

MANAGEMENT BOARD**UNIFIED FAST STREAM & SENIOR CAREERS**

Note by DG Resources

Purpose

1. This note introduces a report on proposals to introduce a unified House wide fast stream.

Decision required

2. The Board is asked to approve the House-wide fast stream scheme in the attached report.

The context

3. This work is part of a number of work streams considering aspects of succession planning and talent management. These also include:

- The SMDP working group looking at fast stream and talent management. Their recommendations are attached to the fast stream report.
- The future of senior management development being considered by SMDP cohorts and DR. Proposals made so far include an intranet-based “interactive learning environment” for senior staff, and a feasibility study for mapping senior competences and compiling a succession plan.
- Work on workforce planning and succession. This will include assessing career paths, and dealing with missing “stepping stones” (eg the lack of generalist SCS2 posts as stepping stones to DG roles).
- Consideration of a new Performance Management system which will help underpin this work. Taken together, these measures will address the issue of providing stronger in-house competition for top posts.

Further work

4. Co—ordination of these developments will be required as a key strand of the HR Strategy implementation. This will inform the corporate planning round in the autumn.

Conclusions

5. [s.40] are to be congratulated on an excellent report. Their proposals on the House-wide fast stream are consistent with the proposed overall direction for senior development and I recommend that the Board approves them.

A J Walker

Director General of Resources

July 2008

Final Report to the Management Board of the working group on a unified House- wide fast stream

[s.40]

9th July 2008

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Terms of reference

To develop proposals to implement the Management Board's decision to introduce a unified, House-wide fast stream from 2009, working in conjunction with the SMDP working group on this theme:

- To bring forward preliminary proposals before the summer recess for adapting the current arrangements for fast-stream recruitment of Assistant Clerks through the fast stream recruitment competition organised by the Cabinet Office.
- To identify by the summer recess types of work in each House department suitable for placements for fast streamers.
- To liaise with PICT about the applicability (if any) of extending elements of the scheme to cover them and to liaise with the House of Lords about the implications (if any) for current bicameral arrangements for recruitment of fast streamers.
- To assess the implications of a House-wide fast stream for recruitment to other posts, notably to A3 posts as Library Clerks.
- To make proposals for an internal route to application to the House-wide fast stream.
- To assess the implications of the introduction of a House-wide fast stream for existing arrangements for promotion to Band A2.

Introduction

To develop proposals to implement the Management Board's decision to introduce a unified, House wide fast stream from 2009, working in conjunction with the SMDP working group on this theme.

1. At the end of February the Management Board “endorsed the principle that there should be common recruitment to the Fast Stream in 2009”.¹ We were given our terms of reference at the end of March and submitted an interim report to the Director General of Resources and the Clerk of Committees at the end of April, which was circulated to all staff at the beginning of June. We asked each department and PICT to reply to a questionnaire and invited comments on the terms of reference from the Trade Union Side. We received responses to our requests for information from DEOs and heads of each department and the unions at the beginning of June, which are appended to this report. We have met the Clerk of Committees and Director of Human Resources in the House of Lords and have co-ordinated our work with that of the Senior Management Development Programme group considering the fast stream and wider aspects of talent management, whose report is presented as an Annex to this report. This final report is built upon the information we have received and discussions we have held, under the guidance and with the advice of the senior sponsors of the report, the Director General of Resources and the Clerk of Committees. We now present our final report to the Management Board with our conclusions and recommendations.

2. The recruitment of Assistant Clerks to band A3 through the Civil Service fast stream was an established element of the human resources model of the Department of Clerk of the House. Assistant Library Clerks are recruited at A3, but not through the fast stream. Following the reorganisation of the departments of the House, the consideration of a House-wide fast stream fits neatly with the fostering of a unified House Service. Our purpose in this report is to pin down exactly what that might mean, and the changes which can be made now and those which will need more work for new ways of using the fast stream to be established. Although outside our terms of reference, one issue we have come across repeatedly in the course of this work is that human resources planning by the House is fragmented. It was difficult to get a sense of the distribution of posts, people and bands across each department. **We recommend that the Department of Resources begins work on creating a strategic planning tool showing all posts and bandings across each department and identifying the known and likely future needs for staff.**

3. Our terms of reference did not include consideration of other recruitment mechanisms for staff. We consider ‘fast stream’ to refer to the small group of people recruited through the Civil Service scheme to band A3, hitherto exclusively to the Department for Chamber and Committee Services, as Assistant Clerks. We also refer to the ‘fast stream’ as that

¹ Minutes of Management Board meeting, 21st February 2008, available at <http://pdvnsco.parliament.uk/bb/corporate/MBdisclosableFeb08minutes.htm>

period of around four years which these recruits spend in the A3 band before being promoted to A2. In the course of our work, it was raised with us that the grading of fast streamers might be changed from A3 to HEO (D). While we do not consider this issue as falling within our remit, this may be an issue which needs revisiting in the future.

Purpose of new fast stream

4. In this report we make various suggestions for the creation and management of a new House-wide fast stream, following our terms of reference. It has become obvious in the course of our work that the development of the fast stream could follow several paths. It is therefore important, in justifying the course we suggest, to have in mind the reasons for adopting a new kind of fast stream for the House. We see those reasons as:

- a) to ensure that those people entering the House Service through the fast stream, who are likely to fill at least some of the most senior management positions in the Service towards the end of their careers in the House, are exposed at an early stage to the full range of skills they will need in order best to perform in those senior positions; and
- b) to allow all departments in the House, not just one department, access to a recruitment stream of able graduates with generalist skills.

5. We do not see the fast stream as only a recruitment gateway: the Civil Service scheme states explicitly that the fast stream is a development programme, and it has been used as such, in practice, by the former Department of the Clerk of the House. The tension between (a) and (b) above, therefore, is that fast streamers should be recruited with due attention to their likely future progression once they have left the four years of fast stream development (band A3). Fast streamers will need to be attracted, retained and incentivised in order to ensure the most able candidates choose the House Service over the Civil Service and more lucrative opportunities in the City and elsewhere. In considering the posts in which each department of House might like to employ band A3 fast streamers, therefore, consideration must be given to the value which that post can offer to the fast streamer (and therefore to the House) in his or her ongoing development and progression.² While not within our remit, we consider that the development of fast streamers should be in the context of a wider policy of talent management and development of staff, as referred to in the report annexed to this report of the SMDP Action Group.

6. A unified House-wide fast stream will not develop overnight, and it is important that adequate resources are given to managing the migration to a new scheme. **We recommend that a Fast Stream Grade Manager is appointed at SCS1 or A2 to implement the new scheme. Some of the initial responsibilities of the Grade Manager are flagged up through this report. We recommend that in the first year of operation, this post should be at least half time. We recommend that the Fast Stream Grade Manager should network with Civil Service Fast Stream Grade Managers to remain abreast of relevant developments in thinking and practice and to stimulate new ideas for the fast stream in the House.**

² The Civil Service produces a useful guide for fast stream Grade Managers on the criteria against which fast stream jobs should be evaluated for suitability.

Recruitment

To bring forward preliminary proposals before the summer recess for adapting the current arrangements for fast stream recruitment of Assistant Clerks through the fast stream recruitment competition organised by the Cabinet Office.

Independent fast stream

7. Our terms of reference were not explicit about whether the Management Board wished to consider a House-wide fast stream which was independent of the Civil Service fast stream; that is to say, a recruitment gateway wholly managed by the House for its own particular needs. Some of the responses we have received during our work have mentioned this possibility, however, which suggests that a statement from us would be useful. We do not consider that there is merit in the House abandoning the Civil Service fast stream and setting up its own scheme. The Civil Service fast stream fulfils the objectives of the House in supplying able candidates for consideration by a final selection board of Commons and Lords authorities. It has high brand recognition amongst graduates, and hence high competition for places. It is unlikely the House, with its small human resources capabilities, could come anywhere close to replicating the outputs of the Civil Service fast stream as efficiently without significant costs. **We do not recommend the creation of a fast stream recruitment mechanism run by the House independently of the Civil Service fast stream.**

Changes to recruitment from the fast stream

8. In our interim report, we described the administrative steps needed to be taken by the House in order to make changes to the recruitment of fast streamers from the Civil Service scheme.³ We recommended a phased transition to a House-wide fast stream over 2009-2010. **We reiterate that recommendation: fast streamers should be recruited in 2009 to the DCCS, as Clerks, but with exposure to other departments during their period in the A3 band (see 'the first four years' below). We further recommend that, dependent on the experience in 2009, fast streamers in 2010 should be recruited to a centrally managed programme.**

9. To reflect the fact that the House is changing its requirements of fast streamers, a new text has been placed on the Civil Service website to replace that advertising 'Clerkships in the House of Commons'.⁴ Changes are also underway to the fast stream recruitment brochure used by both Houses and further changes will probably be needed to both after the first year of the new scheme and as it evolves. The diversity manager might also be asked to review the recruitment materials used.

³ See Appendix 2 for a description of the Civil Service fast stream application process.

