



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

PRIME MINISTER

BIF 1 Feb

ME 16
SENIOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In August 1984 you endorsed the proposals in the Coster "Training for Senior Management" Report, and directed that work should proceed to give effect to them, and later asked for a progress report. The attached minute from Sir Robert Armstrong, which I commend to you, contains this progress report.

The SMDP proposals are a sensible way of introducing a systematic framework to our job posting and training arrangements, particularly for younger staff at broadly the Principal to Assistant Secretary level. They seek to ensure that a clear and recognised pattern of development takes place which is of benefit to management and makes the best use of the individual. The potential of the SMDP is sufficiently important for us to ensure that we devote sufficient time and effort to getting the foundation well laid before it is formally launched. I think, therefore, that the aim of starting the Programme in September 1985 makes good sense as it will enable us to benefit from the work now being done to get a clearer definition of the areas of expertise which people need if they are to do their jobs effectively.

I am satisfied with the way plans are developing and will make a further progress report to you by mid-summer. When the Programme is launched it will be important not only for Ministers and top civil servants to support the Programme but for them to be clearly seen to be doing so. If I may, I will invite you to write to colleagues in charge of Departments at an appropriate time seeking their support of the SMDP in their Departments.

I am copying this and Sir Robert Armstrong's minute to the Minister of State, Treasury and Sir Robin Ibbs.

g.

GOWRIE
28 January 1985

C. Service
W. (Wm.)
PE 17



Secretary of the Admiralty

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

11 February 1985

From the Private Secretary

Dear Paul,

Senior Management Development Programme

The Prime Minister has now considered Lord Gowrie's minute of 28 January about the Senior Management Development Programme, together with Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 23 January on the same subject. She has also seen Sir Robin Ibbs' minute of 1 February.

The Prime Minister agrees strongly with Sir Robin Ibbs' comments, and would be grateful if they could be taken into account as the programme develops.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Robin Ibbs, and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever,
David*

David Barclay

Paul Thomas Esq
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office.



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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PRIME MINISTER

SENIOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

✓ 1st?

Robin Ibbs sent me a copy of his minute of 4 February to you about our progress in setting up this Programme.

I fully accept the importance of having performance targets for the SMDP which are not merely procedural but also qualitative in that they measure improvements in performance by participants in the Programme. The fact that management development is recognised both by the private and public sectors as one of the most difficult areas of all to make such qualitative judgements is no reason why we should not try to set up the best measures that we can.

The SMDP has of course two main objectives: firstly, developing the potential of future top managers; secondly, better performance at broadly Principal to Assistant Secretary level by the participants. It will take longer to measure the first objective than the second.

I am therefore content in principle with the three additional points suggested by Robin Ibbs and will use them as a basis for devising performance targets that measure value for money.

I am copying this minute to Robin Ibbs and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Goy

GOWRIE

11 February 1985

Office of the Deputy Director



13 FEB 1983



CE 10

Prime Minister⁽⁴⁾

A progress report on this programme is attached.

Agree Sir Robin Ibbes' comments?

PRIME MINISTER

SENIOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Grey Gowrie sent me a copy of his minute of 28 January about progress in setting up the programme. I have no difficulty with what he says about delaying the start until September if that will enable the preparation to be more thorough and will increase the chances of getting value for money from the scheme. I am still concerned, however, that the possible performance targets in the accompanying paper are mainly about procedure.

End
4/2

Yes

mt

This is a labour intensive proposal which you will need to be satisfied gives good value for the effort and expenditure required. At present it looks a generous scheme that may spill over on some people who will gain little from it.

The need for performance targets referred to in my minute of 23 August 1984 relates to having a clear statement of what detectable improvements in the performance of those participating is being aimed for. The extent to which this is achieved will have to be assessed by their line managers and these managers need to know before the scheme starts what they should be looking for.

I suggest that before the scheme starts up in September there is a need to have in place, in addition to the points in paragraph 7 of the note by Sir Robert Armstrong:

1. In each department a mechanism for assessing regularly after, say, 1 year whether there is a detectable improvement in performance by those who have participated and hence whether the programme is worth the cost. ✓
2. In each department a parallel mechanism for checking whether the job posting side of the scheme is functioning properly. ✓
3. A firm arrangement for assessing centrally after, say, 2 years whether the overall scheme represents adequate value for money. ✓

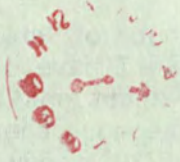
I am copying this to Grey Gowrie and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

ROBIN IBBS
1 February 1985

Long Term Policy: CIVIL SERVICE 1777.



