Paul Cairney, Professor of Politics and Public Policy, University of Stirling, 23rd February 2023

Finance and Public Administration Committee

Inquiry ‘Public Administration - Effective Scottish Government decision-making’

Report: What is effective government?

Contents

Executive Summary

There is no universal meaning of effective government. However, governments and academics describe broad principles - to foster accountable, preventive, co-produced, coherent, evidence-informed, and equitable policymaking – and relate them to tools to foster systematic policymaking (Annex B).

Many of these aims become contradictory in practice. For example, the primacy of national elections concentrates power in the centre, fosters short-term thinking, biases evidence-gathering towards experts, limits consensus seeking, and reduces incentives to learn. Governments (1) need a grand narrative to combine governing principles coherently, while (2) engaging with these inevitable trade-offs.

The Scottish Government narrative rejects *new public management* (NPM), which seeks to reduce government and apply private sector methods to policymaking, and embraces *public value* (PV), to value government and seek citizen and stakeholder engagement. In theory, it has a coherent PV-inspired strategy. In practice, it applied PV ideas patchily (in the context of a history of NPM), while juggling competing aims.

The Scottish Government can learn about its own progress in relation to three categories of experiences: (1) the UK government, which influences policy and policymaking in Scotland; (2) comparable governments using similar narratives, including in Wales and New Zealand; and, (3) international 'good practice'. In each case, learning *what governments would like to do* is only useful when we learn *what they actually do*. Broad lessons include:

- The UK government exemplifies the pursuit of two models of effective government, using (1) NPM to foster government hierarchy, order, and accountability at the centre *and* (2) PV to encourage decentralisation and citizen and stakeholder engagement. Many reviews have recommended PV-style reforms, which suggests that they do not have much traction.

- Scottish and Welsh governments pursue similar agendas on evidence-informed, collaborative, and long-term policymaking, offering mutual learning on successes (e.g. the Welsh Centre for Public Policy) and failures.

- The New Zealand Policy Project fosters the systematic design, delivery, and evaluation of high quality policy advice to ministers. It offers lessons on effective policy design and the chance to reflect on barriers to progress.

- Comparative studies of best practice highlight a long list of potential lessons relating to how to pursue public value, co-produce policy, support the policy profession, respond to crisis, and communicate risk and uncertainty.

These comparisons help to consider what effective government looks like. Each principle produces different requirements of policymakers, such as to manage short- and long-term agendas, collaboration across and outside of government, ways to gather evidence, and reform programmes. Interrogating the theory and practice of effective government is essential, to identify if the Scottish Government has the skills and capacity to deliver an ambitious and coherent strategy.

Introduction

This report shows how governments seek 'effective government' and identifies how to learn from their experiences. It shows that we can only determine if government is working if we can identify its intended purpose, which requires us to relate:

1. The specific search for effective government *decision-making* (or 'systematic policymaking' – described in Annex B), such as to describe the mechanics of government, including how ministers and civil servants perform their roles, to

2. A *grand narrative* of effective government, defined as a way to combine many *principles* to describe the overall purpose and intended function of government.

The latter is essential to clarify what a government should do (or leave to individuals or markets), how well resourced it should be (for some, effective means small government), and whose assessment matters, such as from the perspective of policymakers, citizens, businesses, or external assessors. In that context, there are many, rather abstract or slogan-like, ways to define effective policymaking and measure the extent to which decision-making is working. Therefore, the first aim of this report is to turn each abstract principle into concrete processes that relate to the machinery of government, including to:

1. Hold to account the people and organisations responsible for policy.

2. Anticipate and prevent policy problems rather than react to crisis.

3. Avoid power hoarding at the 'centre'. Co-produce policy with citizens.

4. Ensure policy coherence and policymaking integration.

5. Foster evidence-informed policymaking.

6. Mainstream equity, fairness, or justice across all policy.

7. Ensure that public services deliver public value.

The second aim of this report is to show that these principles do not necessarily combine to produce a coherent approach. Rather, the pursuit of some principles can undermine others, including when short-term accountability measures (related to national elections) incentivise reactive or centralised policymaking and constrain long-term work. If so, a rhetorical commitment to a coherent cross-cutting agenda - such as to engage in evidence-informed, preventive, co-produced and integrated policymaking to address inequalities – may not produce tangible results. The report identifies examples of complementary and contradictory principles in Scottish Government policymaking.