⁴ <http://www.faststream.gov.uk/index.asp?txtNavID=63>

10. Other items which we flagged up in our interim report will need attention in the next 12 months. We recommend that the new Fast Stream Grade Manager's initial tasks should include, by spring 2009, to give consideration to:

- the content of the two open days which are usually held for potential fast streamers. The Grade Manager should assess which departments should be involved and what messages should be given to graduates on the kinds of jobs they might perform at the House of Commons.
- the contact usually made in March with those fast streamers who have chosen the House of Commons as a first or second choice. The information and guidance about fast stream posts given to those applicants will need to be adjusted, and other departments and directorates may wish to be involved.
- the lunch held in April with careers advisers. The information and guidance about fast stream posts given to those careers advisers will need to be adjusted, and other departments and directorates may wish to be involved.
- the membership of the final selection board, usually held in May/ June. The Management Board will need to consider whether two Commons Clerks should be on the board in 2009 as was the case in 2008. Other departments and directorates should presumably be represented and there will need to be an agreement between departments on the qualities looked for and competencies assessed, which may also change. This will depend upon decisions being made on the jobs which fast streamers are likely to do.

Specialist fast streams

11. In our interim report, we raised the possibility of recruiting from the specialist fast streams.⁵ We asked departments whether they would be interested in recruiting from those fast streams, and the answers were largely negative. The DCCS raised the possibility of employing specialist fast streamers in the Scrutiny Unit in the Committee Office, and PICT suggested that specialists from the Technology in Business fast stream could be employed as performance managers, business analysts and project managers. At this stage, however, we do not believe there is a career structure which could be offered to such recruits beyond A2.

12. We recommend that the House does not recruit from the specialist fast streams in the next two years, but that if departments perceive an ongoing need and can demonstrate a career structure for such recruits, the Fast Stream Grade Manager should examine the case for such recruitment in the future.

⁵ Including the Economist, Statistician and Technology in Business fast streams.

Management of fast streamers

13. In our interim report, we recommended that in 2009 fast stream entrants at A3 should remain with their parent department (DCCS) but be offered 'postings' in different departments and that in 2010 all fast streamers, including new entrants, should move to a centrally-managed programme, depending on the results of the 2009 experience. The benefit of moving fast streamers out of the DCCS would be to increase the perception that the recruits are not Clerks, but House of Commons fast streamers who may develop their careers across the House. Although we are in favour of a move towards corporate management of fast streamers, we recognise the risk of loss of identity which recruits may suffer. A3 entrants to DCCS now are inducted not merely into a job but also into a supportive 'collegiate' departmental culture. The Management Board will need to consider where this A3 cadre should 'sit': the Office of the Chief Executive might be one possibility, or with central human resources in the Department of Resources. The DCCS should remain closely involved with the management of fast streamers, as most posts for fast streamers and those appointed to A2 from the fast stream seem likely to remain those of Clerks in DCCS.

14. We conclude that the balance lies in favour of developing central corporate management of fast streamers in 2010, with the close involvement of DCCS. However, we recommend that this case is re-examined in 2009.

15. We recommend that the Fast Stream Grade Manager develops an implementation team and a plan for the corporate management of A3 fast streamers from 2010, with input from each department and close coordination with DCCS.

Other A3 recruitment: Assistant Library Clerks

16. The only two departments which employ staff at band A3 are the Department of Chamber and Committee Services (Assistant Clerks) and the Department for Information Services (Assistant Library Clerks). There is no clear need for other departments independently to recruit their own departmental cadre of fast streamers. The questions we faced, therefore, in our work were:

- a) should Library Clerks be recruited through the fast stream rather than through current mechanisms; and
- b) should current A3 recruits (Assistant Clerks and/or Assistant Library Clerks) be considered to be 'House of Commons fast streamers' and placed in several departments in order to expand their roles and expose them to different skills areas? (As the Departments of Resources and Facilities, and PICT, do not currently use the A3 band, some posts would need to be re-graded in those departments in order to do this).

17. In a sense, these two questions arise from two sides of the same issue. Both Library Clerks and Clerks are at root specialist roles and the A3 band has historically been a training band for that specialism. However, as management has become a more pressing requirement of the House Service, both roles have absorbed more 'generalist' management

competencies, although arguably the traditional role of the Clerk has changed more in this respect than that of the Library Clerk. Moreover, the competencies for which Clerks are recruited have also changed in this respect, as the Civil Service fast stream has changed to reflect the demand in the Civil Service for managers; whereas the Library has retained exclusive control over its own recruitment process and has retained the perspective of the specialist. While management skills and responsibilities have become accepted as part of the role of a Clerk throughout his or her career, the Library has retained its niche specialism to a greater extent. The momentum of opening up the fast stream across departments of the House offers the potential for Library Clerks to take over more management roles, should they wish to.

18. It is for the Department of Information Services to decide how best to recruit Library Clerks. The response we received from the DIS made clear that the department needs to retain the facility to recruit independently to posts requiring specialist skills and knowledge. However, the department raised the possibility of employing fast stream recruits in 'generalist' Library Clerk roles, should these arise, and this would seem to us to be an appropriate placement for a fast streamer in their first four years (see below).⁶

19. The integration of Library Clerk 'postings' into the fast stream would provide a jumping off point for a fast streamer who decided to choose a career as a Library Clerk and seek appointment as such at A2. It would also help to foster the ethos of a House-wide Service and contribute to the development of future senior managers with a cross-departmental perspective. As the departments are structured, however, it is likely that most A3s will seek to be appointed at A2 into DCCS, where the promotion opportunities beyond A2 are better. We raised this issue in our interim report and it was echoed in the DIS response to our questionnaire, which stated that the department would be willing to take on fast streamers, but only on the understanding that their career progression lay outside the department. This point seems likely to restrict DIS participation in the fast stream to providing a small number of placements at A3 but continuing to use other mechanisms to fill most of its vacancies for Library Clerks.

20. Below, we suggest possible ways of enabling a greater degree of crossover between the departments. In simple terms, a fast streamer aspiring to a senior management position will seek those positions which develop the competencies assessed for promotion. If it is seen as in the House's interests to employ fast streamers at A3 and A2 as Library Clerks, the requirements for SCS1 posts must not be so narrowly drawn as to exclude them from promotion. If most SCS1 and above posts remain as Clerks, then individuals from other departments must be given access to training and attachments which allow them to learn the skills necessary to perform a Clerk role. One way of integrating A3s in DIS and DCCS might be for the Fast Stream Grade Manager to have a role in the management of both groups. There may also be scope for providing formal opportunities for new Library Clerks to experience work with a Select Committee or in a procedural office.

⁶ The DIS recruits some Library Clerks to very specialist roles, with narrowly defined areas of detailed knowledge. Others are recruited with a broader knowledge of a policy area; and recently some 'generalist' Library Clerks have been recruited with flexible skills who are deployed to different subject areas as need arises.

The first four years

To identify by the summer recess types of work in each House department suitable for placements for fast streamers.

To liaise with PICT about the applicability (if any) of extending elements of the scheme to cover them and to liaise with the House of Lords about the implications (if any) for current bicameral arrangements for recruitment of fast streamers.

House of Commons fast streamers

21. At present, Assistant Clerks recruited from the fast stream to band A3 are guaranteed promotion to A2 after four years, and also have the opportunity to apply for accelerated promotion after nine months. The period spent at band A3, therefore, is a developmental period which should equip the candidate with the skills necessary to perform at A2, through both formal training and 'learning on the job' postings. For Assistant Clerks, A3 posts have usually been as Second Clerks to Select Committees, or in a few junior positions in some procedural offices. Training provided to Assistant Clerks has focused on skills needed in these two areas. The implication of a move to a House wide fast stream, however, is that A3s should not be training exclusively to be Clerks, but should be exposed to a wider range of skills to enable them to perform a wider range of functions in various departments. As mentioned earlier, given that many fast streamers may be expected eventually to reach SCS1, and that Clerks at SCS1 level require a much wider range of competencies than those traditionally associated with procedural and Select Committee roles, it makes sense to be laying down the groundwork for the development of senior managers at this early stage.

22. We consulted each department and PICT on whether they would like to employ fast streamers, and asked what roles or posts they could offer to fast streamers. The responses were as follows:

DCCS	DIS	DR	DF	PICT ⁷
Assistant Clerks	Possible generalist	Assistant to Director of Operations/	Secretary to the Parliamentary	Head of Secretariat
Executive Officer to the Director General	Library Clerk posts	Head of Policy	Estates Board/ Executive	Business Analyst
Some SEO posts	Possible other posts under re-grading exercise	HR and other projects; business systems analysis	Assistant to Director of Estates	Other roles for those with some parliamentary experience

⁷ As a joint department of the House of Commons and Lords, postings made available in PICT would need to be open to both House of Commons and Lords applicants.

		Assistant to the Director General	Assistant to Director of Business Management Executive Officer to Director General	
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23. We have not investigated the detail of what each of these posts involves and how it matches the competencies fast streamers have and those they should achieve during their period in the A3 band. We find it positive that almost all departments believe they could employ fast streamers and, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, would wish to.

24. When we asked departments how many fast streamers they would wish to take, we received the following responses:

DCCS	DIS	DR	DF	PICT
2-4 per year.	Perhaps 1 a year in future years.	2 per year.	1	1-2 a year.

