years, which has dramatically increased the number of people using it. That includes technical topics, leadership topics and other things. We have also introduced a system of learning expert partners who sit within Civil Service Learning. They support professions and functions.

Q259 **Mr Fysh:** What proportion of civil service learning and development activity goes through Civil Service Learning?

Rupert McNeil: We can measure it in a number of different ways. We do not have the data yet to be able to measure the actual hours spent on it, so we are using the funding as a proxy for that. Some 12% of the learning in terms of spend goes through Civil Service Learning out of over £600 million that is taking place across the civil service, based on the numbers that we have collectively. In practice, that understates the amount of learning—

Chair: Six hundred million?



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Rupert McNeil: Six hundred million was spent in 2018-19 on learning, if you take what is stated on departmental accounts on that. Of that, £75.6 million came through CSL. Civil Service Learning is essentially an expert service that makes sure that can be procured in the most accessible way and in the most cost-effective way. One of the interesting questions is how we really get a good understanding of how that entire £600 million is being spent through professions and in Departments, and how we can leverage it across the whole system.

Q260 **Mr Fysh:** Are there any other parameters through which we should be trying to measure the proportion, other than money?

Rupert McNeil: The ultimate way in which we should be measuring it is through capability—the way in which and the rate at which people are being promoted and acquiring skills and qualifications. We are also measuring it through the civil service people survey as well, which shows that most civil servants—around 88%—believe that they have the skills they need to do their job. We are interested in maintaining that, but also getting ready for changes and new technology, for example, that is coming in. Measuring capability in terms of outcomes is important and of actual hours spent, and also looking at the way of doing that in the most cost-effective way.

Q261 **Mr Fysh:** Does anyone else have any comment on the proportion and the direction of travel?

Stephen Lovegrove: The proportion probably sounds about right, as it happens. We recognise that the principal unit of management in the civil service is the Department, and therefore the Department needs to be responsible for the bulk of the learning undertaken by civil servants within it. If I had a reservation—we have discussed this on a number of occasions as a group—it is whether at a central level we have sufficient visibility as to what the 90% is actually going on: whether there are efficiencies, whether everything is being done to the same standard in different Departments, and whether there are different approaches that are obviously more successful than others. We do not have a good enough line of sight into that area, which is something for us to work on.

Q262 **Chair:** Does part of that £524 million go on the Civil Service Leadership Academy, and part of it go on the Public Service Leadership Academy?

Stephen Lovegrove: No, the Civil Service Leadership Academy comes out of the 10%.

Chair: Okay.

Q263 **Mr Jones:** The Civil Service Learning model originally emphasised outsourcing provision of learning and development activity, but we have had a submission from the Cabinet Office to this inquiry that emphasises the principle of leaders teaching leaders. Does this indicate a switch to in-house provision, and if so, how does the role of Civil Service Learning interface with that apparent change in emphasis?



Rupert McNeil: That is a very good question. Again, they are complementary. We know that we need to have external support in terms of the preparation of materials and delivery of venues, and all that comes through Civil Service Learning. The key thing—particularly at more senior levels, which is where the leaders teaching leaders ethos becomes particularly important—is ensuring that the faculty that is actually delivering training is, wherever possible, civil servants. That is interesting, because there are some areas—for example, if we look at some of the negotiation training that has been done for EU exit, it has involved bringing in expert support from law firms in one case, but that has been supplemented by experts from within the civil service. Civil Service Learning's role is to ensure that Departments and professions, as the guiding brains behind the capability building that needs to happen, are able to draw on things in the most effective way. The learning expert partners help with that, but we would expect the profession lead in any Department to be working very closely with their HR teams to work out the best way for training to be delivered.

Q264 **Mr Jones:** Does this indeed represent a change in emphasis, or is it just a perception? If it is a change in emphasis, what caused it?

Rupert McNeil: It came about when we looked very carefully—I defer to Clare and Stephen on this, because they were very instrumental in putting this in place. I say this as a civil servant of only just over three years' duration: the leadership quality in the civil service is really excellent. Senior civil servants are able to train and deliver great training, which we have seen through the basecamps for people who are new to the senior civil service, where we shifted from having that being led by external faculty to saying that a permanent secretary—Clare, Stephen and others who have led them—should lead each of those basecamps with their team. That has been very well received, and it means that the relevance of what is happening—the training that is being delivered—is much higher.

Clare Moriarty: Leaders teaching leaders has been very powerful. The important thing is that it is not just switching from a model of experts—be they outsourced experts or in-house experts, and increasingly they are in-house experts—and leaders. As a practitioner, I think I can bring something particular to leadership development sessions, because I know what I have done and I can talk with the power of that personal experience. What isn't my professional experience is how you turn that into something that has the right kind of impact for the individuals going through the process.

Effectively, it is a partnership model, where we absolutely make sure we are leveraging the experience, the connection and the fact that people want to learn. When we hear somebody talking about something that resonates with us, we are all more inclined to listen and learn. We are putting that together with the expertise of people who can say, "If we want to achieve this particular learning outcome, we can see from experience that asking people to do this type of activity is more successful than asking them to do that type of activity. If I was picking, I would probably pick the wrong one."



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We are increasingly trying to get a really good blended model, recognising that the context in which civil servants work, particularly at more senior levels, is more unusual. When we have deconstructed the skills and the experience that you need, it is not that different from anything else. When you look at the context that civil servants operate in, it is quite different. That is the bit that we have been trying to capture through emphasising the involvement of senior leaders in learning and development.

Stephen Lovegrove: May I add one more thing? I have found it immensely valuable for myself, as a senior leader in the civil service, to be put in a position where I have to reflect on what are the most important ways in which you can get your job done, listen to the challenges for people slightly earlier in their careers, and take a bit of time out to concentrate on, codify and formulate the kinds of things that are successful. This is very much a two-way street.

Q265 **Chair:** Learning from your juniors.

Stephen Lovegrove: Learning from your juniors—absolutely. But it is also about thinking, “There are lots of things swirling around in my head. Which are the five most important that I would like to impart?” That is quite a useful discipline. Certainly, learning from your juniors.

Q266 **Chair:** It sets a good example to Ministers, doesn’t it?

Stephen Lovegrove indicated assent.

Q267 **Kelvin Hopkins:** Why have so many leadership and other academies emerged since the closure of the National School of Government?

Rupert McNeil: Shall I start us off and then defer? The National School of Government was very much of its time. Probably the most significant change that has happened since it was created—this is part of the evolution of the civil service—has been the creation of functions and professions. That has allowed a much more in-depth construction of what training is required in professions and functions across Government. Academies have sprung up. As Chris Wormald said, the policy profession has all the attributes of an academy, in terms of standards, courses and programmes. They have just chosen not to call it that. Some other organisations, like finance and others, have chosen to call them academies. That is an example of how we are getting much more breadth and depth in the training that is being delivered across the civil service.

Q268 **Kelvin Hopkins:** Wouldn’t it have been more sensible to keep the National School of Government but to strengthen it, elaborate it and build in the kind of training that now takes place in the academies?

Rupert McNeil: What we are seeing, through the creation of a Civil Service Leadership Academy and the learning ecosystem that we are creating, is that you need both. You need the central capstone structure of the Civil Service Leadership Academy, which looks at the common elements, certainly at the top level. You must also make sure you have a system that ensures high quality, consistency and interoperability in the standards underneath. If there is finance training being done in the



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Government, even if it is for non-finance professionals, it should be being done and overseen by the finance profession.

Stephen Lovegrove: Sunningdale was not perfect, but its removal has necessitated the creation of a number of different and perhaps more modern ways of doing this exercise in the civil service. Certainly, it has brought a degree of professional specialisation that would have been necessary under all circumstances. For my money, your point has a good deal of resonance with me.

Q269 **Kelvin Hopkins:** Moving on from that, what are the advantages, if any, of the academies approach over a more centralised model of learning and development provision? Going back to my earlier question, if they were all built into one structure, like a big university, the academies could learn from each other, as Departments can learn from each other. You could get some benefit from working together as well as having silos for each particular profession.

