



**Future
Governance
Forum**

100 FOUR 100

Hours

Weeks

Days

How a new government can set itself up for success

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Introduction

On 4th July we are likely to see the first conservative-to-progressive transition of power since 1997. An incoming Labour government will need to develop delivery plans for its policy programme at pace and under pressure, with a team making the transition from opposition into government overnight after a gruelling six week campaign.

That would be challenging at the best of times, but this prospective Labour government will inherit public services on their knees, low economic and productivity growth, tight fiscal constraints and significant geopolitical instability.

A range of trends - technological, environmental and demographic - could further destabilise that picture. Yet overcoming those challenges also offers opportunities. The digital transformation of public services could secure them for the future. Leading the world in green industries could unlock economic growth.

Labour has rightly asserted that achieving progressive change in this context requires a fundamental rethink of how Britain is governed. Keir Starmer and his team speak of 'a decade of national renewal', which means as of 5th July they will need to be thinking simultaneously about how to deliver the change they promised at this election and how to build on that track record in time for the next one - just at the moment that their bandwidth for doing so is dramatically narrowed by the pressures of running the country.

Setting up for success

It is crucial that the next government uses its first 100 days as effectively - and boldly - as possible. Doing too much too quickly is certainly a risk, but so is doing too little too late. Getting this right can be the difference between a successful first term and having to spend the first years of an administration playing catch-up because a surfeit of caution meant opportunities were missed early on when political capital was at its highest. At the same time, it must demonstrate a commitment to good governance from the outset, while buying sufficient time to compensate for the unusually truncated access talks.

This briefing note sets out our recommendations for what a new government can do in that first 100 day period to maximise its prospects of success. In keeping with our mission, our focus here is on how a new administration can rewire our ageing systems of government to overcome the challenges of mid 21st century life.

We have drawn on our published body of work since launching in November last year. For our *Into Power* series, we spoke to leading figures in the UK Conservatives¹, US Democrats and Australian Labor² to establish lessons that an incoming government could learn from their transitions of 2010, 2020 and 2022 respectively. Our flagship *Mission Critical* report, produced in partnership with Professor Mariana Mazzucato and the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP), drew on the recent experiences of the London Borough of Camden, looked at how a new administration could turn ambition into action and make ‘mission-driven government’ a reality³. And our *Rebuilding the Nation* workstream has begun to identify the financial levers a government could pull to unlock vital private investment in an era of highly constrained public finances⁴.

We have supplemented this work with a number of private interviews with recent and serving senior officials and other policymakers.

Across this research, alongside the long-term reforms needed to re-establish good, progressive government, we have identified immediate actions a new government could take so that it can hit the ground running once it assumes office. We have taken as our timeframe Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famed first 100 days⁵, though acknowledging that not all of those days are equal we have grouped our advice into three distinct timeframes: the first 100 hours, the first four weeks and the first 100 days.

We aim to provide a guide for politicians, advisers and other policymakers to help them reach their hundredth day in office having laid the foundations for national renewal.

¹ Phil Tinline, The Future Governance Forum, [Into Power 02: The Conservative Party’s 2010 transition from opposition to government](#), April 2024.

² Tom Collinge and Adam Terry, The Future Governance Forum, [Into Power 01: Lessons from Australia and the United States](#), February 2024.

³ Mariana Mazzucato (with Sarah Doyle, Nick Kimber, Dan Wainwright and Grace Wyld), The Future Governance Forum and the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, [Mission Critical 01: Statecraft for the 21st Century](#), May 2024.

⁴ Andrew Dyson and JP Spencer, The Future Governance Forum, [Rebuilding the Nation 01: Progressive principles for effective investment](#) and [Rebuilding the Nation 02: Pension reform that delivers for savers and the economy](#), November 2023.

⁵ Elaine Kamarck, Brookings Institute, [‘The first 100 days: when did we start caring about them and why do they matter?’](#), April 2021.

First 100 hours

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair described the ‘journey of being in government’ as being one where ‘you start at your most popular and least capable, and you end at your most capable and least popular’⁶. Blair always regretted that he didn’t achieve more in his first term - especially in public sector reform. How might a new government in 2024 learn from that experience, maximising its moment of peak political capital?