25. We stated in our interim report that we did not recommend increasing the total number of A3 fast streamers recruited, as this would increase the competition for SCS1 posts and could either lead to retention problems or to motivation problems amongst staff unwilling to leave but with no real expectation of progression, despite having been recruited with that expectation. From the numbers above, it seems that departments other than DCCS could absorb the full complement of those fast streamers currently recruited by DCCS. To make this work, therefore, DCCS would have to fill the empty places by other means, such as secondments from outside or inside the House, or internal promotion.

26. Below we recommend that new fast streamers should normally spend at least their first two years in the DCCS, training to be Clerks, as these are the jobs most will continue to aim for in the absence of more promotion opportunities in other departments. The implication of this recommendation is that new entrants in 2009 should not be employed in other departments until 2011. If the Management Board wishes to place fast streamers in other departments before then, therefore, then departments should in the first instance bid for fast streamers who entered the House in 2006 and 2007. Those entrants came into the House with the expectation of being employed in Clerkly roles and although those roles have already changed, they may not be particularly inclined to take up postings in other departments. The Management Board will need to consider how best to sell these opportunities.

27. We recommend that from 2009 departments bid for A3 candidates normally in their third or fourth year in the House for posts they wish to fill. Departments must demonstrate to the Fast Stream Grade Manager that the post they are offering is suitable for a fast streamer and meets the training and development requirements of the A3 band. Each post should be evaluated against a statement of A2 competencies (see below) and assessed for the value it can add to the development of those competencies in the post-holder.

Preparing for A2

28. The banding structure varies between departments to a substantial degree. We asked each department for information on the numbers of staff they employ at each band and the answers were as follows:

	DCCS	DIS ⁸	DR	DF	PICT
A3	8	8	0	0	0
A2	76	48.4	24	15	23
A1	0	11.8	2	-	11
SCS1	39	5.7	5	0	5

29. As we described in our interim report, most A2 opportunities and above remain Clerk posts in the Department for Chamber and Committee Services. Most fast streamers entering the House Service, therefore, are likely to aspire to and reach positions as Clerks, unless there is extensive restructuring or re-grading of posts. The A3 band must, therefore, prepare fast streamers for Clerk posts, while at the same time offering wider exposure to the House. As fast streamers are recruited on the same terms, the postings given to each must not advantage or disadvantage them in gaining promotion. **We recommend that fast streamers normally begin their careers with two years in the Department for Chamber and Committee Services as Assistant Clerks, but that in the third or fourth year they should be offered a post in another department.**

30. The training and development requirements of these A3 candidates depend upon the competencies required for A2 posts. Some A2 roles across the House require very specialist skills or knowledge while others draw on a more generalist skill set. From our discussions and the information we have received, it appears that departments would value an

⁸ Full time equivalent.

expansion of access to A2s with knowledge of the House – whether recruited through the fast stream or via other routes – as well as access to A3s. If the Management Board wishes to see a truly House-wide fast stream develop, then it will need actively to encourage and enable individuals to seek roles in different departments, providing additional training where necessary. The fast streamer at A3, therefore, will need to acquire a set of skills which will be of use in more than one department, and be able to supplement those skills with ones specific to a department or post as required.

31. We asked each department what skills and training it could offer to a fast streamer. The answers were as follows, loosely grouped into areas:

DCCS ⁹	DIS	DR	DF	PICT
Dealing with Members.	Dealing with the public. Dealing with Members.	Handling a variety of customers in different circumstances.	Managing stakeholder expectations.	Customer awareness.
Some management training and personal development.		Range of general business management training. Understanding of wider corporate issues; consideration of cross-House implications of decisions.	Project management skills; managing teams or contractor performance.	Project management; performance and risk management; change management.
		Finance matters.	Financial and commercial skills.	
Workings of a Select Committee. Procedural training. Introduction to Parliament,	Introduction to the workings of Parliament. Parliamentary documentation, how to find it and use it.	Policy making. Written and oral communication.		

⁹ This information is compiled from the information we received on training and development of Assistant Clerks.

Government, Government finance and public law. Drafting.				
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32. The range of areas here demonstrates that certain core competencies are used in each department whereas others are the preserve of particular departments. All the skills listed seem to us relevant to the ongoing career of a member of staff in band A3 and above with management or strategic decision-making responsibilities. It is clear that each department has a valuable contribution to make to the development of an A3 entrant.

33. We recommend that a statement of core A2 competencies is drawn up which is applicable across the House and which includes understanding and experience of more than one department of the House. We recommend that a complementary statement of core formal training required by fast streamers and others at A3 is drawn up with the input of all departments to enable A3s to progress to A2.

34. We further recommend that each department draws up a statement of A2 skills which are specific to roles in that department, where possible. A complementary statement of the training available in those skills should be developed; that training should be accessible both by members of that department and staff across the House. An A3 who meets the A2 House-wide core competencies should be able to access training and development opportunities for specific departmental skills which would allow him or her to apply for appointment at A2 in another department.

35. As we have stated elsewhere, the structure of bands within the House and the distribution of posts at each across departments is likely to incentivise fast streamers to remain within the Department for Chamber and Committee Services. If the Management Board wishes fast stream entrants to become dispersed throughout the departments, fulfilling different roles, there will need to be a clear recognition that taking up such opportunities will be a prerequisite for promotion to A2, SCS1 and perhaps above.

36. Moreover, if departments are to open up posts to fast streamers who ultimately will head back to the Department for Chamber and Committee Services in order to seek promotion at each stage, then there will need to be a degree of reciprocity. That is to say, the Department for Chamber and Committee Services will need to offer opportunities to gain training and experience as a Clerk to members of staff at A2 band in other departments with the necessary core competencies. As secondees from outside the House have successfully performed Clerk roles at A2 and SCS1, there should be no problem in members of staff from other departments who have experience of the House performing such roles. Although outside our remit, we consider that there would be merit in producing a similar list of core competencies for SCS1 posts, as described above for A2 posts, for similar reasons.

Effects on incumbents

To assess the implications of the introduction of a House wide fast stream for existing arrangements for promotion to Band A2.

Current A3s and A2s

37. The responses we received to our terms of reference and questionnaires demonstrated that there is some anxiety that the introduction of new fast stream arrangements will disadvantage current post-holders. There is certainly a possibility that those who entered the House Service with a departmental perspective will be disadvantaged by a new requirement to have had experience in other departments in order to progress. However, as is suggested by the table above, core competencies for A2 may be gathered in different departments. Moreover, many post-holders will have had experience, if not of working in a different department, then of working with another department on a cross-House project or work-stream, but without explicit recognition of the skills so gained.

38. Drawing up a statement of A2 core competencies, as recommended above, should allow post holders to work out in which areas they have had experience, and in which they will need to seek other experience, whether inside or outside their parent department, should they wish to progress. Scoring against these competencies could be integrated into Forward Job Plans and Personal Development Plans in order to embed the idea of continuous progression and to demonstrate to post-holders those skills areas which will enable them to seek promotion.

39. One way in which current A3s and A2s could gain the new skills and experiences would be through participation in projects and programmes of work in other departments in addition to their core jobs. The submission we received from the Department of Facilities stated that fast stream candidates could be brought into the department to manage a specific project, which would be best managed if there was a corporate pool of fast streamers that could be deployed as and where required. In fact there is, in effect, a corporate pool of A3s and A2s who undertake projects in addition to their full time post as and when required. This pool is not shared between departments as fully as it could be. Departments could routinely circulate requests for assistance at A3 and A2 level, thus benefiting from spare capacity in other departments and also offering individuals more opportunities to gain skills in other departments. Opening up the additional appointments and projects in DCCS to other departments, for example, would certainly be helpful in providing individuals from other departments with the opportunity to gain the 'Clerk' skills which offer access to a wider range of promotion opportunities.

40. We recommend that departments draw up lists of all permanent, recurrent and occasional additional posts and projects which they fill from within their department, and assess which ones could be opened up to candidates from other departments, with or without additional training. We further recommend that all departments adopt the policy of circulating requests for short-term or additional work across the House,

making clear in each request how the opportunity would contribute to the acquisition of particular skills, competencies or experience.

Accelerated promotion

41. Our suggested changes need not, in themselves, necessitate any change to the system for accelerated promotion from A3. Changing the A2 competencies, however, and adding a requirement of exposure to another department, may in practice make it more difficult to be promoted as quickly to A2 as some A3s have been in recent years. The Management Board will need to consider how this is communicated to A3s and the effect it could have on pay negotiations, as it seems likely that an important motivation for pursuing accelerated promotion is the significant pay differential between A3 and A2 bands.

Staff in junior bands

42. Some departments raised the problem that opening up posts to candidates who had entered through the fast stream would be demoralising and counter-productive for junior managers in departments aspiring to a limited number of promotion opportunities. This is certainly a consideration for departments in deciding whether or not to bid for fast stream entrants as described above, and which posts to offer to fast streamers. Some of these concerns may be mitigated by the development of an internal fast stream, as described below, which would give staff in lower bands the opportunity to move more quickly and into a wider range of posts. Our recommendations on opening up training and development opportunities across departments could apply equally to staff at every band.