The third aim is to identify how academics and policymakers incorporate these principles into a grand narrative of what governments do, would like to do, or would like people to think they do. Academic studies use the 'policy cycle' to compare aspirational and realistic models of policymaking. Or, they describe trends, including

a shift from ‘new public management’ (NPM) to ‘new public governance’ (NPG) or ‘public value’ (PV) approaches, to signal some attempts to make policymaking more inclusive, deliberative, and participatory.

The fourth aim is to use these general ideas to understand what the Scottish Government does and what it should learn about effective government. This report summarises Scottish Government attempts to describe what it should do - such as with reference to the Scottish ‘model’ or ‘approach’ to policymaking – and highlights gaps in our knowledge regarding what it actually does.

The fifth aim is to identify what the Scottish Government can learn from its own experience in relation to other governments or policymaking organisations, including:

- The UK government, which shares responsibility policymaking in Scotland. It exemplifies the tensions between competing ways to pursue effectiveness.

- Comparable governments pursuing similar models of effective government. Wales and New Zealand offer examples of good practice and the chance to reflect on the gap between their ambitions and achievements.

- More general studies of international ‘good practice’.

Finally, this report concludes by highlighting the implications for policy capacity. For example, can the Scottish Government provide a grand narrative that translates clearly into the design of policy capacity? Or, does each principle produce different requirements of policymakers and present trade-offs for skills development?

What do ‘effective government’ principles mean in practice?

There is no universal definition of ‘effective government’ based on a single purpose. For example, the Scottish Government makes reference to a wide range of ambitions, including *accountability* to the Scottish Parliament and electorate, a *preventive* approach to public service delivery, *decentralisation and co-production* via concordats with local government and initiatives to foster stakeholder engagement, *policy coherence and policymaking integration* via the ‘Scottish approach to policymaking’, *equity* via initiatives including gender mainstreaming and health inequalities policies, *evidence-informed policymaking*, and *delivering public value*. Making sense of such a wide range of effective government ambitions requires us to turn them into a series of more detailed objectives and identify how exactly they fit together, as follows.

1. Responsible and accountable government.
There should be a direct link between the choices of elected governments and the citizens they serve. Essential requirements include:

- A clear link between citizen votes, the election of members of parliament, and the formation of an executive.
- The recruitment of elected politicians from a diverse pool of candidates, to boost the representativeness of parliaments in relation to social background.
- Clear and visible rules to assign responsibility (we know who is in charge).
- High governmental commitment to transparency (we know what they are doing) and scrutiny (to monitor and evaluate what they are doing).
- A well-understood and coherent process (such as clear stages in a ‘policy cycle’) to translate government aims and objectives into policy outputs.

In other words, effectiveness relates to an elected government honouring its manifesto commitments and being open to scrutiny and evaluation before the next election.

2. Anticipatory or preventive policymaking.
Governments should not lurch from crisis to crisis. They should engage for the long-term to: identify problems that transcend electoral cycles, protect resources, and set milestones to ensure progress towards well-defined aims. These measures require the generation of consensus, such as cross-party support to make sure that the next government does not disrupt the work of its predecessors. Examples include:

- Measures to mitigate climate change, such as via a commitment to ‘sustainable development’ or reforms to energy, transport, or food systems.

- Measures to reduce the health, education, and housing inequalities that relate to wider social and economic inequalities, such as via universal entitlements to public services or the redistribution of income and wealth.

- The continuous appraisal of policymaking to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

3. Power sharing and co-production.
Power should not be too concentrated in the hands of a small number of powerful organisations. It should be shared 'vertically' (such as between supranational, national, and local governments) and 'horizontally' (such as between central governments and task-specific organisations in the same jurisdiction).

Governments should also seek to make policy in partnership with stakeholders and citizens, to foster intrinsic benefits ('the right thing to do') and instrumental benefits (co-production boosts support for policies). Examples include:

- Agreements between central and local governments to support common aims.

- Partnership forums or networks to share information and boost collaboration between semi-autonomous organisations (they each have separate responsibilities but contribute to shared projects)

- Fostering trust-based relationships between governing bodies to reduce the (political and financial) costs of monitoring and enforcing obligations.

4. Policy coherence and policymaking integration
No policy is made on a blank page. Governments need to consider how each new policy instrument interacts with existing instruments (the 'policy mix'). Most policy mixes are produced by more than one governing organisation, which requires each to stay informed about the other's contributions. Key requirements include:

- Mainstreaming. Consider this aim in everything that governments do (e.g. gender mainstreaming, health in all policies, environmental policy integration).