Part of the answer is to hit the ground running with bold, decisive action in the first few days in office. The Australian Labor team preparing Antony Albanese for government in 2022 described this as ‘the high-risk time’. Getting them right ‘can create momentum and frame a new administration; conversely, a tentative and shambling government will spend months recovering from a rocky first week...’⁷

This isn’t just about technocratic delivery; it’s a highly political moment. Well-chosen early actions can reap dividends in four or five years’ time, when a first-term government seeks re-election. The first 100 hours aren’t just when a new government embarks on the task of rebuilding Britain; they are the very first steps of the next election campaign.

Defining and communicating purpose

The new government must articulate its purpose in clear and unambiguous terms. When power last changed hands in the UK in 2010, David Cameron’s Conservatives had invested considerable time in detailed implementation planning, but had still not made the fundamental strategic call as to whether deficit reduction or the promotion of ‘the Big Society’ was their overriding aim. As one of the authors puts it in *Into Power 02*, the new administration ‘resembled an impressively-designed house, built on a fault line’⁸.

An incoming government should be crystal clear on its reason for obtaining power, and not assume that the civil service has automatically absorbed and understood that from the election campaign. As former Deputy Cabinet Secretary Helen Macnamara puts it, ‘99% of people who are not in the room [with ministers] have to effectively second-guess what the bosses might want. Absent any other direction the

⁶ [Tony Blair in conversation with John Rentoul](#), the Mile End Institute, 28 October 2013, 2.

⁷ Collinge and Terry, *Into Power 01*, 25.

⁸ Tinline, *Into Power 02*, 9.

risk is that much of the public sector will just trundle on doing what they were before'⁹. New ministers should *over-articulate* the change they want to achieve.

Labour should demonstrate that the priority of the new government is delivery of its five missions. Establishing this clarity of purpose is essential, particularly because this involves a radical change in how government works.

The secret to mission-driven government's success is 'leading with purpose, governing in partnership'¹⁰. Should Labour win on 5th July, Labour Leader Keir Starmer should signal early on that a new mode of working is expected across all layers of government. The Prime Minister and Chancellor need to send immediate signals of their personal commitment both to the government's overall purpose and to how they want the civil service to deliver it. All this has to be done early, before the Prime Minister's time and attention is pulled elsewhere, whether by conflict in the Middle East, or potential bankruptcies of universities, utilities providers or councils¹¹.

All this requires a clear articulation of *how* the missions approach is different:

- It's about the whole country, not just Whitehall. This can be signalled through calls for evidence, mission boards etc. (See below.)
- The purpose of this is not process reform, it is to improve working people's lives in specific, tangible ways, as promised at the election.
- This approach requires a move to cross-departmental collaboration: joint priorities will need to be set and worked to by multiple departments.
- Beyond that, it involves a shift to a much more open, inclusive way of governing.

However, the most effective way to signal the new approach is not through what the new government says, but through what it does.

Establishing power structures

The new government should organise itself according to a clear theory of power. A new administration will inherit a system in which power is concentrated and distributed according to the choices and character of its predecessor. This will be at odds with how the new government conceives of power. To ensure the new

⁹ Helen MacNamara, FGF blog, '[Six reasons the civil service should embrace mission-driven government](#)', 6 June 2024.

¹⁰ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 6.

¹¹ Financial Times, '[Labour faces series of crises if elected, internal dossier warns](#)', 21 May 2024.

government's ambitions are understood and embedded throughout the machinery of the state, and that machinery can set to work delivering on them straight away, it must establish where power sits centrally, where parts of the system will be newly empowered and where existing concentrations of power will be broken up.

A critical first step will be empowering key players at the very centre who will be responsible - and accountable - for managing the wider system to deliver.

Fundamental to this is establishing the roles and responsibilities of, and interactions between, ministers. An overtly mission-driven government should appoint a single member of a core group of the Cabinet whose role is to ensure political coherence across the missions as the new administration gets underway¹². Rewiring the system, setting up mission architecture, and manifesto management is a full-time job, so this should be the sole role of this senior minister for a full parliament. They will need the help of the most senior civil service leaders who understand that this involves radical rethinking, not just creating cross-government task forces. If mission-driven government is relegated to a second-tier 'nice to have', disconnected from sophisticated policy making and hard financial decision taking, it will have minimal traction.

At the same time, for mission-driven government to succeed, establishing authority at the centre must not mean hoarding power there: it should be a means of providing clarity of purpose and accountability that in turn empowers a much wider range of actors throughout and beyond government to deliver.

It's not going to be enough to just super-charge joint working between departments: to deliver the change the missions promise there will need to be a different approach to accountability and decision making. Ministers and officials should be expected to look beyond - and physically get out of - central London to work in deep and meaningful partnership with partners across civil society, business and trade unions in pursuit of ambitious missions. To demonstrate the new participatory, mission-driven approach, leaders from local authorities and from industry could be invited to cabinet.