43. Finally, the opening up of posts across departments is likely in the long term to create more competition for those posts considered most desirable, for whatever reason. Posts in each department will not necessarily be reserved for its members of staff: more competent staff from other departments may compete for and win those posts. More competition is not necessarily a negative phenomenon in itself, but the expectations and needs of staff will need to be managed, and more attention paid to development than has perhaps hitherto been the case.

In-service fast stream

To make proposals for an internal route to application to the House wide fast stream.

44. In our interim report, we suggested that the introduction of an internal fast stream may need to be delayed until other changes have been made. However, on the basis of further discussions we have had and information we have received, and subject to the allocation of sufficient resource to this work, we consider that an internal fast stream could be introduced alongside the phased introduction of the House-wide fast stream as described above. The main benefits of so doing would be to make the most of the development of the talent and abilities of the junior staff in the House and to address the perceived and real barriers to promotion of junior staff.

45. In-service fast streams are well established in government departments and the House of Lords has recently established a similar scheme along the lines of the Civil Service model.¹⁰ An in-service fast stream gives candidates who are already employed by the department access to the A3 appointments made through the external fast stream scheme, and the development opportunities which that band offers, without having to meet the requirement of having a second class degree. Candidates may put themselves forward without any academic qualifications, subject to any sifting process the House may wish to impose. It would then be for the House to put forward candidates to Parity, which manages the external scheme, after which they would progress through both remaining stages of the external scheme: the invigilated e-tray exercise and the assessment centre.¹¹ In the Civil Service, successful candidates are then usually offered a fast stream appointment in the department in which they are already employed, although if no post is available, the Cabinet Office will try to find a transfer to another department.

46. There are a number of considerations to be taken into account in setting up an in-service fast stream in the House. First, the expectations and needs of those staff who might consider applying for the scheme. The scheme will need to be effectively communicated to all eligible to apply, and it would be sensible to canvass opinion on such a scheme before introducing it, to find out the views of the eligible staff and discover areas of misunderstanding or anxiety. Eligible staff will need to be encouraged to apply, and to be offered coaching and training as necessary to assist them in succeeding in the scheme. A scheme in which no-one succeeds is likely to worsen perceptions of unfairness rather than improving them. However, staff will also need to be aware that assessment for appointment is challenging, and that taking up an A3 post is a stretching commitment. Candidates under the House of Lords scheme are encouraged to try out the self-assessment provided on the Civil Service fast stream website to discover for themselves whether they are likely to succeed.

47. Staff at SEO level would need to be aware that appointment at A3 may entail a loss of salary in the short term. SEOs should be able to access development opportunities to prepare for promotion to A2 directly, and the internal fast stream may not be the best option for them. However, given the paucity of A2 appointment opportunities, and the level of competition for those posts, they may wish to consider applying for both paths. The development of an in-service fast stream should, as mentioned earlier, be in the context of wider efforts to promote the development and progression of all staff.

48. The Civil Service commits to offering A3 appointments (although not necessarily in the home department) to all those successful in the fast stream assessment. The House of Lords, in its first internal fast stream competition, also committed to appointing all those who were successful. It is difficult, without surveying the relevant staff, to form any opinion on the numbers of people likely to apply to and succeed in such a scheme, but given the small number of A3s taken on each year, any change in numbers would have implications

¹⁰ A useful Civil Service brochure on in-service fast streams is available here:
http://www.faststream.gov.uk/userfiles/pdf%20documents/civil%20Service%20Guides/in-service_applicants_2008.pdf

¹¹ See Appendix 2 for the fast stream process.

for the posts available. The Management Board will need to decide how to handle successful applicants, whether to limit the numbers of successful applicants appointed and whether imposing a quota on the number of appointments would be seen as acceptable by staff and unions, given the House's requirement to offer employment conditions 'broadly in line' with those of the Civil Service. The House could decide to take fewer external appointees, if sufficient numbers were successful in the in-service competition to fill the available posts.

49. Once appointed at A3, we see no reason to make further distinction between those appointed from the internal and external schemes in their management or placement in postings, and all should come within the corporately managed programme by 2010.

50. We recommend that the Fast Stream Grade Manager should survey staff in junior bands to find out opinions and anxieties on the creation of an in-service fast stream. We further recommend that, subject to the results of those investigations, the Fast Stream Grade Manager should implement an internal in-service fast stream which would be run for the first time in October 2009, in the context of wider efforts to implement a talent management model for the House. We recommend that arrangements should be made to offer training opportunities and coaching to those members of staff who wish to put themselves forward.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. We recommend that the Department of Resources begins work on creating a strategic planning tool showing all posts and bandings across each department and identifying the known and likely future needs for staff. (Paragraph 2)
2. We recommend that a Fast Stream Grade Manager is appointed at SCS1 or A2 to implement the new scheme. Some of the initial responsibilities of the Grade Manager are flagged up through this report. We recommend that in the first year of operation, this post should be at least half time. We recommend that the Fast Stream Grade Manager should network with Civil Service Fast Stream Grade Managers to remain abreast of relevant developments in thinking and practice and to stimulate new ideas for the fast stream in the House. (Paragraph 6)

Independent fast stream

3. We do not recommend the creation of a fast stream recruitment mechanism run by the House independently of the Civil Service fast stream. (Paragraph 7)

Changes to recruitment from the fast stream

4. We reiterate that recommendation: fast streamers should be recruited in 2009 to the DCCS, as Clerks, but with exposure to other departments during their period in the A3 band (see 'the first four years' below). We further recommend that, dependent on the experience in 2009, fast streamers in 2010 should be recruited to a centrally managed programme. (Paragraph 8)
5. We recommend that the new Fast Stream Grade Manager's initial tasks should include, by spring 2009, to give consideration to: (Paragraph 10)
 - the content of the two open days which are usually held for potential fast streamers. The Grade Manager should assess which departments should be involved and what messages should be given to graduates on the kinds of jobs they might perform at the House of Commons.
 - the contact usually made in March with those fast streamers who have chosen the House of Commons as a first or second choice. The information and guidance about fast stream posts given to those applicants will need to be adjusted, and other departments and directorates may wish to be involved.
 - the lunch held in April with careers advisers. The information and guidance about fast stream posts given to those careers advisers will need to be adjusted, and other departments and directorates may wish to be involved.
 - the membership of the final selection board, usually held in May/ June. The Management Board will need to consider whether two Commons Clerks should be on the board in 2009 as was the case in 2008. Other departments and directorates should presumably be represented and there will need to be an agreement between

departments on the qualities looked for and competencies assessed, which may also change. This will depend upon decisions being made on the jobs which fast streamers are likely to do.

Specialist fast streams

6. We recommend that the House does not recruit from the specialist fast streams in the next two years, but that if departments perceive an ongoing need and can demonstrate a career structure for such recruits, the Fast Stream Grade Manager should examine the case for such recruitment in the future. (Paragraph 12)

Management of fast streamers

7. We conclude that the balance lies in favour of developing central corporate management of fast streamers in 2010, with the close involvement of DCCS. However, we recommend that this case is re-examined in 2009. (Paragraph 14)
8. We recommend that the Fast Stream Grade Manager develops an implementation team and a plan for the corporate management of A3 fast streamers from 2010, with input from each department and close coordination with DCCS. (Paragraph 15)

House of Commons fast streamers

9. We recommend that from 2009 departments bid for A3 candidates normally in their third or fourth year in the House for posts they wish to fill. Departments must demonstrate to the Fast Stream Grade Manager that the post they are offering is suitable for a fast streamer and meets the training and development requirements of the A3 band. Each post should be evaluated against a statement of A2 competencies (see below) and assessed for the value it can add to the development of those competencies in the post-holder. (Paragraph 27)

Preparing for A2

10. We recommend that fast streamers normally begin their careers with two years in the Department for Chamber and Committee Services as Assistant Clerks, but that in the third or fourth year they should be offered a post in another department. (Paragraph 29)
11. We recommend that a statement of core A2 competencies is drawn up which is applicable across the House and which includes understanding and experience of more than one department of the House. We recommend that a complementary statement of core formal training required by fast streamers and others at A3 is drawn up with the input of all departments to enable A3s to progress to A2. (Paragraph 33)

12. We further recommend that each department draws up a statement of A2 skills which are specific to roles in that department, where possible. A complementary statement of the training available in those skills should be developed; that training should be accessible both by members of that department and staff across the House. An A3 who meets the A2 House-wide core competencies should be able to access training and development opportunities for specific departmental skills which would allow him or her to apply for appointment at A2 in another department. (Paragraph 34)

Current A3s and A2s

13. We recommend that departments draw up lists of all permanent, recurrent and occasional additional posts and projects which they fill from within their department, and assess which ones could be opened up to candidates from other departments, with or without additional training. We further recommend that all departments adopt the policy of circulating requests for short-term or additional work across the House, making clear in each request how the opportunity would contribute to the acquisition of particular skills, competencies or experience. (Paragraph 40)

In-service fast stream

14. We recommend that the Fast Stream Grade Manager should survey staff in junior bands to find out opinions and anxieties on the creation of an in-service fast stream. We further recommend that, subject to the results of those investigations, the Fast Stream Grade Manager should implement an internal in-service fast stream which would be run for the first time in October 2009, in the context of wider efforts to implement a talent management model for the House. We recommend that arrangements should be made to offer training opportunities and coaching to those members of staff who wish to put themselves forward. (Paragraph 50)

Appendix 1: Submissions received

We sent the following Questionnaire to departments. The response of each is below.

