EC 0729n3\_work programme

Autumn work programme

**Note by Peter Owen**

At our meeting on 1st July we noted that:

“It was noticeable how little of the discussion [at Ditchley] concerned the process issues on which we had been concentrating. This might indicate that it was time for a reappraisal of the focus of our efforts.”

Work currently in prospect is a paper on negotiating and managing a coalition and a report on training and accreditation of top civil servants.

On the former, we have asked John Elvidge to draft an executive summary of his paper with a view to publication in September. On the latter, I have so far been unable to contact Hugh Taylor to establish whether, as we suspect, his current commitments will prevent him from producing a lengthy report. Leigh Lewis has undertaken to produce a shorter piece covering this topic by the end of August.

A preliminary discussion of possible new subjects on 1st July suggested that, without abandoning follow-up of previous projects, we might begin to concentrate on topics that would be of particular interest to an incoming Labour Government (some of which are touched on in the blogs based on Paul Britton’s note for Labour). Examples quoted were

* a new model for improved relations with the civil service;
* arrangements at the head of the civil service (despite recent changes there might still be something useful to say);
* effective arrangements for delivery, including managing half-completed projects.

Relevant sub-topics might include a better explanation of why appropriate action by civil servants might involve some delay or questioning which could be misinterpreted as obstruction and guidance on consistency in outsourcing (Christopher Foster’s paper on executive agencies is relevant to this).

Work on any new topics would presumably lead to separate reports which would also provide material for our pre-election report. We agreed that this should be published soon after Christmas, so any work on new topics would need to be completed during the months of September to December.

It might be helpful in considering the programme of work for the autumn to discuss what the broad headings for the pre-election report should be. *Mid Term Review* was divided into four main sections: Cabinet and policy making; legislation and Parliament; delivery and organisation and the civil service. We intend the pre-election report to be much shorter; do we still need such comprehensive coverage (do we need, for example, to say much about Parliament if we are explicitly targeting the Executive)?

PFO