Relationships and ways of working

An opposition party coming into power must adjust to a new working environment, and proactively preserve those elements of its existing set-up which function well. In opposition, personal relationships will have been forged within an intense, small and very close team - a dynamic only exacerbated by the 24/7 nature of the

¹² Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 49.

previous six weeks of election campaigning. The same tight-knit group of people who have been used to working physically next to one another all day, in near constant phone or email contact, will now be dispersed across Whitehall, working out of different buildings and with the formal processes of the civil service interposed between them and their colleagues.

This is a shift that former Conservative minister David Gauke warns should not be underestimated¹³. The new government should consider what it can do to maintain its close relationships once in power wherever possible. For instance, in 2010 the core Cameron team kept their 8.30am and 4.00pm daily meetings which was seen as making the transition much more effective and met with the approval of then Cabinet Secretary Jeremy Heywood¹⁴.

Ministers and political advisers will need to forge new relationships quickly with civil servants. When moving from opposition to government, new ministers will go from having a team of two or three advisers to heading a department with a staff of hundreds or thousands - often for the first time. Building a good relationship with the civil service leadership of that department is critical to success; Gauke recommends arriving with a 'list of questions that you'd like an answer to on your first day in the office'¹⁵.

Ideally, the groundwork for such relationships will have been laid during a series of 'access talks' between shadow ministers and senior civil servants. In 2024, the window for these talks to take place has been unusually narrow after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak did not give permission for access talks to begin until January of this year, leaving the opposition with less than 200 days.

Both political and civil service leaderships need to use these relationships to embed new ways of working across government. A core component of delivering mission-driven government needs to be breaking down silos and encouraging meaningful cross-departmental working. This new working pattern needs to be established early and responsibility for embedding it in the system should be assumed both by Secretaries of State - who should harness the close ties across the cabinet built in opposition - and by Permanent Secretaries.

The ambition should be to establish a 'whole of government' vision and to break out of the current cycle in which civil servants are too often incentivised to act in the narrow interests of 'my Secretary of State'¹⁶. This will be especially important as the

¹³ Tinline, *Into Power 02*, 17.

¹⁴ Tinline, *Into Power 02*, 16.

¹⁵ Ibid, 13.

¹⁶ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical 01*, 28.

next government will inherit a civil service machine which has lost morale, self-confidence and authority in recent years. For some officials the arrival of a new government may feel like a welcome opportunity to revert to a previous mode of delivery. It will take joint political and departmental leadership to demonstrate that the only prospect of achieving the government's missions and delivering on its purpose lies in moving forward to a new and much more collaborative way of doing business. The prime minister should set the tone, by calling out non-collegiate, rivalrous behaviour from the start.

First four weeks

Once a new government navigates its first few days, attention can turn to its first month in office. The election's unusual July timing means that the new administration will need to maximise the impact of domestic set-piece events - most notably the King's Speech expected on 17th July - to give it a momentum that can carry it through the parliamentary recess and into the autumn.

The next UK government should use its first month to start establishing the institutions, processes and people - in Whitehall and beyond - that it will need to deliver on its programme, and to start ruthlessly prioritising which elements of that programme it wants to get underway first. Getting this right will enable the government both to push ahead with its agenda and position itself to respond to external events.

'Bring out your dead'

To establish what is new about its overriding purpose, a new government must make vividly clear what has gone wrong and must now be corrected.

This involves telling a clear, compelling story of the journey from past decay to future renewal. But it should not only *narrate* this shift: it should *enact* it.

Less than two weeks after taking office in 2010, the new Chancellor George Osborne announced £6.2 billion 'in-year' cuts; within seven weeks, he had delivered an 'emergency' Budget. Beyond their specific measures, these announcements took advantage of the brief period when a new government can unarguably blame its predecessor for the state of the country. They served to dramatise what Osborne cast as the severity of the situation.

Likewise, the new government could declare at the beginning of the new parliament that departments should "bring out their dead". This could be cast as a moment of 'radical honesty' where it is acceptable to put all existing problems out in the open. What have departments committed to do, knowing there is insufficient funding available, for example? Where have they been papering over areas of particularly severe decay?

Alongside this, the government could announce an audit of exactly how broken the country's systems have become. This could be used as a call for evidence, inviting the whole country to get involved - both to vent its frustrations and to contribute its

ideas for solutions. For example, the government could ask hospitals, trusts, and councils for staff surveys and gather data. This work should be completed with urgency, before the first spending review.