Questionnaire

The Management Board have endorsed the principle of introducing a unified, House-wide Fast Stream programme from 2009. A project team ([s.40]) has been tasked by Helen Irwin and Andrew Walker with developing proposals for such a programme. The project's Terms of Reference are:

- To develop proposals to implement the Management Board's decision to introduce a unified, House-wide fast stream from 2009, working in conjunction with the SMDP working group on this theme.
- To bring forward preliminary proposals before the summer recess for adapting the current arrangements for fast-stream recruitment of Assistant Clerks through the Fast Stream recruitment competition organised by the Cabinet Office.
- To identify by the summer recess types of work in each House Department suitable for placements for fast streamers.
- To liaise with PICT about the applicability (if any) of extending elements of the scheme to cover them and to liaise with the House of Lords about the implications (if any) for current bicameral arrangements for recruitment of fast streamers.
- To assess the implications of a House-wide fast stream for recruitment to other posts, notably to A3 posts as Library Clerks.
- To make proposals for an internal route to application to the House-wide fast stream. [note: the project team will be following up on this point separately, however, initial comments from Department are welcome]
- To assess the implications of the introduction of a House-wide fast stream for existing arrangements for promotion to Band A2.

You may also be aware of the SMDP group that is looking into a House-wide Fast Stream. While the time frame and remits of the SMDP group and Fast Stream project team differ to some extent, wherever possible the two projects will be sharing information and resources.

The project team would welcome written submissions on the proposal from DGs/DEOs by Friday 6 June. Where possible, please provide all relevant senior managers with the opportunity to contribute to the Department's response. Departments are requested to provide comments on all aspects of the proposal, however, some of the primary questions we would like responses to are provided below.

Questions

1. What existing posts does your Department have at bands:
 - a. A3;
 - b. A2; and
 - c. SCS1

Have you recruited at each of these bands in the past twelve months? If so, please provide details of post/band and whether recruitment was internal or external? Is this level of recruitment at these bands typical of a twelve month period?

2. The core competencies for entry to the existing Civil Service Fast Stream Development Programme run by the Cabinet Office (from which Fast Stream Clerks are currently recruited) are as follows:

- results oriented: able to juggle tasks, meet deadlines under pressure
- flexible thinking: imaginative and innovative
- decisive: leadership potential
- good at building relationships: team player
- able to make an impact: persuasive
- keen to develop: taking up opportunities to acquire new skills.

Additionally, common characteristics of existing entrants to the programme are that they will be generalists, recent graduates with at least a 2:2 in any degree discipline, and have long term career, development and management expectations.

Are there any existing jobs within the Department that could be filled by a Fast Stream candidate?

3. In addition to the 'generalist' Civil Service Fast Stream Development Programme, the Cabinet Office also runs a number of other Fast Stream recruitment options including:

Economists' Fast Stream Scheme: Government Economic Service: 2:1 degree or postgraduate degree in economics required; joint or mixed degrees are acceptable, provided the major element of the degree is economics.

Statisticians' Fast Stream Scheme: Government Statistical Service: open to graduates with a degree in a numerate discipline (eg psychology, mathematics, economics, geography, sciences, business studies, etc).

Technology in Business Fast Stream Scheme: Government IT profession: requires 2:1 in Business, Engineering, Librarianship, Mathematical Science, Physical Science, Technology or IT Management for Business.

Are there any existing jobs within your Department that could be filled by a Fast Stream candidate via these options?

In addition, there is a Finance Fast Stream programme in operation within the Civil Service. However, this is an internal programme only open to existing Fast-Streamers, those applying for the In-Service Competition, and existing trainee Finance Professionals who pass the Fast Stream assessment centre. For more information see:

http://thegfp.treasury.gov.uk/professional/faststream_44.html

Are there any existing jobs within your Department that could be filled by a Fast Stream candidate via this option?

4. What training would your Department be available to provide to new Fast Stream recruits? How could this contribute to their development of a long-term House-wide career?

5. What would the career prospects/promotion opportunities for a Fast Stream recruit at band A3 be within your Department?

Note, under the existing programme for Fast Stream Clerks, a recruit at A3 can reasonably expect to reach A2 within 4 years of service and SCS1 within ten years (although only the former is explicitly stated on the Fast Stream website).

6. In principle, would your Department wish to recruit staff via a new, unified, House-wide Fast Stream programme?

If so, how many per year?

Would you prefer short-term postings (eg 1 year) of fast-streamers to your Department or longer-term postings?

What would the cost be to your Department's staffing budget of recruitment via such a programme, assuming no additional funding?

Note, the current process of recruitment via the Fast Stream Development Programme results in one intake of recruits each year in October, with final Selection Board interviews occurring in May. A representative of the Department may be required to sit on the Board.

A feature of a new House-wide programme is likely to be that recruits spend their first four years working in a number of different departments with placements typically lasting between 1-2 years.

7. What would be the implications (if any) of a House-wide Fast Stream for existing recruitment, training and promotion practices? What do you think the effect of its introduction would be upon current staff?

8. Overall, how does your Department think such a programme could work in practice and what are the main implications (if any) for both your Department and the House?

Department of Chamber and Committee Services

1. Existing posts:

<i>Band</i>	<i>Number</i>
Band A3	8 (plus one on loan from DIS)
Band A2	76
SCS1	39

A3 - Four people were appointed to the House at this grade, as Assistant Clerks. All of them were appointment from the Fast stream Recruitment Campaign which is an external competition.

A2- Fifteen people were appointed to this grade. Five Assistant Clerks were promoted under the terms of the fast stream to Senior Clerk. Two further Senior Clerks were appointed via an internal recruitment campaign. Four Sub-Editors were appointed via an internal recruitment campaign. Two people joined us on secondment from the NAO, and one on exchange from the Scottish Parliament. A Sentencing Guidelines Advisor was also appointed following an external campaign.

SCS1 – 3 people were appointed at this grade. The Director of Parliamentary Broadcasting was appointed via a concurrent campaign, a Principal Assistant Editor was appointed via an internal campaign, and a Deputy Principal Clerk was also appointed by an internal campaign.

The level of recruitment at each grade is demand led and it is therefore difficult to predict whether the figures above are typical of a twelve month period for these grades, especially as the cohort is so low.

2. **Fast stream appointments:** Yes, Assistant Clerks are currently recruited as fast streamers.
3. **Specialist fast streams:** In principle some of the Scrutiny Unit posts could be filled from the Economist or Statistics schemes. However, at present such posts are filled either by secondment from civil service or elsewhere, or by loan from the Library.
4. **Training and development:** Extension of existing fast stream development activity.
5. **Career and promotion prospects:** As now, in principle.
6. **Numbers of fast streamers wanted:** Yes. 2-4 per year.

Mixture of both short and longer postings preferred.

Cost to departmental budget: as now.

7. **Implications:** Easier in DCCS than in other Departments. There will be some uncertainties to be resolved about its effect on the promotion prospects of existing A3s.
8. **Readiness:** Yes.

Helen Irwin

June 2008

Department of Information Services

1. **Existing posts:** The current grade mix in the department is shown in the following table. One of the SCS1 posts is a temporary post, due to end in December 2008. We currently have 8 staff at A3.

SCS3	1.0
SCS1	5.7
A1	11.8
A2/A3	56.4

The next table shows the competitions that have taken place in the last twelve months, by grade.

Grade	Internal	Concurrent
SCS1	1.0	
A1	1.0	2.0
A2	1.0	3.0
A2/A3	1.0	4.0

2. **Fast stream appointments:** I find this question a difficult question to answer. All our A3 posts are Library Clerks in the Research Service, most of whom are expected to have considerable specialist knowledge of their own subject areas. Nowadays, our practice is to recruit to these posts using an assessment centre. Our selection criteria allow us to appoint at A2 or A3, depending on the experience/competency of the candidates: most of our external competitions attract a high calibre of experienced candidates and therefore the reality is that a majority of appointments are made at A2, although a competition currently underway for two statisticians is aiming to recruit one of each given suitable candidates. (Some of our current A3s were appointed through an internal competition held just over twelve months ago to fill four new ‘generalist’ posts, i.e. candidates had to demonstrate competency but not depth of subject knowledge.) It is possible but not guaranteed that such A3 generalist posts might be available in future to fast stream candidates. It also needs to be borne in mind that we will still have an overriding need to continue to recruit to specialist posts.

There may be other posts within the department that are not currently graded at A3 that might be adapted to suit a fast stream candidate; but this would require some further consideration.

3. **Specialist fast streams:** We employ statisticians and economists at A3/A2, so in theory we could recruit to these via a Civil Service fast stream. However we do not have a career structure that we could offer these candidates within their disciplines.

4. **Training and development:** One of our main training offerings (which is relevant to all new staff) is our parliamentary training programme. This provides an introduction to the workings of Parliament, with a special focus on parliamentary documentation, how to find it and use it. We also encourage new staff to seek attachments to other parts of the department: many will enhance their parliamentary knowledge by working in the Commons Information Office answering questions from the public; or working in the Members’ Library, where they can gain first hand experience of dealing with Members.