Nick Borwell: I think we can move to that now. That is what we are doing, in that the professions and functions have academies—the Major Projects Leadership Academy, which I was responsible for, has been very successful. It is a systems leadership programme in a sense, because it deals not only with project delivery, but with policy to delivery to operations, which takes it across Departments. It is not departmentally focused, which is good.

If we take those, as we are doing, and allow them to continue, and the Civil Service Leadership Academy focuses on the cross-SCS leadership, and we build down and out from that, we are looking to align everything we do under the Civil Service Leadership Academy. Having a dispersed model is quite good in lots of ways, as long as we communicate and ensure that we are learning from each other. What we have in terms of the strategy, based on the foundations we have now, is going to be strong.

Q270 **Kelvin Hopkins:** I notice you have an Army background. Would the Army be better if it was disaggregated in that way?

Nick Borwell: The Army is different, because the military spends most of its time training and, mercifully, relatively little of its time fighting, whereas we are operating all the time, so pulling people out to do development and training in something is always a challenge. We have to recognise that we are not putting people on leadership courses for three months or six months away; we are not able to do that. What we can do is the immersive piece. We can get people away and balance that with the on-the-job development as well. We have to recognise it is different—I agree that we can learn a lot from that model, but it is different and we must recognise those differences.

Q271 **Chair:** Excellent. Did you want to add something, Mr Lovegrove?



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Stephen Lovegrove: Only to say that if we do not forge the links between the various disaggregated academies, we will be missing a very important trick.

Q272 **Mr Jones:** Could one of you could describe how an academy comes to be established?

Rupert McNeil: We have a set of criteria that define a profession in Government, and that is something we keep under quite regular review. The definition of a profession is a group of people with a certain skillset within Government where we want to maintain a common standard, whether that is finance or legal. To a very large extent, they are self-governing, with a permanent secretary-level or very senior leader who is head of the profession. For example, Sir Jon Thompson is the head of the operational delivery profession—it is very important to have a permanent secretary doing that, because many civil servants are in that profession—and Sir Chris Wormald is head of the policy profession, and so on.

They will then decide the best way to organise the capability building for that profession. That will be very different in different contexts. The technology profession has around 17,000 civil servants doing 32 different types of job across all of Government. There is a digital academy that supports that, but there is a lot of activity happening in Departments as well to support that. The key thing is that they are doing it against common standards that have been agreed by that profession.

Similarly, policy and operational delivery are very context-dependent, depending on what the Department is actually doing. It could include people in DWP jobcentres, for example, or prison officers, so the nature of their professional training will be very different. The idea of an operational delivery academy is therefore somewhat different from, for example, a finance academy.

Q273 **Mr Jones:** Sorry for interrupting, but what is the process for establishing the academy within the professional context?

Rupert McNeil: What will happen is that the profession will decide on the way it wants to deliver its training—its learning and development. It will then convene the heads of profession in the various Departments and work out how it wants to deliver that. Whether it is called an academy or something else is actually more a matter of taste for how that profession wants to organise itself. The key thing is that they have the standards and the way of delivering the training.

Q274 **Mr Jones:** Mr McNeil, there is no policy professional academy, but a few moments ago you said that the policy profession itself has the attributes of an academy. Could you explain what you meant by that?

Rupert McNeil: Absolutely. I think it was something that Sir Chris referenced in his evidence to the Committee a few months ago. What the policy profession has done is a quite remarkable achievement. Across policy and operational delivery, which are the business of Government and very diverse, it has actually distilled the essence of what is expected of a



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policy practitioner—a policy professional—into a set of standards, which are really world class. Those standards talk about the level of skill and capability required across a whole range of disciplines, from analysis to policy development, and look at how they can be used by individuals.

That then gets used in a number of different ways. It can be used, for example, in setting the apprenticeship standards policy—the new policy apprenticeship was recently launched—and in the success profiles, which are being used in recruitment, and also for helping people in the policy profession to work out how they can shape their careers within very different policy environments.

The other thing to add is that the policy profession has very successfully embraced leading teachers teaching leaders, which is why I think it is a role model for many others. Through the course of the year, there will be a large number of seminars and training interventions led by some of the best policy leaders in the country. If the policy profession chose to call that system an academy, I think it would absolutely be able to, but it has chosen not to. If I was talking to another profession thinking about setting up an academy and was asked what it should look at, I would say to look at what the policy profession has done, because that gives a very good example of the components needed.

Q275 Dr Huq: How are cross-departmental academies funded?

Rupert McNeil: The funding model varies. A small amount is centrally funded—in fact, the leadership academy would fall into that category—with some subscription from people attending events. The policy profession has actually done it slightly differently. It basically takes a fee from each Department. Departments subscribe to it, and I think that subscription model is actually very effective. At the moment, there is not a common requirement as to how different academies are funded, but we are very conscious, as we move into the next spending review, of making sure that no profession is left behind and that we look at the best and most consistent way to fund professions and functions.

Q276 Dr Huq: So there is a set fee of equal amounts?

Rupert McNeil: For the policy profession—I will have to write to you to confirm this—I believe it is done on a per-capita basis, based on the size of the Department.

Q277 Chair: One thing that killed off the National School of Government was having to charge for its courses. Is it not a constraint on the development of leadership academies if you effectively have to charge Departments for what you do?

Rupert McNeil: I think it varies. We have just been through a slightly painful learning experience about online training, which we were charging for. We actually decided that it was much more cost-effective to make it free at the point of use, which has dramatically increased the number of people making use of it. I think it is a very valid point that one needs to make sure that training is accessible and available.



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On the other hand, in the area that Clare has referenced, we have the accelerated development programmes, which are very valued. They do not cover large numbers of people, but they are paid for by Departments. Departments pay for the people using them. One of the interesting changes to our funding environment that we want to look at quite carefully is the opportunity to use the apprenticeship levy as well, which is a new component in the system.

Clare Moriarty: It is quite a complex area, because there is some evidence, particularly when you get into face-to-face training, that people are more likely to show up if they have paid for it. The Major Projects Leadership Academy, which Departments pay for—once somebody has been accepted, the Department has to pay—has a much higher attendance rate than some other areas. That is a finding that goes far wider than just the civil service.

It is partly about making sure that the process by which people, in some cases, are selected for and start doing a programme feels like the right process, and then it is about the relationship between the individual, the Department and the provider of development. However, it is not as straightforward as, "If you make it free, more people will do it." In some cases, if you make it free, fewer people will do it.

Nick Borwell: There is a value attached to it. If you look at the centralised programmes, whether it is the Major Projects Leadership Academy, policy and so forth, and some of the other programmes that we have around talent, they are aspirational. People want to do them. Departments can see the value in them, so a lot of them are oversubscribed now. That is a position that we would love to be in across the whole of the CSLA.

Q278 **Chair:** How would the Duke of Wellington's have trained its soldiers if it had to be charged for every soldier it sent on a course?

Nick Borwell: Again, I think it is a slightly different model, but I take your point. Sending people to Staff College and charging people for it would be interesting, but I think the culture is very different. There are things that we can do to learn, as I say, but it is a different starting point, and we have to recognise that. It would be lovely if we could make it all free at the point of delivery, in a sense, but there is a value attached to this—

Q279 **Chair:** I can see that there is a balance to be struck, but how do you make sure that the charging structure, or the subscription structure, is not a constraint on the training, learning and development that civil servants actually need?

Rupert McNeil: We have certainly looked at ways of making it as cost-effective as possible. One of the great revolutions of the past 20 years is that very sophisticated training can be delivered very effectively online or remotely. We want to make absolute maximum use of that, which means that we can focus some of the more expensive, face-to-face, in-person residential training in the best way. It is very important that we evaluate.



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That is something that we pay a lot of attention to. We are in the early days of doing that effectively, making sure that we are spending it in the right way.