The first steps of institutional renewal

During its first month in office the new government should put in place key elements of institutional architecture. The 2010 coalition government did this effectively with both the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) and the National Security Council.¹⁷

Labour has committed to establishing an Industrial Strategy Council on a statutory footing, and it also needs to put in place the core governance arrangements for its five missions. These should include appointing ministerial Mission Leads as part of the Cabinet appointment process and convening a Mission Leadership Group, led by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, to oversee all missions.

In *Mission Critical* we also recommend establishing a Mission Council - comprised of representatives of all tiers of government, the private sector, trade unions and civil society - and Mission Teams for each mission to drive delivery¹⁸. These Teams should have cross-departmental expertise and bring in talent from local government, industry and civil society. Widening out the membership of both the Council and the Teams will help the government resist the temptation to run missions from Whitehall alone and instead take a porous, open approach.

The new administration should be more circumspect when it comes to scrapping existing institutions. A government seeking to abolish particular aspects of the governing apparatus should ask itself why this is the right choice: 'because it was created by our predecessors' is not a good enough reason. David Cameron found this to his cost in 2010 when he got rid of the Prime Minister's Strategy and Delivery Units altogether, and significantly scaled back the Policy Unit - decisions he later came to regret¹⁹. Only once a new government has established a solid case for abolition rather than reform should it move ahead - re-establishing an organisation that was axed in haste will consume time and political capital and could represent significant opportunity cost.

¹⁷ Tinline, *Into Power* 02, 20-22.

¹⁸ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 29 and 61.

¹⁹ Tinline, *Into Power* 02, 19-20.

New ministers will need to determine when to go with the grain of existing civil service behaviour and when to push against it. Moving to a mission-driven system of government will be counter-cultural for the UK system and attempting to upend too much all at once risks early failures (and a potential loss of risk appetite and reversion to type). Nevertheless, there will be instances where the incoming government will need to stop patterns and habits rooted in the inherited model which would inhibit delivery of missions. Recognising these categories and acting accordingly will be critical in the first few weeks as the new government sets direction. Ministers should not be unnecessarily daunted by this: in many ways the civil service machine has been primed to expect significant change, should it have a new party in power for the first time in 14 years, and will be anticipating that this means new ways of working.

Building new teams and bringing in new talent

A new government must build its teams carefully but at pace, with an emphasis on empowering mission delivery and being open to temporary appointments if needed. Recruitment to critical roles within a new administration is a central means of setting the tone and direction for how it wants to govern. This should centre around the cultures, skills and dynamic capabilities required for mission delivery, such as service design, participation, and stakeholder engagement²⁰.

It is vital that the new government gets this right swiftly. Some people will be in position straight away, imported directly from opposition, or possibly lined up in advance of an election and hired within the first few days in office. But there are many more appointments that will need to be made at a slower pace. The government should consider learning from the American practice of making ‘beachhead’ appointments: temporary hires to begin work immediately while allowing time for a thorough recruitment process for permanent hires to take its course²¹.

Beyond Whitehall, ministers should signal early a more collaborative approach, showing greater humility as to what central government can achieve alone, prioritising its role as the ‘orchestrator’ of national life. Effective mission-driven government requires humble collaboration across the whole of government and beyond, including business, trade unions and wider civil society. This requires a workplace culture where collaboration is instinctive, and is incentivised across all

²⁰ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 54.

²¹ Collinge and Terry, *Into Power* 01, 54.

layers of government in the policy making process. This needs to be signalled early on, and incentivised through changes to core civil service processes such as performance management and the regular submission of advice to ministers (for instance, requiring evidence of meaningful external engagement)²². In the first month in office, this humility should extend to new ministers seeking advice from those with direct experience of governing (both in the past at national level and currently at sub-national level) and to them being unafraid to bring in external sources of advice - including direct hires - from beyond government²³.

Throughout its approach to recruitment, the new government must place a premium on securing breadth and diversity of experience and background. How a new administration approaches the resourcing of its major roles is as important as the appointments themselves. President Biden set expectations of diversity of appointments to his administration - in the interests of good governance and public legitimacy - and this resulted in record levels of diversity within his team²⁴. A similar approach will be especially important for mission-driven government in the UK, where recruitment should focus on diversity in its widest sense, including ethnicity, gender, disability, socio-economic background, cognitive diversity and experience beyond Whitehall and Westminster.