- Effective intergovernmental relations (or central-local relations). Secure regular formal meetings, supported by informal networks and processes, to ensure the routine sharing of information between each government.

- Effective multi-level or collaborative governance. Maintain task-specific networks to ensure that all relevant policymaking organisations are contributing to the same aim (and not creating problems for others).

- Performance management, to (a) identify ambitious aims and achievable objectives, (b) clarify which organisations hold or share responsibility, (c) produce milestones and monitor the extent to which organisations achieve objectives, and (d) give organisations the means to collaborate with others.

5. Gathering and analysing information (evidence-informed policymaking).
Governments should gather and analyse policy-relevant information effectively. High quality information is essential to (1) defining a policy problem, such as to determine

its size, urgency, and cause, and (2) identifying technically feasible solutions, such as to gather evidence on how policies have worked in practice (in a government's own jurisdiction or comparable experiences elsewhere). Relevant concepts include:

- Rational-synoptic policy analysis, regarding how to produce the government capacity to consider problems and solutions comprehensively (such as team of well-trained and skilled professional policy analysts). In reality, governments seek to address pragmatically the *absence* of comprehensive analysis.

- 'Evidence-based policymaking' regards how to identify the highest quality policy relevant evidence. Some advocates relate evidence quality to scientific methods, to prioritise randomised control trials and their systematic review.

- 'Evidence-informed policymaking' describes a pragmatic assessment of evidence, or the pursuit of more inclusive ways to generate usable evidence.

- Problem scanning, to identify policy problems and foster effective responses.

- Policy evaluation and learning, to encourage the routine gathering of evidence on the success of policies (to inform discussions of policy change), and foster *learning organisations* that reflect on what they do, why, and to what effect (in relation to benchmarks or 'best practice').

- Ensuring that governments have sufficient policy capacity via targeted recruitment and skills development, such as in relation to specialisation (should civil servants be generalist or specialist?) and expectations for policy knowledge (should civil servants have professional qualifications before recruitment, and how much in-house training is appropriate?).

6. Fostering equity, fairness, or justice.
Policy analysis is incomplete if it focuses exclusively on efficiency, using economic tools (including cost-benefit analysis) to identify how to produce the highest benefits from the same costs. It should also prioritise the fair distribution of costs and benefits. Fairness should extend to participation when governments gather information, engage with stakeholders or citizens, and deliberate. Essential elements include:

- Recognitional justice, to ensure that all relevant social groups feel included and are not marginalised by policy or policy processes.

- Procedural justice, to ensure that participants are treated fairly and that the opportunities to contribute to policy deliberation are distributed fairly.

- Distributional justice, to ensure that the costs and benefits of policy choices (or their social and economic outcomes) are distributed fairly.

7. Delivering services well, or 'creating public value'.
Governments should deliver public services with clear value to citizens. Moore (1995) argues that 'creating public value' requires 'public managers' able to (1)

deliver the policies of an elected government, *and* (2) use their training and skills – combined with 'bureaucratic entrepreneurship' and leadership - to respond to the values of citizens and needs of service users. A 'strategic triangle' helps to judge if action is:

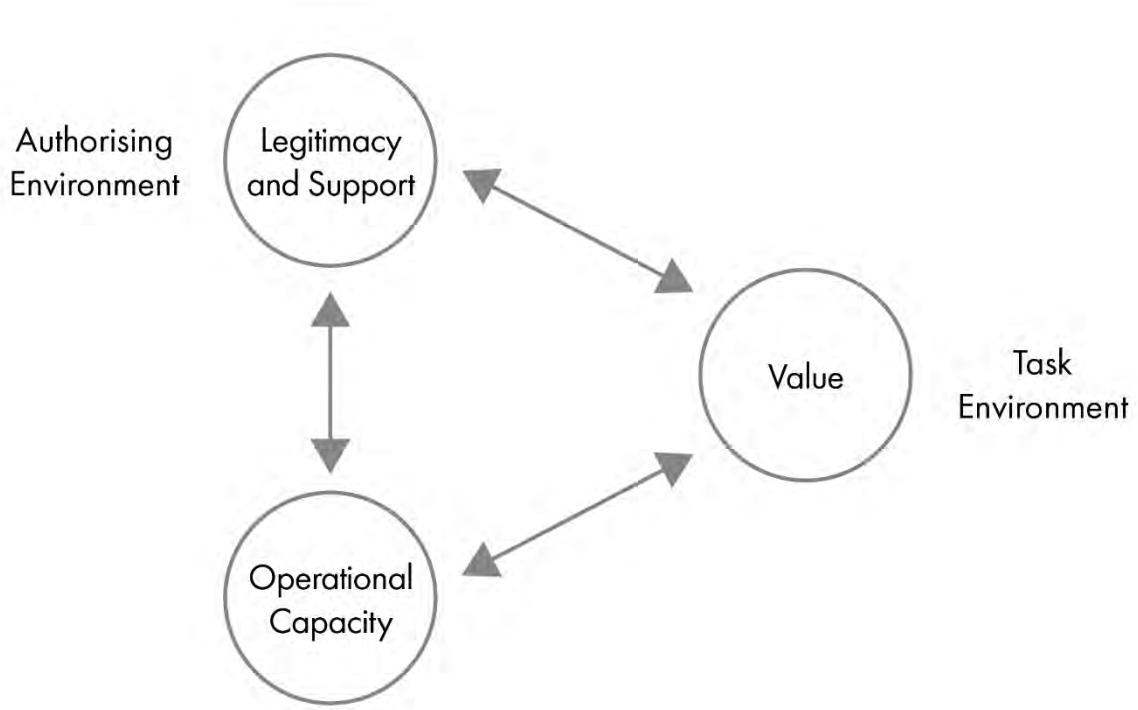
1. 'Publicly valuable'. Value relates not only to the recipients of public services (akin to consumers) but also wider policy aims (such as population health) and measures such as citizen trust in government.

2. 'Politically and legally supported'.

3. 'Administratively and operationally feasible' (1995: 22; O'Flynn, 2007).

They would develop skills to make judgement calls *and* influence elected policymakers (via deliberative processes to establish what is or should be politically feasible), as well as manage organisations and services (Moore, 1995: 293-305).

Chart 1: The strategic triangle



Source: O'Flynn, 2021: 3

Take home message: the phrase 'effective government' lacks meaning unless we identify the principles or measures used to determine effectiveness. Without these measures, we may be using the same phrase but describing (1) different expectations about how government should work, and (2) different measures of progress.

Do these principles complement each other?

Like all governments, the Scottish Government has found that there is an inevitable gap between the theory and practice of effective government principles. *In theory*, many principles could complement each other, including:

- *Procedural justice and accountability*. If governments (1) invest in citizens to participate in public life, and all citizens enjoy high opportunities to contribute to deliberation, they (2) boost the transparency of policymaking, which requires the public availability of information *and* the ability of citizens to process it.

- *Recognitional justice and evidence-informed policymaking*. If governments enjoy meaningful conversations with a wide range of social groups, they generate knowledge essential to understand and address policy problems.

- *Co-production and preventive policymaking*. Working with many stakeholders helps to generate a consensus that is essential to long-term action.

- *Public value, co-production, and accountability*. Distributing policymaking responsibilities fosters diverse ways to foster accountability. They supplement ministerial accountability to the public (via parliament) with organisational accountability (for the delivery of services) and stakeholder or citizen-based accountability (via consensus-driven processes or feedback on services).

In practice, governments pursue contradictory objectives. Examples include:

- *Short-term accountability (and the salience of service delivery) versus preventive policymaking*. National electoral accountability focuses political attention to short-term measures of governing competence, which reduces incentives to think for the long-term or plan for outcomes that would emerge after ministers have left office. Large and visible reactive services such as healthcare command far more resources than lower salience services to improve population health. The core business of public services take priority over their attempts to join-up services.

- *The competition to inform policy with evidence*. ‘Evidence based’ approaches favour a narrow definition of scientific evidence and limit policymaker attention to elite sources. ‘Co-production’ approaches favour a wide definition of knowledge and encourage policymakers to learn from many different sources, including stakeholders and citizens. There is no simple consistent way to reconcile both aims, or combine insights from diverse knowledge sources.

- *Power sharing versus democratic accountability*. There is potential for the worst of both worlds when governments seek to deliver on their electoral mandate but share responsibility with many other elected and unelected bodies. If everyone is responsible, then maybe no one is responsible. Central governments pursue ad hoc and inconsistent approaches to this problem, to delegate and defer to organisations for the most part, but intervene during periods of crisis.