The other key thing is the co-ownership of both Departments and professions in the common curriculum and the common platform. One thing that we are paying a lot of attention to as we look to renew some of the contracts that we have in learning is making sure that the Departments and professions are absolutely involved in taking the decisions, which include some of the trade-offs between different ways of delivering the training.

Clare Moriarty: The other point that I would make, which goes back to your point right at the beginning, Chair, about reflection, is that we are quite interested in how people learn in cohorts. If somebody goes on a course for a day and pitches up with a number of other people they may have some interesting conversations. If we can form people into the right types of cohorts and then put them, over a period of time, through a programme that has a number of different elements—it would not be, as might be the case with the Army, that we take people away for three months and train them continuously, but over the course of a year a cohort of people would have a series of different interventions, all of which they would do together, and often, at the front end of that, with some residential input to form the group effectively—you get much better value from the cohort.

It also, as a side effect, makes it easier for Departments to think about how they budget. If you are thinking about people, and really having the right conversations within a Department about the development of people, and who might benefit from a programme of development, rather than trying to look at everything in terms of whether somebody does something next week or next month, it is a more end-to-end view. Departments then do, in my experience, put aside the funding that they need to make sure that they can put people on to the programmes. A programmatic cohort approach seems to be more successful than a pay-as-you, pick-as-you-want process.

Chair: Very helpful—thank you.

Q280 **Mr Fysh:** What role has Civil Service Learning had in establishing and managing the partnerships with external bodies through which many of the civil service academies are delivered?

Rupert McNeil: We are concerned to make sure that professions and Departments keep and own very close links to their professional bodies, whether that is the various awarding bodies and chartered bodies for finance, or areas such as legal finance and others. Civil Service Learning provides a way to procure training from some of those bodies in a consistent and cost-effective way. As Clare said, there is help through the quality control of having people who are learning experts—not necessarily experts in that profession—to work alongside the Department and profession and consider how they can structure things in the best way. We



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think that blended approach is working very well. But a situation where the property profession or the finance profession was not owning the relationship with their professional body would be unhealthy, and we are there to provide support for that.

Q281 **Ronnie Cowan:** The Civil Service Leadership Academy has been operating since October 2017. What has it achieved in that time?

Clare Moriarty: May I provide a little bit of context, and then Nick can talk about what we have achieved? We are at an inflection point in terms of the leadership academy and the wider leadership agenda. Over the past couple of years we have been doing three things. The first has been to develop our understanding of what good leadership needs to look like in the civil service, and particularly the focus on organisational development.

Q282 **Ronnie Cowan:** How long has the civil service been in operation?

Clare Moriarty: The civil service has been in operation for a few hundred years.

Q283 **Ronnie Cowan:** And now we are trying to say what good leadership looks like.

Clare Moriarty: It is a continuous process of looking at what good leadership looks like, and we have been trying to ensure that we can articulate that in the current context. As I was saying, systems leadership is a concept that we probably did not pay as much attention to a few years ago, and we are really thinking about how we ensure that leaders are able to develop their organisations. We have been doing that and we have been growing the leadership academy from the start—Nick can talk about that. We have been focusing initially on the transitions that people make, particularly within the senior civil service, and ensuring that we have developed products that have the maximum impact for the people who experience them. We have also been looking at academies and how to ensure that we knit together all the work that goes across from that. The third thing, which is closely related, is improving our talent management, and a significant element of that is about ensuring that we have the right pipeline of leaders.

As others have said, we have a series of accelerated development programmes that identify people who have the potential to progress to the next level and ensure that they are equipped to do so. Recently we have been bringing that together in a single governance body for leadership and talent across the civil service—the leadership and talent board—and that oversees work to ensure the right leadership strategy for the coming years. That is not starting from scratch, but integrates work that has been going on across the civil service over the past few years. The Civil Service Leadership Academy—Stephen can talk about this—will have its own governance and will be the delivery vehicle. If we have a clear strategy and clear set of leadership standards, the leadership academy becomes the vehicle for delivering that, docking into the leadership and talent board.



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In the first instance—this is very much about consolidating a position from which we can build outwards—we can focus on what I call take-off and landing: the transitions that people make as they go through the senior civil service, from deputy director level to director, from director to director general, and from director general to permanent secretary. At each level, they need to be doing things that are slightly different, so making sure that people are properly prepared for that move and that then, when they land in at a different level, we are really giving them the right initial training and development to make sure that they can function effectively in their new grade. That is the starting point, both for how we are looking at leadership and talent generally, and also creating the context for the next phase of the leadership academy's work.

Q284 Ronnie Cowan: Which doesn't answer my question: what has it achieved in that time?

Nick Borwell: What it's achieved so far is to build a foundation to then build from. Last year, we've—

Q285 Ronnie Cowan: Can I go back? Why do we not have a foundation after 198 years? Why do we not have a foundation already? I am just amazed that we are having to go through this whole restructuring, this whole attitude. All I hear is management speak: the learning, cohorts, interventions, leveraging experiences, blended models. This is about people doing the job that they are expected to do when they are employed to do their job. They should absolutely be given in-house training—because it is hugely important—but we seem to be just wrapping this whole thing into something mystical. Sorry, I've interrupted you, Mr Borwell; go on.

Stephen Lovegrove: Can I just give a tiny bit of comment? The civil service, throughout hundreds of years, has constantly looked at itself and tried to ascertain whether or not it is set up to do the job that it needs to do. It did it with Northcote-Trevelyan; it did it with Fulton; it has done it recently, very actively. In 2012—we have already talked about it—the National School of Government was abolished, and a different form of professional training came in.

Two years ago, I think it is perfectly reasonable to say that we looked at the way in which we were doing leadership and realised that there was an absence of formalised training in leadership, so we moved to fill that. Now, that may partly have been created by the abolition of the National School of Government in 2012, but at least we recognised it in 2017. In 2017, the Civil Service Leadership Academy was set up. Recently, we have realised that some of the governance mechanisms around the top of it were getting a bit messy, so we have cleaned those up; we have got rid of one of the committees—one of the ones I was chairing, actually. We've got rid of those to make sure that it is cleaner.

I think what we are seeing here is the institutions of the civil service changing around the new demands that are being placed on our people. It is not, I think, fair to characterise it as suddenly waking up to the idea



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that we need to do leadership and training. It is a question of a constant evolution, and we have been going through an evolution in the last few years.

Q286 **Chair:** Although I do share Mr Cowan's frustration to a certain extent, I am pleased with what you are doing now. However, Professor Kakabadse, who advised our previous report, has emphasised the need for dedicated civil service leadership training, in-house rather than outsourced.

Stephen Lovegrove: Absolutely.

Q287 **Chair:** And he has pointed out that greater complexity makes it all the more important for values to be considered, and greater reliance on an in-house service to grow unique capability and a problem-solving mindset among the civil service that cannot be provided from outside.

Stephen Lovegrove: There is not a word of that with which I would disagree. When did Professor Kakabadse write that?

Chair: In evidence to this Committee on this inquiry.

Stephen Lovegrove: Presumably he did that last year, and we set up the Civil Service Leadership Academy two and a half years ago, so we are moving in the right direction. I accept that we might want to move quicker, and we might well want to be better resourced, but—

Q288 **Ronnie Cowan:** You are doing this on £1 million a year, I believe.

Stephen Lovegrove: Not enough. I am sure that we would like to accelerate it, but we are absolutely in the same place as the Committee on this.

Q289 **Ronnie Cowan:** The CPSL has got £21 million over the next three years. Is that more the sort of budget you would be looking for?

Nick Borwell: It is something we are looking at now. We are building a business case to work out exactly what we are need. It is a later question, I believe, that we might be asked, but would you like to go into that a bit now?

Chair: We'll come to that one.

Nick Borwell: I might cover that in a bit more detail later, but absolutely.

Q290 **Ronnie Cowan:** I am still being quite belligerent here, but I would like to know what we have achieved in the last two years. I mean, we have set in place a model and people are being put through processes, and you are taking people out of their working environment, giving them onsite training and putting them back in again. Are you able to see an improvement and how do you measure that?