That could mean looking for those who have recent governing experience at regional or local level (especially important for Labour, with the party having spent the last 14 years in opposition). It should also mean putting in place processes that enable a new administration to cast its net wider than has been the case historically.

Genuine commitment to new, collaborative and porous ways of working starts with government demonstrating that it is open to hiring from a much broader, representative pool of people than perhaps has been the case before.

Empowering leaders across the country

A new government should make an early and expansive offer to regional and local leaders, inviting them to contribute to overall mission delivery. Both major parties have committed in their manifestos to accelerate devolution within England and address the country's over-centralisation²⁵. To make good on those commitments, the new Prime Minister, Chancellor, and Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing,

²² Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 53.

²³ Collinge and Terry, *Into Power* 01, 34-37.

²⁴ Collinge and Terry, *Into Power* 01, 17.

²⁵ [‘Clear Plan, Bold Action, Secure Future’](#): The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2024, June 2024, 56. [‘Change’](#): The Labour Manifesto 2024, June 2024, 40.

and Communities should write to mayors and council leaders in their first month in office, clearly communicating the new government's overriding purpose, and setting out an invitation and an offer. For those Mayoral Combined (County) Authorities (MC(C)As) that do not already have 'trailblazer' status, the invitation should be to work with central government towards getting it. For those local authorities that are not already part of an MC(C)A arrangement, the invitation should be to create new partnerships for economic leadership and governance in their area. The offer from central government should include committing to single funding settlements for MC(C)As and to multi-year settlements for wider local government.

In return, the new administration should be clear about what it expects of local and regional leaders, and should build on what already exists to accelerate delivery.

These initial letters should also set clear expectations that central government will want to see the development of sub-regional industrial strategies and statutory Local Growth Plans that ladder up to the national government's overall industrial strategy.

Through this initial contact and the ongoing discussions that it generates, national and local leaders should seek to put in place a system for monitoring and evaluating progress within this new framework - potentially building towards a new 'State of English Devolution' report.

Throughout this early work the new government should look to build on the existing settlement rather than reinvent the wheel. Making this invitation, and setting out the offer and expectation from central government, within the first four weeks of a new administration will show regional and local government leaders that it is serious about relinquishing power, with central government setting the direction but not specifying the means.

Prioritising and kickstarting the programme

The new government must triage its manifesto policies to balance achieving quick wins, sowing the seeds for later success and embarking on fundamental reform. A new administration needs to determine where it must act quickly and where acting in haste would risk making mistakes. In 2010, the incoming Education Secretary Michael Gove got the first of these right. His academisation programme saw some schools convert to academy status by September 2010 - within four months of taking office. However, he fell foul of the latter with his rushed abolition of the Building Schools for the Future programme²⁶.

²⁶ Tinline, *Into Power* 02, 28-30.

In 2024, this offers a useful model for assessing which elements of Labour's six initial pledges can be delivered at speed, to demonstrate tangible improvement for voters. These six 'first steps' will need to be developed into detailed delivery programmes, to be rolled out over the summer in a communication strategy. Several of the six pledges focus on recruitment - of new teachers, neighbourhood police and PCSOs, alongside the creation of new Border Security Command and the provision of 40,000 additional NHS appointments per week. As with Gove's success and failures, the varying degree of complexity involved in each of these proposals may do much to dictate which can be delivered by the autumn.

Meanwhile, there are other actions the government could take immediately such as ending the effective ban on onshore wind or revising the mandate of the Low Pay Commission. In other more contentious and complex areas of reform, such as building towards a National Care Service, it will need to proceed more carefully.

Given the major emphasis it has placed on planning reform - and how horribly difficult this can be to achieve - the new government will need to start work on this straight away. It is vital to begin while political capital is at its height, so that voters can see new homes and infrastructure being built before the end of the parliament.

In a joint interview with the *Sunday Times*,²⁷ Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves have already announced Labour's intention to take the following measures within the first two full weeks of a new government:

- The publication of a draft national planning policy framework, setting targets for councils to meet local housing needs;
- The announcement of a house building programme by the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, followed by a letter to councils requiring them to review their green belt boundaries, with a view to identifying areas that could be reclassified for development;
- There are also plans to recruit 300 planning officers and to give local residents a degree of priority when new homes are completed.