2 FEB 1985





Ref. A085/228

1. CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER
 2. PRIME MINISTER
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Senior Management Development Programme

On 6 August 1984 you endorsed the proposals for a Senior Management Development Programme (SMDP) contained in the Coster "Training for Senior Management" Report. You later asked for a progress report which your Private Office agreed should be made in January 1985.

2. The proposals for the SMDP were made in the light of your comment that the Top Management Programme (for new Grade 3 staff (Under Secretaries) and their counterparts in the private sector) was unlikely to succeed unless eligible staff had suitable training earlier in their careers. The SMDP is, therefore, aimed at younger staff between Principal level and Grade 4 (Assistant Secretary plus) in all occupations, and has two primary objectives:

- a. better preparation for those with potential to get to Grade 3 and above; and
- b. better performance at the levels from Principal to Grade 4, whether or not the participants are likely to reach Grade 3 or above.

The SMDP aims to provide an integrated approach to more effective management development through a combination of relevant job experience, secondments, projects and training throughout the years spent in these grades. Training is only one, although important, part of it.

3. We had originally intended to make a start with the introduction of the SMDP early in 1985 whilst work to develop a basic standard proceeded. It quickly became clear from our own work and from consultations with Departments that it would be important, if the



SMDP was to be the vehicle for change and improvement which we intended, for it to be reasonably well developed before it is launched. I am sure that this is the approach that will give us best value, and we are now aiming to launch SMDP in September 1985.

4. The first step in developing SMDP is the definition of competencies (ie those areas of expertise in policy, management or other issues which staff need to be good at if they are to do their jobs well and to develop effectively). The Coster Report suggested that there were a group of Service-wide competencies which were relevant to many Departments and areas of work, and that the Cabinet Office (MPO) should define these. Work to do this is on target, with a questionnaire survey of potential SMDP participants being well under way; the results from this should be available in February. This working level view is being supplemented by interviews with a selection of Permanent Secretaries, top specialists and other top managers about what they want out of staff - and particularly from good young staff at Principal level/Grade 4. The Report from these interviews should be available by the beginning of February and agreement on the Service-wide competencies should be reached by Easter.

5. Departments will themselves be working to determine the competencies that are specific to them. It will not be possible to take this work far until the first draft of the Service-wide competencies is available, but we are making our questionnaire and methodology available to Departments to use if they wish. The aim is for the departmental competencies to be settled by mid-summer.

6. We aim also to have available to Departments by July the training and development logs which individuals who participate in SMDP will need, together with detailed management guidelines and the first edition of a "directory" of training opportunities which will indicate where relevant training can be found at the Civil Service College and elsewhere.



7. Your Private Secretary's minute of 28 August 1984 endorsed Sir Robin Ibbs's proposal that we should set out performance targets for SMDP. That proposal was made when it was hoped to start introduction of the SMDP early in 1985, rather than in a more fully developed version in September 1985. We are not ready to go firm on performance targets yet, and it would be premature to do so; but our present thinking is that in the first year or so they should be fairly simple and aimed at getting the SMDP into operation. A more qualitative approach can be introduced once it is up and running. Possible performance targets we have in mind for Departments are:

- a. opportunity to participate in SMDP given to all eligible staff by August 1985;
- b. necessary information and documentation to participating staff by September 1985;
- c. training plans agreed by all participating staff and their management by March 1986;
- d. each Department to have set by end 1985 target participation rate for eligible staff. This to be monitored by end 1986 (targets may well vary from Department to Department).

8. Implementation of the SMDP will put heavy pressure on the system at some points which are already tightly stretched. There is, for example, the resource demand arising from the release of staff who are likely to be among the best at their level for relevant and necessary training; my judgment is that Departments recognise that they have to absorb this. There will also be demands upon Personnel Divisions to manage the SMDP, at a time when they are having to cope with major changes flowing from other important management initiatives. If we are to get the best out of SMDP it will need to be managed well; participants should have



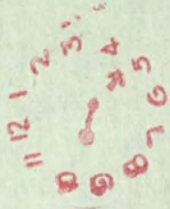
effective guidance and counselling available to them; and Departments will have to plan constructively the integration of job experience and training, and there will need to be "stocktakings" of individual and departmental progress.

9. I believe that the SMDP is being set up on the right lines, and will lead to a more effective Civil Service. I will report again in the middle of the year, when the scheme is nearly ready to start.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

23 January 1985

30 JAN 1985
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C. Service
L. Tenn
PE17

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