Nick Borwell: We sought to put as many people through in the first year or so as possible—

Q291 **Ronnie Cowan:** Who are these people?



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Nick Borwell: The SCS—sorry. So we have 4,500 people in the SCS: 3,500 of those are deputy directors; about 800 are directors; and about 180 are directors general. So that is the population we have been looking at.

So far, we have put 3,040 people through one sort of development activity or another. At this stage, in order to do that rapid assimilation, if you like, people have taken relatively short programmes. So, they have done an induction of a day or two, followed up with workshops. We have an immersive learning series of events, which 250 people have been through and which is all about learning from experiences, including real-life experiences. There are a number of workshops on top of that, with a total of about 1,700 people. So, about 3,000 people—a bit more than 3,000—so far.

Now, the point of that—

Q292 **Ronnie Cowan:** Fairly senior people?

Nick Borwell: Yes—senior civil servants.

Q293 **Ronnie Cowan:** All senior civil servants?

Nick Borwell: All senior civil servants, yes.

Q294 **Ronnie Cowan:** What are we doing for the people lower down?

Nick Borwell: If I may, that is the next part. The strategy from 2019 is that the Civil Service Leadership Academy is now the delivery arm of the civil service's strategy. In other words, we are about delivering that civil service leadership capability.

The fact it is cohort-based is important, as Clare was saying, because we need people to learn from each other over time. So we do not just dip them in and give them a quick day or two. They are sustained through a learning experience, through workshops and so forth, with each other, to learn from each other.

Q295 **Ronnie Cowan:** Do the cohorts come from different Departments?

Nick Borwell: Absolutely—that is part of the beauty of it. So they are from different professions and different Departments, which means—

Q296 **Ronnie Cowan:** Different parts of the UK?

Nick Borwell: From all over the UK—absolutely. And when we come on to locations and so forth, that is something we might look at in terms of regions. But I will save my powder on that, if I may, just for a minute.

The whole idea of this is to provide coherence and alignment of civil service leadership development across the whole of the civil service, so that it is not reliant on Departments doing it for themselves. Instead, the senior civil service can actually lead the development further downstream.

As we build this cohort structure, and we are looking to build it very rapidly now that we have a good foundation, we will build down into the



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Departments, with the Departments, to ensure there is leadership development at a more junior level, because it has to start well down the scale, and not—as you rightly say—suddenly magically appear at SCS.

It has to be done with the professions, because we have got some really good professional academies. The Government Digital Service has six academies around the country, which have trained thousands of people in digital. They also train in agile leadership, for example. We have got to make sure that is coherent.

We are also looking at the Mark Sedwill systems leadership initiative, which is around how systems are led; in other words, not just within Departments but how different functions come together to deliver capability? All of that is coming together in the strategy that we have put together now, to take from the foundation and take it forward. So I hope that helps a little bit with the context.

Stephen Lovegrove: In terms of whether it has been successful in its first two years, recognising that it has been concentrating on these transition moments—these watershed moments—in people's careers, where they move from deputy director to director, or from director to director general, the satisfaction surveys from the people who have gone through the courses are very encouraging. The average, in terms of satisfaction, is 8.3 out of 10. So they seem to be working and I have no doubt—

Q297 **Ronnie Cowan:** Sorry. Can you explain that to me again?

Stephen Lovegrove: After every course, every person who goes on the course is asked to review the course, and to review their experience of it in some detail.

Q298 **Ronnie Cowan:** How soon after being on the course?

Stephen Lovegrove: Very soon, usually—within a week or so.

Q299 **Ronnie Cowan:** Is that the best time to review whether you have learned something?

Stephen Lovegrove: I am afraid that one of the many professional deficiencies that I have is not knowing the answer to that particular question, but on the whole people are very satisfied with the kinds of experience they get on the courses and the kinds of experiences they hear about.

Q300 **Ronnie Cowan:** It is one of those things. When you take a course, at the end of the course you feel quite enlightened and empowered. You think, "This was great." But when you go back to the work environment you think, "How do I actually apply this to my work environment? Was the course as beneficial as I thought it was or hoped? I don't want to give an 8.3."

Clare Moriarty: For some of the courses, as well the initial feedback there is telephone feedback about three months later. Ultimately, your question



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is the right one. How do we know that people are changing as a result of doing this? We are specifically trying to establish whether people think they have done things differently as a result of going on the courses. Generally, people can identify things that they have done differently.

Ultimately, it is very difficult to evaluate the impact of this type of programme, except over quite a long period. We have introduced a programme for people who are coming into the director general cohort, which is a small number of people, but they are very significant to the experience of a much larger number of people in the civil service. For the first time, we have put in place a year-long programme for people. We will not know how successful that is until we can compare and contrast people who have had that experience with people who have not. The constant question we are asking is, "Are you doing something different as a result of going on this course or programme?"

Q301 Ronnie Cowan: Is there not a slight danger that we train the individuality out of people, and we end up with a whole bunch of drones all tied to the same sort of job at a similar sort of level of Government, and therefore there is no flexibility?

Clare Moriarty: If you met the people, I think you wouldn't say that. I don't think that we are in danger of doing that. One of the benefits of bringing people together from different backgrounds and cohorts is that they meet people working in different types of roles and different types of departments. We have a lot of people coming into the civil service from outside with completely different backgrounds. Bringing people together and getting them to know other people well encourages individualism, rather than knocking it out of people.

Stephen Lovegrove: One of the key lessons that people learn is that there are different types of effective leadership.

Ronnie Cowan: Yes. I think that may be the most important lesson.

Q302 Chair: Thank you. How much of what you are about now is simply recovering from the demise of the civil service top management programme, and the closure of the National School of Government, however justified that may have been at the time?

Clare Moriarty: I can only speculate. Life moves on and things evolve. Had the National School of Government stayed in place and had the top management programme continued, they would have evolved to being something rather different from what they were at the point at which it stopped. Certainly, it is not the case that nothing happened in the interim. I think that we are trying to create the right environment, where people can learn with peers from other Departments, other parts of Government and the wider public sector, in a way that responds to the challenges of today.

Q303 Mr Jones: It has already been pointed out that the CSLA has limited resources. Does it procure any of its provision from external providers? If so, who are they and what sort of services do they provide?



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Nick Borwell: Very little, in terms of delivering the programmes themselves. We have administrative support from one particular supplier. Going forward, although we use leaders delivering to leaders, there are niche capabilities that we will have to be able to buy in, as well. We will get some of that pro bono, I am sure, as the Civil Service Leadership Academy gains a reputation. I think that will work well. But we will definitely have to spend some money on getting other resources in to help us. Generally—it is working well at the moment—we are using public service leaders, not just civil servants, to develop our civil servants, and I think that is very positive. It does provide this energy and variety—if that is the right word—that we need in developing our leaders.

Q304 **Mr Jones:** Who will be assisting with that sort of provision? You mentioned administration, for example.

Nick Borwell: Administration is done by the Korn Ferry Hay Group. As we develop the strategy further, we know that as we develop cohorts where they develop programmes for each level of SCS and then below that as well, we are likely to need more external suppliers to help us, but that will not dominate. What we are not looking to do is bring in a big supplier to do it for us. We can do this, and we can do it effectively, but we will need to develop some other suppliers as well. We will need smaller suppliers rather than a big blanket approach to this thing.

Q305 **Mr Jones:** Is it necessarily a good thing to rely upon pro bono support?

Nick Borwell: I'm not suggesting we rely on it, but—

Q306 **Mr Jones:** Clearly, you have not done hitherto.

Nick Borwell: “Reliance” would be too strong a word. I think that where we would need to pay for it, we would need to pay for it. There are occasions, however, where, as long as it is ethical, whether it's from academics or from industry, we might get support that is almost voluntary.

Q307 **Mr Jones:** I am intrigued to establish why any commercial organisation would wish to provide support to the Government free of charge.

Nick Borwell: You might well be right. We might get nothing or very little, so I accept that entirely.