Other examples of quickly-achievable early moves on planning might include:

- Immediately allowing councils to keep all their capital receipts from right-to-buy, such that they can buy new stock and not just build, and allowing match funding from Homes England, with the aim of doubling the number of council homes built in the first year.
- As part of entrenching the narrative of national renewal after years of failure, a new Prime Minister could deploy stories of excessive delay, the public benefits thus lost, and the systems responsible. This should involve

²⁷ *Sunday Times*, ['Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves target green belt for new homes'](#), 30 June 2024

highlighting the blockages caused by long processes of judicial review, environmental review, appeals, etc. This would demonstrate a willingness to overcome vested interests, obstructions and inertia.

- New DLUHC ministers and their teams could develop this by delineating how far obstacles can be overcome through the confident assertion of existing ministerial powers, and identifying barriers to building that can be broken only with primary legislation.

The new administration will then need to get its programme underway via a combination of legislation, institutional changes and delivery planning. The first major domestic event following the election will be the King's Speech on 17th July, where the new government starts to put meat on the bones of its overall strategy. Labour has indicated this is likely to include flagship legislation such as an Employment Bill, Take Back Control Bill and Energy Independence Bill.

Beneath these headline laws it should also take the opportunity to embed its overall purpose into the system by establishing new missions under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023²⁸.

Outside of parliament, the government can signal intent by kickstarting the creation of new institutions such as Great British Energy and the National Wealth Fund. The Prime Minister should write to each Cabinet minister with a clear articulation of his priorities - both on missions and other areas of policy responsibility - and they should work with senior civil servants to convert these into delivery plans (a tool used to great effect by the incoming Cameron government in 2010)²⁹. Being clear at this stage about what constitutes a priority will also empower ministers to tell civil servants what they should stop doing.

²⁸ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 29.

²⁹ Tinline, *Into Power* 02, 13-15 and 23-24.

First 100 days

The UK's current political and economic context is so challenging that the victors on 4th July are likely to enjoy the shortest of honeymoons. A disillusioned, distrustful electorate will need to see signs of progress during the first 100 days to be convinced that there is reason to be hopeful. Tangible improvements in voters' lives, however modest, will buy the new administration the breathing space it will need to move onto more fundamental and challenging reforms, and to lay the groundwork for success later in the parliament and at the end of the electoral cycle. Delivering the six initial pledges quickly should win legitimacy for the more ambitious programme outlined in the missions.

The new government might usefully think of its first 100 days as an arc, during which delivery on the six first steps indicates the government's resolve, while it takes the time - with the civil service and other stakeholders - to steadily develop the five missions into a programme for government. As and when this approach faces criticism, it should be robustly defended, on the grounds that it is a fulfilment of the promise to govern in a more serious, more collaborative fashion.

While the missions are in development, problems stored up since the election was called will place urgent demands on the new government, such as pressure for a decision on prison places and on the fate of Thames Water, and action on funding crises in higher education and local government. Ministers will need to find ways to deal with these swiftly while protecting the missions process. During this interim period, ministers may need to apply a 'missions test' to demands on government time and announcement priorities: is a given action critical to the delivery of one of the missions?

All of this could build towards an Autumn Budget, to be delivered alongside a detailed announcement of the mission architecture. This would underline the point that, for missions to work, accountability should go hand-in-hand with money - and so will show how the Treasury will need to work differently to achieve the missions.

But it is the Budget itself that will most sharply reveal how serious the new government is about doing things differently.

Embedding change into the heart of government

For a new approach to government to take root, it will need to be embedded into the state's financial institutions, starting with the Treasury. Some of the most

significant decisions will come later, but the new government should lay the groundwork as soon as possible for a new, mission-driven approach to taxation, spending, investment and growth. Without an accompanying change to the way in which the public finances are overseen, neither the ambitions of mission-driven government nor the potential of thoroughgoing devolution will be realised.

A new administration serious about taking a mission-driven approach needs to refresh the Treasury's mandate and operations accordingly and embed its missions framework into the Treasury itself, as well as across the range of public finance institutions³⁰. Should Labour win, its first Budget will present an opportunity to get this work underway - from strengthening elements of the current architecture (such as the Treasury's Enterprise and Growth Unit) to establishing new institutions (such as an Industrial Strategy Council) to considering where there might be a case for revising the mandates of and/or consolidating existing institutions, such as the Major Projects Authority, the National Infrastructure Commission, the UK Infrastructure Bank, the British Business Bank, UK Government Investments and UK Export Finance³¹. The first 100 days should also be the point at which the new government begins the vital process of reforming the Treasury's Green Book to emphasise the need for transformational change³².