5. **Career and promotion prospects:** Opportunities for advancement are limited. Most A3s can expect to progress to A2 Senior Library Clerk after four years’ service, or sooner via the accelerated promotion scheme. We have a handful of posts at A2 (e.g.

Head of the Information Office, Business Manager, Head of Outreach, Visitor Services Manager, Head of Indexing and Data Management, and Head of Library Resources) that can offer management experience but these fall vacant rarely and are filled by open competition. Some require specialist knowledge and the latter two posts have tended to be filled by candidates who have come up via the library practitioner route. Most of our senior manager posts are at A1 and require some specialisation: the head of a research section, for example, will have to carry a subject portfolio. These are also subject to competition. It is quite rare for a candidate to move straight from A2 to SCS1.

6. **Numbers of fast streamers wanted:** In principle, yes, we would be prepared to recruit via a House wide fast stream; in reality, however, I do not consider that we are yet in a position to do so.

The most suitable postings would be for a 'generalist' Library Clerk, working within a subject section but with a broad-based portfolio. I can envisage a scenario where we might be able to take one or more a year, on a sort of rolling programme, but it would have to be on the understanding (a) that their career progression lay outside this department; (b) there were some suitable vacancies to kick-start the process.

I am not clear from your questions whether you envisage that we would take on fast stream recruits as supernumeraries, or wait until we had a suitable vacancy. Obviously we are not starting with a clean slate and we already have people in posts that might be suitable.

The department would still have a need to continue to recruit to subject specialist A2/A3 posts via concurrent internal/external competition; therefore fast stream recruitment should not have a significant impact on our recruitment budget.

7. **Implications:** One of my main concerns is that fast stream recruits should not have access to any opportunities that would not be open to other candidates. Good general senior management posts within the department are scarce enough; it would be inexcusable to restrict these to fast stream candidates.

Also, as most of the more senior posts are in DCCS, would DCCS be giving procedural training to the 'new' fast stream? I would be concerned that if that is the case, such posts and appropriate training should be available to others, such as the A3s that we recruit directly, who can demonstrate the right competency.

8. **State of readiness:** I am not convinced that we have the grading structure across the House to support an intensive fast-stream programme. I've already stated that if this department were to take on fast-stream recruits their career progression would have to be outside the department, as we have so little to offer them that does not require specialist knowledge or experience; or that would not give them an unfair advantage

over other candidates. Are there sufficient A2/SCS posts in the House service that could offer a realistic career structure?

I (and other directors in DIS) are concerned that fast stream recruitment is not in itself going to provide us with the leaders and managers of the future; and wonder whether there is some more radical approach that might open up greater opportunity.

In my view officer status creates an unnecessary obstacle, preventing some bright graduates from considering alternative career opportunities. Fundamentally, our thinking involves abolishing A3 as a grade, and having a system of progression that might open up more junior management positions for potential 'fast stream' or graduate trainees early in their careers. Progression would be from B2 (which is paid the same, more or less as A3), to B1 (which is more or less in between A3 and A2), and A2, with agreed criteria for moving from one band to the next. Moving between grades need not necessarily be based on competition for specific posts. There might be two streams - fast and 'other'; and it might be that 'fast' skips one of the stages, or has a shorter spell at one or more of them, say.

Department of Resources

The answers specifically provided by the DEO are marked thus; comments have also been submitted by the Business Management Directorate (BMD) and the Financial Management Directorate (FMD).

Questions

1. Existing posts:

	Dept Resources DEO	Financial Mgt Directorate	Business Mgt Directorate
A3	0	0 (0)*	0
A2	16	4 (3)	4
A1	1	1 (0)	
SCS1	3	1 (0)	1

New recruits shown in brackets (all external)

3 x A2 Corporate Accountant, Systems Accountant, Head of Financial Planning and budgeting. 1 x A1 head of OHWS. All posts advertised concurrently.

This was not a typical 12 months, the department experienced higher than usual level of turnover at pay band A.

2. **Fast stream appointments:** Suggest: Asst to DGR (A2); Asst to Director of Operations/Head of Policy; HR projects (DEO).

Key criteria would be willingness to study accountancy (FMD)

3. **Specialist fast streams:** Probably not (DEO).

4. **Training and development:** Generalist management, people skills, policy making, written and oral communication, (e.g. drafting and presenting papers to APMA, Administration Committee), understanding of wider corporate issues, Finance matters, having to consider wider implications of making decisions, e.g. how HR policy impacts on the different departments, handling a variety of customers in different circumstances. (DEO)

Range of general business management training (BMD)

5. **Career and promotion prospects:** Very limited (DEO)

6. **Numbers of fast streamers wanted:** Yes – 2 per year. Need to consider timings to minimise the impact when staff move on. (DEO)

Possibly in 12 months time (FMD)

Suggest no less than 2 years and no more than 3 years (DEO)

Short term posts – no – too short to be useful to business or the development of their financial skills.

Cost implications:

Low impact (BMD)

Nil – already train accountancy trainees (FMD)

7. **Implications:** Could restrict promotion opportunities. Would need to ensure that's training was well organised and spend was reasonable compared to non fast streamers. Must ensure that training plan and succession planning are clearly identified and monitored.

Would need to ensure that posts identified are suitable for fast streamers and provide enough opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and effective people management.

Existing staff may benefit from fast streamers' way of working, thought process etc. (DEO)

Need to consider both internal and external candidates.

8. **State of readiness:** Would need to ensure that sufficient senior roles are available for non fast streamers who have required skills, knowledge etc. The House needs to ensure it has an effective succession planning policy in place. Fast streamers should be encouraged to apply for external secondments in order to experience a different environment and ways of working, etc. (DEO)

There are probably suitable posts for fast stream staff in Operations Directorate; probably for postings of 18 months and no more than 2 or perhaps 3 at any one time. I had an A3 working for me last year for about 3 months, which worked really well for both parties but was too short, but any longer would have disadvantaged the person returning to their home department. Generally, I see advantage in the fast stream intake coming into the House via the Clerks (and perhaps the Library) given the grade composition, but joining the DR early enough in their careers to have the benefit of seeing the move as a positive one in terms of learning new skills and seeing the House from another perspective. (Dir Ops)

Department of Facilities

1. Existing posts:

- a. A3; None
- b. A2; and Staff in post:

FACCUS	SAAO	Permanent Full-time	CBBA	Asst Serjeant at Arms	A2
FACCAT	REF	Permanent Full-time	GED	Food & Bev Ops Manager	A2
FACEST	FURNISH	Permanent Full-time	CED	Furnishing Manager	A2
FACCAT	REF	Permanent Full-time	GED	Operations Manager	A2
FACEST	DIREST	Permanent Full-time	CDA	Head of Secretariat	A2
FACEST	FSU	Permanent	CDE	Fire Safety	A2

		Full-time		Mgr	
FACEST	WMDU	Temporary Full-time	CEEA	Service Manager	A2
FACEST	PSU	Permanent Full-time	CDB	Project Sponsor	A2
FACEST	WMDU	Permanent Full-time	CEEE	Maintenance Mgr. (H1)	A2
FACEST	QSU	Permanent Full-time	CEA	Quantity Surveyor	A2
FACFIN	FU	Permanent Full-time	CABA	Procurement Manager	A2
FACEST	PSU	Permanent Full-time	CDA	Senior Clerk	A2
FACEO	SAAO	Permanent Full-time	CAA	Exec Officer to SAA	A2
FACHR	REF	Permanent Full-time	GEC	HR & Development Mgr	A2
FACFIN	FU	Permanent Full-time	CABA	Contracts Performance Manager	A2

c. SCS1 None

Information on recruitment at these bands is held centrally by HRM&D in the Department of Resources

2. **Fast stream appointments:** The core competency requirements for Fast Stream entrants is not dissimilar to the competency requirements for an effective catering manager, except that catering managers must additionally have appropriate training and/or experience within their professional discipline. Without either formal training in the hospitality industry or experience of working within the industry, an applicant would normally need to work at a relatively junior grade in order to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. However, the grading of Fast Stream entrants is such that they would be joining the Catering & Retail Service at senior management level,

responsible through their subordinate managers for teams of up to 100 staff. It is therefore unlikely that they would be able to fill any existing job at this level of responsibility within the CRS organisation.

3. **Specialist fast streams:** No, for reasons stated in answer to Q2, although business studies graduates (Statisticians Fast Stream) may have more potential to rapidly learn our business in CRS than graduates in other disciplines.

Following the imminent re-organisation of the Dept of Facilities management roles, there will be no Finance posts within CRS. However, there may be opportunities for a Finance Fast Stream candidate to work within the Facilities Finance Unit, although I suspect seniority of grading will again be an issue.

There may be periodic opportunity to bring in a Fast Stream candidate in order to manage a specific project. As well as learning project management skills, this could, depending on the specific project, give them the opportunity to learn commercial skills, improve financial skills, gain experience of managing teams or contractor performance, provide practical experience of managing stakeholder expectations, etc.