Stephen Lovegrove: Mr Jones, may I make a couple of points about the way in which we are trying to take this forward? On the whole I would agree with you. When I worked in the City there was always a phrase that free advice was worth what you paid for it. I am very conscious of that. We are definitely looking for more funding for the Civil Service Leadership Academy. That is worth putting on the table in a very plain way. The spending review is coming up and we are developing our plans for that.

Various components make our case. We need to settle our location strategy. Is this going to be very dispersed? Is this going to be located in one central hub? Are there going to be regional hubs? To what extent will we have a digital presence? Those things have not been fully settled yet.



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We need to develop the curriculum more and to address the points that you make about who is providing that curriculum. Is it enough to be able to rely on internal resources, particularly at a time when the civil service is very stretched with other aspects of policy development? I think we have not made as yet enough of the potential lessons that we could learn from other countries who have done these kinds of things, like Canada and Singapore. We haven't done that in a fully consistent way yet.

We need to develop the idea of the faculty and to support the principle. All of these things are going into the spending review bid now. We know that we will have to make that as robust and as well developed as we possibly can in order to be able to get the appropriate amount of money from stretched public resources.

Q308 Mr Jones: It seems to me that you are attempting to deliver an awful lot on a shoestring. No doubt you will make a robust bid for additional funding.

Stephen Lovegrove: I don't disagree with your characterisation. Of course, the aim of pushing this as quickly as possible down beyond the senior civil service, where the numbers of people become very much greater very quickly, also has financial implications.

Clare Moriarty: For the record, I don't want to mislead the Committee. One of the key course events that we have designed has been with support from a small organisation called ThePublicOffice, who have an expertise that has enabled us to take an experience that I was involved in—the west coast main line franchise competition—and help us make that something from which people can learn in a way that is not tied down to but benefits from specific experiences. I would not want us to give you the impression that it was only on the administrative side that we had external support.

Q309 Dame Cheryl Gillan: May I ask a brief question, because of my own ignorance? Thirty or 40 years ago, it was quite commonplace to second people out of the civil service to other institutions around the world, and they usually came back bearing the fruit of serving wherever it was—in the World Bank or other Governments' civil services. That is still happening, isn't it? I just want to make sure that it still happens and is not compromised in any way by the setting up of the new leadership academy.

Rupert McNeil: It's very important. We would like to see more secondments and permeability between other sectors and the civil service. In the current context of preparing for EU exit, there has been more of an inflow, consciously, and we have paused some of that activity, but even now, we are talking about how we will ramp that up again as we move into the next phase.

Q310 Kelvin Hopkins: Lord Maude said that he wanted future civil service leaders to train alongside their private sector peers and learn from them. Is the establishment of the Civil Service Leadership Academy a rejection of that approach?



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Stephen Lovegrove: No, it isn't. I think it is recognition of the fact that the complexity of the modern civil service requires a tailored and dedicated facility to enable our people to discharge their responsibilities and fulfil their careers as well as they possibly can. It does not mean that it is the only training that they could ever undertake. We quite often send people off to business schools. In the Ministry of Defence, we send a lot of people off to train alongside their military colleagues and their diplomatic colleagues. So there are plenty of other things that they need to do as well, but just as the police have their police academy and the NHS has its NHS academy, there are particular characteristics and complexities involved in the modern civil service that do, I think, demand a dedicated facility.

Q311 **Kelvin Hopkins:** Personally—

Chair: After your comment, we can go straight on; I don't think we need a supplementary—but carry on.

Kelvin Hopkins: Yes, okay. I have always been rather enthusiastic for the French system: the *énarques*; the ENA. It trains an elite cadre or class, if you like, and they do long-term secondments in the private sector, but they are still *énarques*; they still have that role. They are almost like platonic guardians—they are almost like that.

Stephen Lovegrove: If the ENA survives.

Kelvin Hopkins: Indeed; I think things are moving the wrong way. Isn't there something to be said for having those big secondments outside, to key parts of the private sector, and wouldn't it benefit society if many of those in the private sector were seconded to work sometimes in the public sector, so that you did get the cross-pollination of learning from each other?

Clare Moriarty: Can I say, as someone who has been through the ENA system as an international student, that it is a very interesting model, but it is a completely different model, which reflects a very, very different society? One of the things that has changed hugely in the civil service over the last 30 or 40 years is that we have much greater permeability. We have lots of people coming into the civil service, at all sorts of levels. The DG development cohort that I am sponsoring has a number of people who have joined, at director general level, from the private sector. But at all levels, people interchange more freely with the private sector than they did. So some of that happens. The ENA method is one particular *rayonnement* that goes outwards. I think what we are trying to get is a mixed economy.

The other thing that is worth saying is that the Civil Service Leadership Academy is not ever going to provide all the leadership development. There are some fantastic programmes. The Windsor Leadership Trust runs programmes that bring together the public and private sectors. There is also the Forward Institute. There are a whole variety of programmes that civil servants participate in. And of course the national centre for public



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sector leadership will do the same thing across the public sector. So one issue is not reinventing things that other people are doing very well, but making sure that we are planning people's development, looking at the whole spectrum of opportunities that they can tap into, some of which will be our own, through the leadership academy, and some of which will be run by other people but where we have a strong interest.

Kelvin Hopkins: This is just a brief comment at the end. There are schemes for Members of Parliament to go into industry, through the Industry and Parliament Trust—I have been on one myself—to go on military placements and so on. I think there has been recent talk about doing civil service placements for Members of Parliament, which would be very helpful. I think that would be a good idea.

Rupert McNeil: Absolutely.

Mr Jones: Do you necessarily want Members of Parliament?

Clare Moriarty: Definitely.

Chair: They would need to be housetrained.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: I would have thought it would be very useful to have a few Ministers take part in those courses.

Q312 **Dr Huq:** The IPT said they could custom-build a course, but when I asked whether I could do a civil service one, they said, "No. That's the one thing you're not allowed to do." I don't know whether they have revised their guidance since then, but at the time they said that the two do not mix. The ENA is being abolished, I think, to pacify the gilets jaunes.

Clare Moriarty: There is certainly talk of it.

Q313 **Dr Huq:** My question follows on from what Ronnie Cowan was asking. How do you actually measure whether the Civil Service Leadership Academy has had a positive effect on the quality of leadership within the civil service? I know that you said that you do an evaluation questionnaire, but often for those things you have had a day out of the office, so you are pleased and give it 10 out of 10, so he has a point.

Rupert McNeil: I have a quite clear view of how we need to do this. Ultimately, it has to be outcome-based. As we introduce the concept of success profiles across Government, which give a very clear articulation of what is needed to be successful in a particular job, when you get the job and as you evolve through it, one of the important things is to look at the data that comes out of that process and the data we get out of the interviews for senior civil services roles and civil service roles at all levels, which is a form of assessment.

One of the things that is really interesting—Clare has alluded to this already—is that the indicators of potential, which sit at the heart of our leadership strategy and can evolve as we look at new things that leaders need to know and ways in which they need to behave, become the reference point. The Civil Service Leadership Academy and the capability-



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building in the civil service are making sure people are able to do their jobs really well.

Then we have other ways of assessing it, such as evaluation of the courses themselves, how line managers feel their individual team members have benefited from those courses. Through the people survey, we see some interesting trends, in terms of leading and managing change across the civil service, which has been steadily improving over multiple years. There are lots of ways of looking at it.

Stephen Lovegrove: I think the market will speak in due course. If the Civil Service Leadership Academy gains a reputation for being a place where you learn genuinely useful things to make you do your job better, you meet genuinely interesting people who add value to the way you do your job, and appearance and attendance at its courses is recognised as being a good thing, people will want to come to it. If it turns out that those things do not happen, I suspect that attendance will fall off rather quickly. That will be a very good way of finding out whether or not it has been successful.

Q314 **Dr Huq:** Are you tracking the people who have been through it and seeing their progression rates?