The new government should increase policy certainty by setting out its broad economic strategy and establishing a predictable rhythm for fiscal events. The current state of the public finances, combined with both main parties' fiscal rules, means that incentivising and directing private investment will be a cornerstone of any economic growth strategy. Policy uncertainty and political instability is a major barrier to unlocking that investment. The next government should do all it can to remove that barrier and give major sources of patient capital the certainty they need to start investing.

The incoming government should set out a clear economic and fiscal strategy - setting the direction for public services, businesses, places and the country as a whole to operate within - and stick to it. As part of that strategy, it should embed stability and predictability into the state's own financial planning process. The government should move to a single annual fiscal event, with a guaranteed OBR forecast, and it should signal the rhythm of one-year spending reviews and multi-year Comprehensive Spending Reviews (CSRs) over the course of the

³⁰ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical 01*, 57.

³¹ Dyson and Spencer, *Rebuilding the Nation 01*, 16.

³² Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical 01*, 35.

parliament. Establishing these timelines in advance - possibly in statute - would establish vital clarity across both public and private sectors³³.

An initial one-year spending review should be followed by a three-year spending review, but the Treasury should be open about what underpins them. Both reviews should be based on the same analysis, problem diagnosis and priorities, and this should be made clear.

Looking beyond the first 100 days, the new Treasury should take a longer-term view, setting multi-year budgets, focusing on prevention and encouraging innovation. The current short-term approach to Whitehall spending arrangements means that - in the words of one of our interviewees for *Mission Critical* - departments are 'not willing to look beyond the current spending programme or spending review period'³⁴. This is counterproductive, encouraging officials to take a much more reactive, short-term and risk-averse approach to their work. Changing the way that funding allocations are set - be that moving to multi-year funding settlements for local government or establishing a new category of 'preventative' spending³⁵ - can radically shift incentives within the system towards long-termism, innovation and collaboration. The new government should also amend how government projects are appraised and evaluated, with a greater focus on outcomes and thus more space for innovation and experimentation of method³⁶.

At the core of the success of this whole project is the role of the relationship between the Treasury and 10 Downing Street. Provided the Prime Minister and Chancellor work closely together, and both remain visibly invested in the missions approach, it will encourage others throughout government to take them seriously. This should be self-reinforcing: the more commitment there is to this way of governing, the more it should keep the Treasury and Number 10 latched together, and vice versa, in a virtuous circle.

One approach institutionalising this might be the creation of **a different version of the 'Quad'**: the regular meeting during the coalition government of the Prime Minister, Chancellor, Deputy Prime Minister and Chief Secretary to the Treasury. The original Quad was a political fix created to reach deals and resolve disputes within the coalition. A new Quad might have a similar membership and be of like size, but would have a quite distinct purpose. It would not be a closed, inward-focused

³³ Dyson and Spencer, *Rebuilding the Nation* 01, 15.

³⁴ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 32.

³⁵ Ibid, 33. See also Polly Curtis, Andrew O'Brien and Anita Charlesworth, Demos and The Health Foundation, [Revenue, Capital, Prevention: A new public spending framework for the future](#), October 2023.

³⁶ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical* 01, 33.

decision-making body, but would rather be outward-looking, with a clear focus on driving progress on the missions and holding ministers and others to account.

Laying the groundwork for long-term success

The next government should use its first 100 days to set the frameworks for those long-term programmes at both national and regional level where benefits will be felt later on, setting the scene for CSR processes to come. Having begun the process of triaging and prioritisation in the first four weeks, it should now begin to take those early actions on more challenging and long-term policy areas that will set the government up for demonstrable success in its first term. This will be particularly important should Labour win and move from having developed its initial policy proposals within the constraints of opposition to having the civil service at its disposal.

Mission Leads in Cabinet should commission their Permanent Secretaries to commission a 'beta' theory of change for their missions which can then act as the basis for investment, delivery and evaluation plans. Having commissioned Local Growth Plans from across the country the government should establish and convene its new Council of the Nations and Regions to bring together national, devolved and regional leaders for much more constructive joint discussions about policy delivery than have been held in recent years.

All the time, those leading this process should ask the same basic question: "What will make this easier to deliver?" This is to avoid the default response, "We need more money." A single monitoring framework for everything under each mission should be created: a reporting system tracking in real time how the government is doing, freely available online at gov.uk. This would make it easy for people to work on this on the ground, and would apply the bracing pressure of scrutiny.