- *Power sharing versus policy coherence and policymaking integration*. Multi-level policymaking consists of many elected governments with legitimate claims to retain their autonomy and produce divergent policy. For example, the Scottish Government may go its own way in a UK system *and* respect the right of Scottish local authorities to make their own service allocations. The continuous potential for policy incoherence and policymaking non-integration is *built into* systems that lack a single central authority. Collaboration is possible, but often in the absence of agreed-upon rules of engagement.

- *Top-down versus bottom up styles*. One focuses on setting clear objectives at the 'top' (to implement a national government manifesto) and ensuring their delivery by public services, emphasising democratic accountability and performance management via targets, regulations, and earmarked funding. Another focuses on trust in the public sector or professions to deliver public value within a broad framework that focuses on high-level and long-term aims. In practice, governments maintain a confusing mix of both approaches.

- *Accountability versus learning*. If national elections are highly partisan, learning is limited to political parties debating policy success and failure. If so, there is little incentive for elected governments to evaluate their own policies.

- *'Depoliticization'*. A recurring theme in equity research is that governments use a technocratic approach to avoid essential political debates on inequalities.

The Scottish Government has faced all of these tensions between effective government principles when trying to turn them into detailed objectives, including:

- *Short-term accountability versus preventive policymaking*. Preventive health struggles to compete with healthcare, and overall education attainment overshadows a commitment to minimise attainment gaps, even when Scottish ministers make a sincere commitment to policy change (Cairney and St.Denny, 2020; Cairney et al, 2022; Kippin and Cairney, 2022).

- *The competition to inform policy with evidence*. The Scottish Government juggles competing ways to gather and use knowledge for separate initiatives that contribute to common aims (Cairney, 2017a).

- *Power sharing versus policy coherence*, 'in a multilevel policy-making environment where there is minimal clarity on how each level of government can take responsibility' (Cairney et al, 2021: 426). There is periodic uncertainty about (1) which policymakers are responsible for what aspects of policy or (2) how well policymaking organisations are performing (Cairney, 2015).

Take home message: avoid the assumption that governments can simply list or combine their effective government principles to produce a coherent strategy. There is continuously high potential to pursue some objectives at the expense of others.

Grand narratives of effective government: what is the purpose of government?

Academics and governments produce – often similar – grand narratives regarding the purpose and desired function of government. They underpin all discussions of government effectiveness, and help to make sense of multiple aims to produce a coherent strategy. These narratives begin by answering questions such as:

- *What problems should governments seek to solve?* For example, is poverty a state or individual responsibility, and how far should governments intervene to mitigate inequalities in health, education, and housing?

- *What is the proper balance between the state and market?* For example, what taxes should governments impose, what services should they provide, and what regulations on behaviour are appropriate?

- *What should be the balance between state intervention for the collective good and state retrenchment to protect individual freedom?* For example, when protecting public health, should governments focus only on infectious disease or also 'non-communicable' diseases such as heart disease and cancers?

- *What should be the balance of powers to govern?* Should a single elected government make policy from the 'centre'? What responsibilities – and level of autonomy – should other organisations enjoy?

- *Should governments be run like businesses?*

Take home message: defining 'effective government' is a political choice (such as to determine the proper balance between state and market), not a technical matter.

The rise and fall of new public management approaches to effective government

Academic studies try to capture broad international trends in grand narratives, such as to identify the two most recent phases in countries like the UK.

1. The rise of 'new public management' (NPM)

The international rise of new public management (NPM) became 'one of the most striking international trends in public administration' (Hood, 1991: 3). Its grand narrative suggests that the role of the state should be limited, favouring the more efficient market, and applying private sector methods to the public sector: *small government is effective government*, and a *government monopoly of service provision produces ineffective government*. Gone was the idea of a 'public service ethos' overseen by a well-respected civil servant profession working in the public interest (regardless of the party of government). In its place was the idea that individual civil servants would pursue their own interests unless kept in line, requiring 'contracts formally setting out requirements, monitoring, reward and incentive

systems' to make sure that the aims of elected policymakers and civil servants would align (O'Flynn, 2007: 356).