Stephen Lovegrove: We are. We are moving into phase 2 of the CSLA. It has been going for nearly two years. We recognise that there is a new phase coming. As I said earlier, we have addressed the governance within the civil service. We are going to set up almost a board of trustees-type approach to the Civil Service Leadership Academy to give it greater focus and heft as it plans its next chapter.

Q315 **Dr Huq:** Do you have any diversity-focused programmes in the leadership stakes? We always hear these horrific figures about how it is a standard type of person who makes their way to the top.

Rupert McNeil: We have several things. One of the things that we now have in place is ambitious but achievable targets for representation of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities in the senior civil service, which is a great focusing of the mind. As well as that, we have a requirement for members of the senior civil service to have diversity and inclusion targets in their objectives. There is a great deal of very positive inclusive leadership training, not just at the senior level but all the way through the organisation. One of the things that has been done in partnership with the leadership academy over the past couple of years is introducing a package of online management fundamentals training, which also includes important aspects of diversity and inclusion. Training and raising awareness on that is extremely important, using the permanent secretary leaders who are our champions as a driver of that, as Clare is for faith and belief.

Q316 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** Can we talk money and resources? It is quite clear that that is one of the biggest bugbears. I think the civil service spends approximately £600 million a year on learning and development, of which the CSLA gets a very small bite of the cherry—I think it is £1 million a



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year, and it was £2.5 million in set-up costs. Compare that with the Public Service Leadership Academy, which I understand is getting £21 million over three years, or with the astronomical costs for setting up the HS2 College, where it is quite obvious that spending £48 million to set up something that has only 400 students on its books at the moment is an inordinate waste of money. I understand that John Manzoni wants to have this bid. Could somebody talk me through how much money we are talking about and what it is going to be used for? Surely that would be better value for money than some of the spending that goes on in other areas of Government.

Nick Borwell: Would you mind if I spoke about the second part of the question first, which is what we will do with the money?

Dame Cheryl Gillan: Absolutely.

Nick Borwell: First of all—this was referred to earlier—is location strategy. Where are we going to be? Is it one big institution somewhere, or is it a number of institutions? In other words, we have a regional and national footprint. We are looking at that at the moment. Depending on what we decide to go for, the cost will be dependent on one of those options. Although there may be a bit of a focus down here, there is a lot to be said for actually having a national footprint for the Civil Service Leadership Academy in a similar way to, as I mentioned before, how it worked very well for the Digital Academy—a different focus, but it has been quite effective. Location, or where we are, is potentially going to be an expensive thing to do if we are going to do it well. The next is around design.

Q317 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** Sorry, but why would location be more expensive? If you based it in London, I can understand the cost would be hugely expensive.

Nick Borwell: I meant more expensive than what we have now, which is very little.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: You've got virtually nothing now, but it's ridiculous.

Nick Borwell: There will be an amount of money for location. We are not sure what that is going to look like.

Q318 **Chair:** Creating permanent locations?

Nick Borwell: There are a number of options. One is to create a permanent location: you could build a place or a number of places. We could lodge—we would have to pay for it—with academic institutions or other professional bodies. We could do something like that. We are looking at all those options to see what we could do. The important thing is that people have to be able to get to them, and they have to be modern. We need something that is going to be fit for the future and not looking back. We are looking at all those options.

Q319 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** The idea that people have to be able to get there—if you are going to study a course at an institution for a week or



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something, presumably you will get there and stay there.

Nick Borwell: I don't want to make too much of it, but there are some that are very isolated, and we want to try to avoid that. It is more time out of the office for people.

Stephen Lovegrove: There is a point to this. Obviously, at the moment we are lodging with the Defence College in Shrivenham. If you were to go for a two-day course, Shrivenham is, for some people, a bit painful to get to. Quite a lot of the time is spent travelling to Swindon and then getting on a bus to get up to Shrivenham, before coming back down again. When we have asked people what they have liked and disliked about the course, one of the things they have definitely disliked about the course was that it is a bit too far away.

Q320 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** I find that very trivial. If we were running a course for our people when I was with Ernst & Young, you were told where it was. If it was a remote hotel up in the Peak district, you went there, stayed there and did it. It just seems that that is a very trivial level. What else is the bid going to cover?

Nick Borwell: Design, because we have to design our programmes effectively. We do not have the in-house civil service capability to do a lot of that stuff. We have started doing it, but we are going to have to do that properly and scale it across the civil service and, as I say, down into more junior levels. That is going to be quite a big job. Even our own central team—the Civil Service Leadership Academy team—is small and not perfectly formed at the moment. We need to look at how we make that perfect and fit for what we need to do to run the Civil Service Leadership Academy.

Lastly—I suppose it is not lastly; there will be others—is modern and innovative learning tools online. Although we value the face-to-face lessons hugely, we have to understand that a lot of the technology that is developing now is more immersive—if I can use that term—and we need to embrace it and be right at the front edge of that.

Q321 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** What is the bid? How much is the bid for?

Nick Borwell: I do not know yet. Sorry—that is really unhelpful.

Q322 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** Can you give me some idea of the scale of the bid?

Chair: Bid high.

Nick Borwell: Yes, aim high—thank you, Chair. Honestly, I cannot, but I know that it is going to have to be considerably north of where we are now, which as you say is pretty well nothing. I am sorry that is unhelpful. We have to look at our strategy and so forth.

Q323 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** We are very supportive, so we were hoping that you would come up with something that was a little bit more than that. The Centre for Public Services Leadership seems absolutely lavishly funded in comparison with you. Is that good value for money?



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Nick Borwell: They are doing something that is very different. They are looking at very senior public servants across every public institution, if you like. We are looking at, initially, 4,500 senior civil servants and then the leadership of 400,000 civil servants. The scale is completely different. I do not think they are comparable, which is why I am reluctant to be drawn that way. I could say, "It's that and a bit more", or, "Actually, it's quite a lot more", but I just do not know yet.

Rupert McNeil: As we go through the process of preparing the business case, which is a very thorough process that Nick is leading on, I think we would very much like to come back and write to the Committee and keep you updated on our progress. The National Leadership Centre is interesting and actually helpful, because they have done some really good work. It was the first time we had really looked at all the public sector academies.

One of the things that comes out very clearly, as Stephen has alluded to, is that the civil service has been missing that component compared with the health service or the military or the police. We will come back on that. The volumes—I believe the National Leadership Centre will be a good product with a good set of programmes. It is an indication of the type of scale. We would very much like to come back and keep you informed of that.

Q324 **Dame Cheryl Gillan:** How important would it be for the leadership academy to take in people who are effectively employed by the Government? While we are busting a gut to train real civil servants, we are seeing these arm's length bodies, such as Crossrail and HS2, and various IT projects and so on, where there are clear leadership failures. How much will that still affect the performance of Government, unless you take those people who you appoint to arm's length bodies and bring them into the fold as well? Quite frankly, it is hard to see how a permanent secretary in a Department can manage things and use those leadership qualities when the Government has passed them off to an arm's length body.

Rupert McNeil: I think that the professions and the sponsoring Departments are now looking at what is happening in the arm's length bodies. We are certainly trying to find opportunities to bring people into that. Of course, many civil servants come in and out of that periphery of arm's length bodies. It is a good question within the business case as to how broadly one can take it. It would be helpful to make sure we have that mix.

Clare Moriarty: DEFRA has an interesting landscape of a mixture of civil service and non-civil service arm's length bodies. Because I am interested in leadership, I certainly took a close interest in the leadership within the arm's length bodies.

In institutional terms, the Centre for Public Services Leadership will certainly encompass those bodies that sit outside the civil service but very much within the central Government public sector. I think it is a balance



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between what we do within the civil service—individual Departments will certainly reach beyond the civil service to their arm's length bodies—and how we fit the arm's length bodies within that wider public service concept.

Some things are entirely common to the civil service and the public service, and some things are in a slightly different context. The leadership academy is where we will have a particular opportunity to focus on that civil service context. Its complementary existence with the public services leadership academy means that we can look at those things together. Civil servants will be part of the public services leadership programme as well.