Early in its time in office, the government should set up how it will demonstrate delivery on its commitments and be held accountable for it over time. Embedding new evaluation and accountability frameworks early on will both improve the quality of policy design and implementation, and pay political dividends in giving the government a clear story to tell towards the end of its first term and ahead of seeking re-election. Mission-driven government demands a different approach, supporting 'learning-by-doing' and recognising the need for exploration and experimentation rather than the prevailing, risk-averse model.

Grounding each mission in collaboratively-designed theories of change (as above) will aid with this, as will shifting the key evaluation questions away from 'is it

working?’ to ‘who is it working for, where and why?’ Setting up mission teams with evaluation experts in place from day one will promote this new culture of evaluation, learning and iteration from the outset³⁷.

The new government should convert the Office for Local Government Improvement (OfLOG) into a new, independent Office for Government Learning with a remit to provide the overarching framework for accountability of public services around mission delivery and to focus on learning and experimentation as well as minimum standards and value for money considerations.

The first 100 days is an important moment to begin the longer-term process of reforming the civil service so that it is set up to deliver missions.

The new administration should commission a taskforce to consider a new government workforce strategy, fit for the challenges of mission-driven government, and how best to deliver it. This should set out how the government intends to build teams and institutions that can deliver its ambitious programmes at national, regional and local levels. The strategy should factor in where new skills need to be nurtured and strengthened within the civil service to reflect new ways of working, such as by developing career opportunities for technologists from the private sector or establishing new specialisms in design skills³⁸.

Neither political nor civil service leaders should underestimate the bandwidth needed for officials both to continue delivering departmental responsibilities while shifting to a whole new way of working, which applies to those ongoing responsibilities as well as to new policy. Departments will need support and guidance to do so. Equally, those on the political side should not assume that it is only civil servants who will need to adjust to new ways of working as they suddenly move from campaigning and opposing to governing. It is worth learning from the Australian Labor example and putting in place arrangements for training, induction and ongoing mentoring support for ministers and special advisers³⁹.

The new government should also be prepared to lose some staff early on if the sudden pressure of the transition to government reveals that they are not suited to it, to ensure there are no ‘single points of failure’ in the team⁴⁰. The changes that are necessary to make government effective will require open minds. It is a challenge to both politicians and policymakers to do things differently. Any blockages, whether from political or official sources, will need to be overcome.

³⁷ Mazzucato et al, *Mission Critical 01*, 35.

³⁸ Ibid, 54.

³⁹ Collinge and Terry, *Into Power 01*, 38-39.

⁴⁰ Tinline, *Into Power 02*, 7 and 27.

More broadly, the scale of renewal the UK needs requires what former Cabinet Minister Peter Mandelson recently called a 'whole country approach':⁴¹ a sense of national collective endeavour. It is exactly because Britain's problems are so severe that the arrival of a new government offers such a historically rare opportunity to rethink, to rebuild, and so to transform lives for the better. British government has shown it can do this, as in the collaboration of Whitehall, local government and communities that made the 2012 Olympics an enduring success. Right from day one, the new government must recapture that spirit.

It is too precious a chance to waste.

⁴¹ Discussion with Peter Mandelson and Andrew Cooper, chaired by Polly Curtis, at [Britain Renewed](#) conference hosted by FGF, UCL Policy Lab, Citizens UK and Power to Change, 15 May 2024

Acknowledgements

The recommendations in this briefing note are sourced from across FGF's previously published reports and blogs, and the events we have hosted or participated in. You can find links to all of these on our website (<http://futuregovernanceforum.co.uk/>) and at the relevant footnotes throughout the text.

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<https://www.futuregovernanceforum.co.uk/contact/>

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About The Future Governance Forum

The Future Governance Forum is a new, progressive, non-profit and non-partisan think tank. We are here to provide the intellectual and practical infrastructure vital to national renewal and the revival of progressive government in the UK.

Our mission is to shape a new, sustainable and progressive governing model for the UK that delivers for everyone. We bring together people and institutions with the expertise to develop and implement new models of partnership, policy development and service delivery.

Our current programmes of work explore:

- **Mission Critical:** how can governments develop missions as more than a signal of intent, but a theory and a practice of government?
- **Impactful Devolution:** how can government meaningfully and permanently devolve power to regional and local level in one of the most centralised countries in the world?
- **Into Power:** how should an administration be set up, and its people empowered, to deliver on its promises?
- **Rebuilding the Nation:** how can we utilise innovative models of public and private investment to deliver future policy objectives?
- **Systems Change:** how can the UK's system of government be reformed to better facilitate not obstruct delivery?

By prioritising these questions we are thinking about new progressive models of governance for the long term.

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