This would probably be best managed if there was a corporate pool of fast streamers that could be deployed as and where required to undertake developmental projects or reviews.

4. **Career and promotion prospects:** Limited within CRS, but possibly as part of a structured training as described in response to Q3 above.

5. **Number of fast streamers wanted:** Specifically for CRS: No

6. **Implications:** I think the issue of Fast Stream entrants would need to be handled very carefully, as there are only a few posts available at this level or above in many parts of the House Service. The extension of the Fast Stream entry system could therefore be very demotivating to existing Managers, who would see even fewer opportunities available for their own personal development.

7. **State of readiness:** I think this is covered in my answers above.

Email from John Borley

Attached is your questionnaire. The comment boxes are all from Sue Harrison, Director of Catering, and I wouldn't demur from anything that she says regarding her area. Looking more widely across Facilities, though, Mel Barlex reckons it could be extremely useful to have a fast streamer in his area. Most of his posts, like Sue's, require specific professional competences, but there is doubtless room for a generalist. [s.40] role might be

a good one. John is, formally, Secretary to the Parliamentary Estates Board, but I see him as something of a Super Executive Officer to Mel.

Our newly established Director of Business Management, [s.40] (A1) needs an assistant, which is a post I shall try to find headroom for in my complement. A fast streamer could act as my own Exec Officer.

Parliamentary ICT

1. Existing posts:

- a. A3; None
- b. A2; 23 * A2. Note: also 11 * A1
- c. SCS1 5 (including 1 * SCS1A post)

Recruitment Campaigns for Band A and SCS posts: 1 April 2007- 31 March 2008

Job Title	Pay Band	Type
Applications Support Manager	A1	Internal
Managing Editor, Parliamentary Website	A1	Internal
Technical Services Manager	A1	Internal
Technical Design Manager	A1	Internal
Business Relationship Manager	A1	Internal
Application Support Team Manager	A2	Internal
Application Support	A2	External/
Director of Programmes and Project Management	SCS1	Internal
Director of Technology	SCS1	Internal
Team Manager		Concurrent

Probably higher than typical, reflecting early development of PICT as an organisation.

2. **Fast stream appointments:** Yes. On the assumption that Band A3 as entry to fast stream equates approximately to B1, the most appropriate for generalists would probably be Head of Secretariat or Business Analyst (though the latter would require specific training).

If there is an internal route to the fast stream, other roles could be available if the candidates had suitable skills and experience from the previous career in Parliament – e.g. change manager, project manager, customer services manager. These would not be suitable for new generalist graduate entrants without previous work experience.

3. **Specialist fast streams:** Yes: Performance Manager; Business Analyst; Project Manager – mainly from the Technologh in Business stream

4. **Training and development:** Some training could be offered in-House and tailored to this scheme – particularly in performance and risk management, customer awareness and change management. We would also expect to support candidates in external training of the kind we already provide to PICT staff – e.g. project management.

5. **Career and promotion prospects:** PICT has two fundamentally different types of role at A2: those which definitely require particular technical or professional skills (technical architects, finance, HR etc) and those which are essentially management roles requiring generic skills in managing people, budgets, performance, objectives, risk etc, but with a good awareness of the technical context. Roles in the first category are less suited to a fast stream approach, but roles in the second category, provided that candidates have the necessary technical awareness, are potentially available to good fast stream candidates who have spent a part of their A3 apprenticeship in PICT. These might include, for example, senior project managers and business analysts, managers of services such as telecoms; Members Computing Officers.

6. **Numbers of fast streamers wanted:** Yes – probably one most years, occasionally two. 2 year postings would be more suitable.

On the assumption that A3 is approximately equivalent to B1 and that fast-stream trainees are in roles that would otherwise be covered by substantive B1 staff, the cost should be neutral.

7. **Implications:** If there were one or two fast-stream A3s in PICT at any given time covering B1 roles, including potentially those in projects, there would be a marginal reduction in promotion opportunities for other PICT staff, but this would be unlikely to have a major impact; and would be outweighed by the medium term benefits if some of

those recruited through this scheme were eventually to return to PICT at more senior levels with a rounded management training and awareness of Parliament.

8. **State of readiness:** See above. The benefit for PICT would be relatively small if it were limited to participating in the A3 (“apprenticeship”) phase, though having staff in other parts of Parliament with deeper awareness of PICT and ICT issues would be a benefit. The greater benefit for PICT would be in future years if there were greater mobility of able rounded managers, equipped to work effectively at A2 and above in PICT’s environment, but also bringing experience from other areas.

FDA

The FDA supports the principle of a House-wide fast stream but has concerns about how the scheme will operate in practice. There is a general feeling that it would have been preferable to make a decision over whether to introduce this scheme after an assessment of its feasibility had been carried out. Our members have particular concerns about the impact such a scheme might have on the development and promotion prospects of existing A2s.

Specific issues/questions raised by members include:

- Any scheme introduced must not affect the promotion prospects of existing A3/A2 staff – the same placement/training opportunities must be available to all staff and not just those recruited to a “unified fast-stream”. The FDA will resist any suggestion of a two-tier structure in development/promotion opportunities.
- Promotion must be based on an open and fair competition – there must be no preference to people recruited through the “unified fast-stream”.
- How many additional A3 staff will be recruited? There is already a high number of A2 staff in the House, far more than can reasonably be expected to reach A1 or higher – is it sensible to increase the number of staff at this grade as it may simply limit promotion prospects even further?
- The scheme could raise expectations amongst staff recruited to it which ultimately cannot be met. The vast majority of SCS posts are in DCCS – although there have been some limited moves of late to open up recruitment to these posts it remains the case that only those who have spent their career as a Clerk have ever been promoted to an SCS Clerk post. It is difficult to see how a House-wide fast stream will change this. A more obvious and less costly way of signifying a unified House service would be for the Management Board to commit to applying the House recruitment policy and standards to all vacant posts irrespective of grade/department.
- Are there enough posts across the House to justify a House-wide fast stream? Will the new recruits be in addition to the existing complement of staff? Most of the A Band jobs across the House require specialist skills – jobs created specifically to support

wider circulation could lack real development opportunities. Key to the scheme's success will be the challenge of identifying real A3 jobs as opposed to simply bringing new people in, circulating them around the departments and calling it a unified fast stream scheme.

- Potential career paths should be mapped out for A band staff – these staff should be aware of the sort of moves that may be needed to reach A1/SCS levels.
- The Library's current assessment process for recruitment to Library Clerk posts is highly successful. The Library frequently recruits people with extensive work experience for its specialist posts – there is no desire or business need to limit recruitment to these posts to fast stream graduates.
- The information produced by the project team indicates that these fast stream recruits will perform 1-2 year placements in departments. In certain departments, e.g. the Library, it can take a non-specialist 2 years to become proficient – what benefit is there to the Library's business in investing in a member of staff who will simply move on at the end of the placement?
- There is a possibility of such a scheme having a negative impact on the prospects of staff below Band A. Many existing staff in Bands B and below have the attributes of fast-streamers - it would be unfair to overlook them.
- The House should develop an induction programme that involves new staff in working in other departments.
- The House has an internal transfer/secondment scheme which has, to date, had only a limited impact on increasing mobility across the House and between departments. It might be useful to consider why this scheme is not used more widely before embarking on a new scheme with many of the same features.
- DCCS is still seeking secondments in from the civil service instead of encouraging staff from other departments to apply for temporary placements – this policy appears to contradict the stated desire to improve circulation of staff between departments. There are also limited opportunities for staff to take up secondments in the civil service to improve their career prospects.

[s.40]

FDA Branch Chair

May 2008

Prospect Union

1. We welcome the suggestion for a House wide faststream, providing this does not reduce the opportunities for career development for those staff who have entered the service by other routes.

2. We have supported the measures recently put in place which facilitated internal recruitment to Library Clerk posts, where candidates can be appointed at either A3 or A2 for specific posts. We would not wish to see a House wide scheme remove this opportunity for flexible appointment.

3. We have pressed for a number of years for an internal route for application to the fast stream. It remains our wish to see this provided.

Appendix 2: Civil Service fast stream process

This description of the fast stream recruitment process is extracted from <http://www.faststream.gov.uk/index.asp?txtNavID=97> .

1. REGISTRATION

2. SELECTION OF FAST STREAM SCHEMES Once you have selected the Fast Stream scheme/s you wish to apply for, you will have a specific number of days to complete each stage described below.

3. ONLINE SELF-ASSESSMENT TESTS (7 days)

These tests have been designed to help you decide whether you wish to pursue a Fast Stream application.

- Verbal and Numerical Reasoning

4. ONLINE PRACTICE TESTS (7 days)

These practice tests will give you an opportunity to try out the type of tests that you'll have to pass to move on to Stage 5 of the application process.

5. ON-LINE TESTS (7 days)

- Verbal Reasoning
- Numerical Reasoning
- Competency Questionnaire

6. e-APPLICATION FORM (7 days)

7. SUPERVISED E-TRAY EXERCISE (½ day at a regional centre)*

- Numerical and Verbal Reasoning re-test
- E-Tray Exercise

8. ONE-DAY ASSESSMENT CENTRE (London)*

9. FINAL SELECTION BOARD*

For some of the Graduate Fast Stream options, there is a Final Selection Board

* Please be aware that your invitation to these stages of the selection process depends on passing the preceding stage.