Q325 Dame Cheryl Gillan: Please hurry up with your research on this, because we are about to create another massive arm's length body for the restoration and renewal of this place, which could be one of the biggest mistakes we ever make.

Stephen Lovegrove: As somebody who came into the civil service quite late in their career—I was in my late 30s—I think it would be fair to say that, although it is better now, we are still quite bad at acclimatising private sector leaders who are expected to discharge very onerous and important responsibilities on behalf of the public sector with the practice, customs and standards of the public sector. That is an area where we can do a lot better, and the CSLA certainly has a role to play.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: But rapidly. The Treasury is spending money on its own pet projects but not actually on this, which I think is absolutely pivotal to the successful administration of this country, and I think you would endorse that.

Q326 Mr Jones: Could you explain the relationship between the Centre for Public Services Leadership and the civil service academies, including the leadership academy? Is there one?

Rupert McNeil: We are talking about a very complementary ecosystem. We have thought about the National Leadership Centre as the capstone on top of these sectoral groups, which have existed for greater or longer periods, whether that is police and fire colleges or the NHS Academy and so on. Having that and, in a sense, convening for the first time the people who run and lead those organisations and their sponsoring bodies, allows ways in which things can be done more cost-effectively between them to be looked at. For example, there is a very interesting question about whether, in the longer term, finance training across the public sector, which is done through a number of different bodies, can be co-ordinated—whether our common standards for finance, HR, operations or technology can have shared curricula across those bodies.

Fundamentally, the National Leadership Centre fills a gap, which I think has perhaps been better filled in some other countries, for a place where people from different parts of the public service can come together and share their experiences, learn about common problems and learn about leading the complex systems that they are responsible for. People who are going to be police commissioners or chief fire officers learn with people



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who will be chief executives of NHS trusts and senior civil servants. Creating that is a very exciting moment in public service capability building in the UK.

Q327 **Mr Jones:** But is there any formalised relationship, and if not, ought there to be one?

Rupert McNeil: There is, essentially. My team and I were very closely involved in helping to scope out the costing and the model, working very closely with colleagues in the Treasury. That has been very effective. In terms of the interaction with other civil service learning governance arrangements, we have had good representation from the National Leadership Centre. I meet very regularly with its acting chief executive, Kris Murrin, and I think those links will grow and reinforce.

However, underlying it, it would be absolutely right to say that we do have to be very vigilant that this system does not fragment, that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and I would definitely welcome this Committee playing a very active role in making sure that we do that.

Q328 **Chair:** Does the Centre for Public Services Leadership train senior civil servants?

Rupert McNeil: It will have relatively few at director general level who will be going on to those courses. When you look across the whole spectrum of people in public service at the level that they are aiming at, we represent a relatively small proportion.

Q329 **Chair:** So there is not duplication; there is clear demarcation.

Stephen Lovegrove: Yes, very clear.

Clare Moriarty: The idea is that the Centre for Public Services Leadership does something that, by definition, no one else can, which is to bring together people at a very senior role across all the different parts of the public service. It can only work if civil servants are part of that cohort in the same way as very senior police officers and very senior NHS people. The Civil Service Leadership Academy looks after the civil service, and then there will be a small intersect between the Public Service Leadership Academy and each of the individual sectoral academies, but the value it will add will be around bringing together the public sector view.

Q330 **Chair:** Does the CPSL think it's looking after the DEFRA public bodies, for example, or is that primarily the responsibility of the Civil Service Leadership Academy?

Clare Moriarty: I am no longer at DEFRA, but I would say that the non-civil service DEFRA bodies, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, are arm's length bodies of DEFRA, but they are non-civil service so that would be the natural place for their leaders to go. We also had a number of executive agencies staffed by civil servants, where the first port of call would be the Civil Service Leadership Academy, but somebody involved in one of those might then, as a civil servant, be part of the public services leadership process.

Q331 Chair: Would it be helpful for the clarity of our report if a clear joint statement could be made—so that there is agreement and we do not have to guess or navigate our way through—on where the boundaries lie between the two bodies, and on how they co-operate? Do you think that could be arranged?

Clare Moriarty: I am sure it could, yes. As Rupert said, we've got quite carefully calibrated governance so that we are making sure that the right connections are there.

Stephen Lovegrove: At the very beginning—it may have moved a little bit away from this—the idea for the CPSL was that it was going to concentrate on productivity; a lot of it was going to be about productivity, and lessons that could be shared and learned across the whole of the public sector. As I say, it may have moved a little bit away from that, but I think that is still quite a big focus for it.

Chair: That is very helpful, thank you.

Q332 Dr Huq: How does learning and development support career planning within the civil service?

Rupert McNeil: It is becoming an increasingly important part. If we think about the whole system, when an individual takes on their role they should know, through their success profile, as we call it, what experience and behaviours are required to be successful in that role. That is owned by the profession and the Department.

That will then form the basis, if you like, when they start their role—allow a bit of a gap analysis, from which a development plan can be produced. Of course, in terms of the performance management process where line managers are talking to people in their teams over the course of the year, they will—we certainly recommend this—be having conversations about what they can do to be good in their current job, and how they might want to grow in that job or move to other jobs.

The thing that we hope is going to transform this and make it easier is to have the publicly available career pathways for professions. By the end of June, we will have the 10 Government functions, and included within that the professions of operational delivery and policy will have their career pathways and frameworks set out. That will make very clear what skills you need as you progress through it. The final part of that, of course, is giving people access, online and through other training, to the development that lets them acquire those skills. That is one of the most important things. When people join the civil service, they aspire to get really great learning and development and to be able to grow in their current role and move into other roles. Ultimately, that will be linked to Clare's leadership and talent board and directing that career approach.

Clare Moriarty: One of the things that I am really keen to encourage is that we focus on individuals and have the right conversations with and about people, and about how they can develop and what they might need to support that development. That happens between individuals and their



line managers, as they think about the skills that they need to acquire and how they might do that. As we go up through organisations, I would expect, within a Department, for there to be conversations about the whole cohort of people, really thinking about the people who need a particular type of support, either to develop to do their current job really well, or to develop a particular talent.

For people who have the potential to be our leadership pipeline, we are making sure we match them up with the range of opportunities in Departments and the Civil Service Leadership Academy and with these wider providers. For the most senior levels, the leadership and talent board thinks about our director cadre. The senior leadership committee, chaired by Thomas Scholar, does the same process for directors general. It is about having the right things in place, and then making sure we have the conversations that allow people to identify how they want to develop, and for people with a broad overview of skills and development to do that as well.

Q333 Dr Huq: Is there a regular appraisal and goal-setting thing for all levels?

Clare Moriarty: Yes.

Q334 Dr Huq: And how will the Civil Service Leadership Academy improve that? That's a leading question, isn't it? Will they improve it, and if so, how?

Clare Moriarty: We hope they will. One of the things that the leadership academy will do is develop and refine a suite of programmes that help people to develop. On the talent side, we have accelerated development programmes. We have one called the future leaders scheme for people at grades 6 and 7—people who are team leaders, typically, and are identified as having the scope to progress in their career. That programme makes sure they have the right range of skills and experience.

Over time, I would certainly hope that the leadership academy will be the home of the set of programmes that get people ready for progression, ensure people are able to perform a new role successfully, and help people to focus on specific areas where they need to progress. It would be the home for those programmes for senior staff. Increasingly, we will be framing them for people more generally in the civil service.

Chair: We have three further questions. We will wrap this up as quickly as we can, because I know we are running over.

Q335 Dame Cheryl Gillan: The predecessor of this Committee, which I and several others of us sat on, regretted the closure of the NSG. It is seven years since it closed. You are almost describing what it might be like now, or how it would be better organised if it had still been here and allowed to continue. What about the vision thing? Where is this going to be in 10 years' time? You are describing a very piecemeal approach. It is as if we threw the baby out with the bathwater and are having to start again in all these areas. Where do you see this in 10 years' time?