Annex: Report of the SMDP Action Group

Not being constrained by the need to deliver an interim scheme within the deadline, the action group has been able to take a broader perspective than the working group on a number of the issues. The Board might wish to consider responding directly to the Group on its proposals.

Action and decisions

This annex briefly reports the conclusions of the Action Group and suggests a number of principles and practical proposals that the Board may wish to adopt in planning both graduate recruitment and the wider development of senior staff in the House Service.

Background

The group consisted of [s.40]. The conclusions are based on a review of the existing Faststream literature plus interviews with a number of stakeholders and external organisations including the Cabinet Office, DWP, the Bank of England, Marks and Spencers, the House of Lords and the TUS. While the group's work concentrated on Band A and the SCS, the principal conclusions apply to career management throughout the organisation.

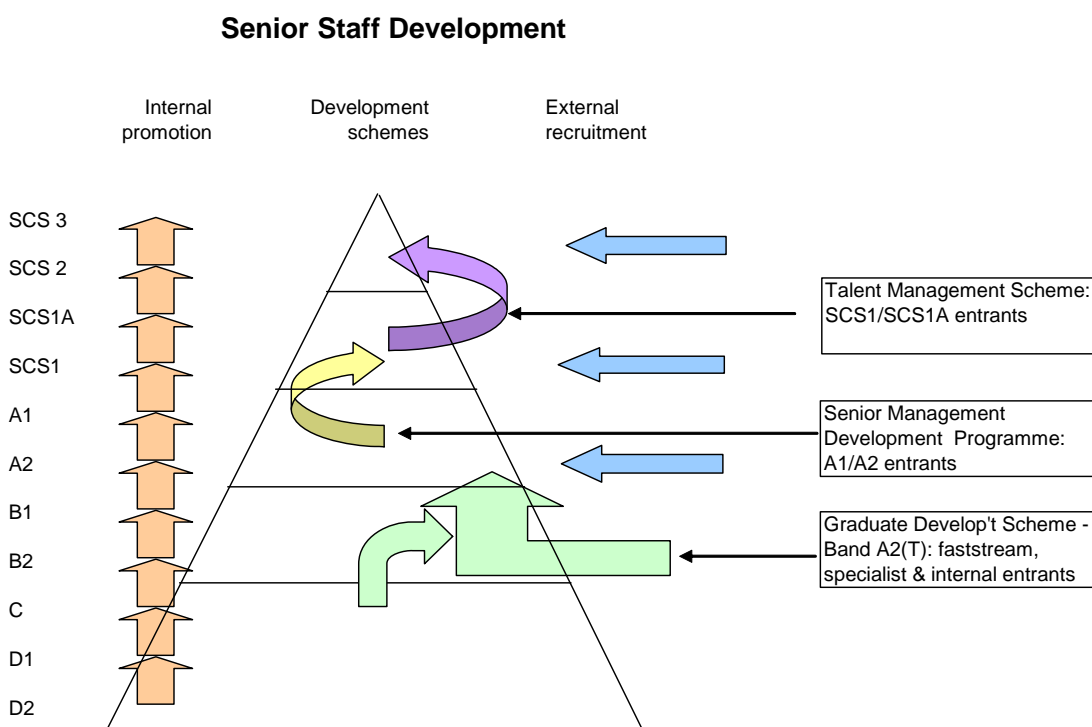
Principal conclusions

The group came to four main conclusions:

- While in recent years much progress has been made in improving staff development, the various schemes (eg Managing for Excellence, the SMDP) should be co-ordinated parts of a single strategy for delivering the people resources that the House Service requires. In terms of senior staff that vision might be: "The House will manage the recruitment and careers of its senior staff so that positions in band A and the Senior Commons Service are (or could be) filled by staff with the necessary skills and attributes, and that each individual is able to make the best contribution that they can to the House Service."
- While it is recognised that there will often be reasons to invite external applications for top posts, good workforce planning and risk management would suggest that there should always be suitable internal applicants.
- More active career management, including the identification of talent, should be introduced at all levels. While this will involve some investment (eg in the appointment of grade managers), it should result in better focused spending on staff development and a reduced risk of unsatisfactory appointments.
- Delivering a consistent and co-ordinated approach to developing staff is a key element in making a unified service a reality.

Developing Senior Staff

The Group suggests that there should be three specific schemes for preparing staff to fill jobs at Band A, SCS1 & 1A and SCS2 & above respectively. These are illustrated in the following diagram and discussed in more detail below. In each case this would be part of a balanced approach that would also include direct external recruitment to the substantive grade and internal recruitment outwith the schemes.



We envisage pools of talent at different levels with the three development schemes providing (i) a means of moving through the 'gateways' between pools, and (ii) clarity about the requirements of posts at the higher level and the skills, knowledge, capacity and aptitude that must be demonstrated in order to move from one pool to another. The competences required for different management roles need to be analysed so that individuals can see which skills they need in order to perform different tasks. Only then can development plans be devised to help people obtain the skills they need for the positions they aspire to reach.

The reward system should be reviewed to ensure that people with strong specialist skills are rewarded for these skills and not necessarily encouraged to become managers of people in order to receive promotion.

Band A

Band A (A1, A2, A3) represents the main pool of senior staff across the House Service – some 211fte at the end May (of which 33 are in PICT). At present the Faststream entry to the House Service (as in the Civil Service) is more of a recruitment tool than a development scheme. The number of staff recruited through the Faststream is very small and there is no

internal entry. A broader-based scheme with internal entry would contribute to meeting the House Service's diversity objectives.

The Civil Service Faststream competition is an effective and efficient way of recruiting staff of the right calibre, and it should be retained as part of the broader scheme. The group proposes a graduate development programme as an entry point to Band A. There would be three types of entrant to the scheme (to be designated Band A2(T)): Civil Service Faststream applicants: other, often specialist, entrants previously recruited at A3 (eg Library researchers): and internal entrants – the latter selected partly on an assessment by line managers of aptitude and suitability and partly on application. Essential features of the scheme would be:

- Active management of trainees to ensure that they receive a minimum package of training and a varied range of postings. They should be regularly assessed to ensure they are progressing as expected.
- A grade manager to assist trainees in identifying the right postings to build up a portfolio of skills and competences. We should recognise that some talented staff may wish to specialise (eg finance, HR, Library research) and that this may happen at different stages of their career.
- Real jobs for trainees – not a series of attachments with no responsibilities. This should be across all departments, not just the traditional roles in DCCS and DIS. There should be a process for managers across the House Service to bid for the services of a trainee in which managers would need to justify why they needed a trainee, why the post is suitable and what it would offer the trainee.
- Clear criteria for promotion to A2 with regular assessments against competences. Promotion from A2(T) to A2 will be on a competence not a vacancy basis. Promotion will still be by merit, but demonstrating competence in the key attributes with supporting work experience will be beneficial to individual prospects. The current arrangements for accelerated promotion, and automatic promotion to A2, should end. Those failing to demonstrate the necessary skills within a set period (five years?) should be taken off the scheme.
- Other elements of the wider system should ensure that choices of post at A2 are not distorted by issues of departmental structure and future promotion opportunities, by ensuring that postings in all departments are valued when setting criteria for promotion to higher pay bands.
- It is important to make talented staff feel valued in the process. This can be achieved by ensuring they have good quality line managers, who bring them into direct contact with senior staff at regular intervals, engage them in live projects that make a real difference and for which trainees are answerable for the outcome.

SCS1 & 1A

A House-wide scheme should be introduced to prepare those in Bands A1 and A2 for promotion to the SCS - this would be the successor of the Senior Management Development Programme. This programme should be subject to competitive selection, focusing on the capability and aptitude to reach the top jobs in the House Service, for example by designing an assessment process that selects those with strong managerial and interpersonal skills, as well as capability for strategic thinking, leadership and adaptability. People should not expect to be eligible for the programme until they have a number of years' experience in Band A. An objective of the programme should be to enable staff to be fitted for a range of posts at SCS1, not just a single career path.

- The grade manager should offer career reviews and advice to all staff on a rolling basis, mapping out a coherent development plan. This should, where appropriate, include advice on external career options.
- Line managers should also have a formal role in identifying skills gaps and bringing on talent so that their reportees are able to develop their full potential. Line managers should be able to get support in this work from the grade manager.
- The programme might include placements and secondments to roles in different organisations to broaden experience and, in particular, to help develop leadership skills.

SCS2 & above

In line with Tebbit Recommendation 29, a scheme should be introduced to identify and develop internal talent on a House-wide basis. This should cover those in SCS1 and SCS1A with the aim of preparing them for posts at SCS2 and SCS3, and would have highly competitive entry. The overall objective should be that, when a Board member retires, there are at least two internal candidates who would be able to compete for the role, whether the post is filled by internal only, or concurrent internal/external recruitment. Features of the scheme would be:

- There should be Board level input into identification of talent in the top 3% of the organisation.
- Dedicated development assistance at that level, including personal coaching, to ensure that any competence gaps are closed and to prepare candidates for the top jobs.