Stephen Lovegrove: Without revisiting the past too much, I recognise aspects of your characterisation. We would certainly have had to develop



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and professionalise the CSG over the years, and who is to say that we would not have done that? What we have now is a slightly cleaner slate to devise interventions and institutions that are going to be durable for a longer period of time. We do not want—I very much agree with you on this—to allow an enormous number of initiatives, perfectly well intentioned and responding to proper need, to all flourish together in a way that means that we are dissipating effort, because we do not have the quantity or the level of resources to be able to afford do that. If you were to ask me what we will be looking for in 10 years' time, it would be a well-integrated and clearly linked set of establishments, institutions and interventions that were all working in harmony and were all part of a big picture. That is what we are trying to do at the moment.

Q336 Dame Cheryl Gillan: And with a ring-fenced budget.

Stephen Lovegrove: We have the issue that we started the session with of how much of the budget will be in a Department and how much of the budget will be held centrally. We are all clear that the vast majority of learning and leadership probably does have to operate within what is still the unit of management within the civil service, which is the Department. But within that, we do want to have something that is cohered, unified and clearly working harmoniously with the various parts of it.

Rupert McNeil: And if you roll forward 10 years to the successor of this Committee, what questions do I think you should be asking? It would be looking at whether we were delivering the capability needed to produce the right set of outcomes. If I take an issue that is across all our professions and functions at the moment, it would be the impact of automation and cognitive technology. That will raise some very interesting questions for leadership—how do you lead a system that includes, effectively, somewhat independently operating units, some of whom are human beings and some of which are robotic? That type of issue, which will be faced across the public sector and is being faced in the corporate sector as well, and how well we are responding to that, will be the type of thematic question that can be directed to us when we have this in place—as well as whether we have the raw capability in areas such as people understanding contract management, commercial skills, and the importance of inclusive leadership and variation in leadership styles.

Q337 Dame Cheryl Gillan: That in itself is almost the troops that have been lined up to defend democracy, which is under threat unless you have the right leadership.

Rupert McNeil: Completely, and I think Stephen has alluded to it as well—the importance of using this as a way to imbue values in the system. As we move colleagues around—we recently moved colleagues around Government to deal with EU exit—and as we bring people into the civil service from outside, as has been referred to, we are paying a lot of active attention to the induction, whether it relates to security, values or the civil service ethos. What is great is seeing people come together in some of these induction sessions for EU exit movement, because everyone has to go through induction training, and basically learn from each other about



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the environments they will be going into. Clare used the term “inflection point”, and I think we are at an inflection point. I would like to record our gratitude to the Committee for keeping us on track with that. I very much hope that you will continue to do so.

Chair: We do like gratitude. Thank you.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: Especially the Chairman.

Q338 **Chair:** Can I put the next question to our two permanent secretaries? Whatever initiatives are taken for learning and development as a civil servant, some come from Ministers and they may be good or bad. Whose responsibility is it ultimately to nurture civil service capability?

Clare Moriarty: It is both Ministers and civil servants, but civil servants are always in reality going to need to do the legwork, because that is what we are here for. What I have in my head is that we need to be consistently articulating the north star of the place that we are trying to get to, and then making sure that everything that we do, whatever you call it—learning, development, training courses—is pointing towards that north star. The north star is, fundamentally, set directionally by where Ministers are taking us, but it is fundamentally imbued by the civil service’s values.

Ministers are clearly not detached from the issues about capability, but would I turn to a Minister and say, “I think you need to be doing more to make sure that civil servants have the capability to do the role”? No, I wouldn’t. I regard that as my role, working with a Secretary of State to make sure that I understand what they are looking for in terms of the capability of the Department, and how that evolves over time, as well as, with my broader leadership-and-talent hat on, trying to understand what that adds up to. If each permanent secretary is working with their Secretary of State to understand what the capability needs are in that Department, what does that add up to across the civil service as a whole?

Stephen Lovegrove: I absolutely agree with everything that Clare has said. It is worth having reasonably explicit conversations with Ministers to say that it is in the deepest interests of good governance of the state for there to be a capable civil service, and to speak to Ministers to make sure that there is enough latitude in the system to allow that activity to take place. Ministers have a role in allowing that latitude.

Q339 **Chair:** Looking back over the last 10 or 20 years, what lessons would you say the senior civil service needs to take on board, when perhaps it has been difficult to give, or for whatever reason it is difficult for Ministers to hear, clear and consistent advice about civil service learning and development? When you look back and see what has perhaps gone wrong on one or two occasions, what do you think the senior civil service needs to learn from that?

Clare Moriarty: The obvious questions are about making sure that development of the right capability, and having the right capability in place, is sufficiently front of mind as we go into any kind of enterprise, whether it is a specific project or an evolving area of policy. Those need to



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be part of the discussions that we would always have with Ministers about how quickly we can do something. Part of that is about whether we have the right capability—whether the core capability of the Department is sufficient, or whether we are adding quickly enough in areas of skill that we may not have previously needed.

The pace at which we can move and do things safely is always going to be conditioned by the capability that we have in the Department. As the permanent secretary, I need to make it my business to understand what capability we have, and what capability we might need, and then to have the conversation with Ministers about what that then tells us about what we can achieve at what pace, and where we might need to invest. The conversations that we have about business planning and spending review bids and all those things need to encompass the dimension of capability.

I have never come across a Minister who did not readily understand, as we all do, that our ability to achieve things is directly related to our capability. We all deal in practice with the tension of how fast we can do things and what risk we are carrying. The more we make those decisions explicit and bring capability into the conversation, the better results we can expect.

Stephen Lovegrove: The civil service represents a very important strand of continuity in the Government of the nation. Continuity is very important. It is a lot easier to throw things away than to build them.

Q340 **Chair:** Sir Richard Mottram has told us that the current governance of learning and development is “unclear” and “not strong enough”. While Ministers are accountable to Parliament for ministerial policy on the civil service, who should we as a Committee regard as responsible for the governance of learning and development?

Stephen Lovegrove: Permanent secretaries have the biggest individual responsibilities for the civil servants underneath their control, so you should certainly look to the body of civil servants in the form of the Civil Service Board, broadly, led by the Cabinet Secretary.

I mentioned earlier that Clare, Melanie Dawes and I, who were respectively chairs of the talent board, the people board and, in my case, the leadership and learning board, got together earlier in the year and thought that the distinctions between those boards were unclear. There was a good deal of duplication, things were falling between the cracks, and there needed to be much more focus in this area, so we abolished one of those boards and have had a go at refining the terms of reference, membership and mission statements of the two remaining boards, which are Melanie Dawes’s people board and Clare’s leadership and talent board.

As I say this, Clare may look away, but I think you can certainly look to Clare and Melanie to take the lead in this. There has been another strand about those two boards working much more closely together as well.

Clare Moriarty: All of these boards dock into a combination of the Civil Service Board and the Senior Leadership Committee. That is where the responsibility for having the right governance rests. As Stephen said, we



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were conscious that the governance as previously constructed was not quite giving us the right impact. In my case, having the overview of the leadership and talent agenda, and with the leadership academy then having its own board of trustees and formally docking into the leadership and talent board, that provides us with stronger governance.

The learning agenda sits with the people board. You could argue about whether it all needs to go together, but the risk is that one creates something that is so big it cannot then be governed. What we are aiming to do is to have very close working between the leadership and talent board and the people board. There are huge areas of overlap, particularly around things like diversity and inclusion, and where learning meets leadership, but it is something that we will constantly review, because governance is only as good as the results that it produces.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Q341 **Kelvin Hopkins:** Chair, I have a quick question. Stephen talked about continuity. Does the panel agree that preserving corporate memory with proper record keeping is absolutely vital, and that if we do not have records, there will be no point in the 30-year release of documents about our history?

Clare Moriarty: Yes.

Stephen Lovegrove: Yes.

Chair: On that note of agreement, may I thank you very much indeed for staying the extra half an hour? It has been very useful. I hope we will produce a really good report that will both support your work and perhaps make some constructive suggestions. Thank you very much indeed.