- **Seven features of new public management (NPM)**

1. Re-establish a managerial hierarchy, and assign clear responsibilities, to allow the 'top' to oversee accountability.
2. Set clear aims, standards, and targets to measure performance.
3. Reward positive results rather than fixating on rules and procedures.
4. Break up too-large departments to create 'manageable units'.
5. Greater competition will 'lower costs' and improve standards.
6. Shift from a 'military-style public service ethic' in favour of "'proven' private sector management" such as more flexible ways to hire and reward staff.
7. 'Do more with less' by cutting needless government costs, reducing the burden of regulation on business, and 'resisting union demands' (Hood, 1991: 4)

The UK government used this narrative - from the late 1970s - to pursue state retrenchment and challenge well-established approaches to policymaking, including to replace 'Keynesian' economic policies and reject the need to seek consensus for policy change. This shift included public sector reforms:

1. Selling nationalised industries (including major utilities) in favour of a 'lean' state, and selling state-owned housing.
2. Contracting-out the delivery of public services to the private (or third) sector.
3. Raising charges for public services (including higher education).
4. Introducing quasi-market measures for public services, such as internal markets in healthcare, and league tables in education.
5. Reducing civil service numbers, and seeking to separate strategic versus delivery functions (such as via departmental Executive Agencies and non-departmental public bodies, or quangos) to hold the latter responsible for continuous improvements in service delivery.

Before devolution, these reforms applied to the UK government Scottish Office and Scottish public sector. They provided a legacy for elected governments in Scotland.

Take home message: NPM had a profound effect on how UK (and devolved) governments measured effective government. Ministers shifted functions outside of government and introduced performance measures inspired by private sector management. Governments now seek new models, but in the context of this legacy.

2. The search for alternatives to NPM

There are three main explanations for an energetic search by governments – including the Scottish Government - for alternatives to NPM. First, after three decades (1980-2010), NPM did not prove to be a coherent approach, applied consistently, to deliver more effective government (O'Flynn, 2007; Osborne, 2006; Hood and Dixon, 2015). Examples of a gulf between NPM rhetoric and actual policymaking include (in the UK):

- The number of quangos fell but their costs quadrupled.
- The 'running costs' of departments rose despite the 'cost cutting' rhetoric (and 'public spending relative to GDP' remained stable).
- Feedback measures – including surveys of citizens – do not show that government 'works better'.
- There was 'a striking increase in … administrative costs in real terms, while levels of complaint and legal challenge also soared' (Hood and Dixon, 2015: 28; 35; 74-5; 124-7).

Second, focusing too much on managing the performance of individual public services comes at the expense of *overall performance*. Contemporary approaches – such as 'new public governance' (NPG) - try to understand the role of each service as part of a 'complex public service delivery system' that cannot be broken down into individual parts (Osborne et al, 2014: 316; 323). This approach requires governments to foster relationships (and recognise the interdependence) between (1) public services in different sectors (such as health and education), (2) the governmental and non-governmental organisations essential to make and deliver policy, and (3) public service providers, service users, and stakeholders (2014: 316).

Third, many policymakers reject the ideological assumption that markets and competition are superior to states, or that running a government like a business is a self-evidently good idea (Osborne et al, 2014: 320). Pragmatic approaches shift 'from the primary focus on results and efficiency toward the achievement of the broader governmental goal of public value creation' (O'Flynn, 2007: 358).

The precise meaning of PV or NPG is unclear, but key elements include to:

- Reject the idea that governments can be run like businesses, or that the outputs of public services are akin to consumer products. Describe the value of government and public service more positively.
- Reject hierarchical performance-managed government focused on rooting out failure. Embrace a decentralised and flexible approach, in which (1) there are many semi-autonomous but inter-dependent services that need to collaborate to deliver public value, and (2) learning from trial-and-error is essential.
- Trust public service professionals. Enable their autonomy to make decisions and work with other organisations and stakeholders to deliver services.

- Seek meaningful citizen engagement in the co-production of policymaking.
- Respond to the collective will of citizens, not the sum total of consumer preferences (O'Flynn, 2007: 361-3; Stoker, 2006; Osborne et al, 2014: 318-9).

Kelly et al's (2002) report to the Cabinet Office summarises key differences between 'traditional' public administration, NPM, and public value:

Table 1: Approaches to public management

	Traditional management	NPM	Public value
Public interest defined by	Politicians/ experts	Consumers	Individuals and the public
Dominant model of accountability	Democratic, via hierarchy	Democratic and consumer	Democratic, consumer, stakeholder
Preferred system for delivery	Government departments, professions	Private sector or delivery organisations in quasi markets	Pragmatic collection of models
Approach to public sector ethos	Public sector monopoly	Private sector delivery	Pragmatic mix
Role for public participation	Voting in elections	Consumer satisfaction surveys	As citizens, consumers, stakeholders
Goal of managers	Respond to political direction	Meet performance targets	Satisfy users, maintain citizen trust and legitimacy

Source: shortened version of Kelly et al (2002: 10)

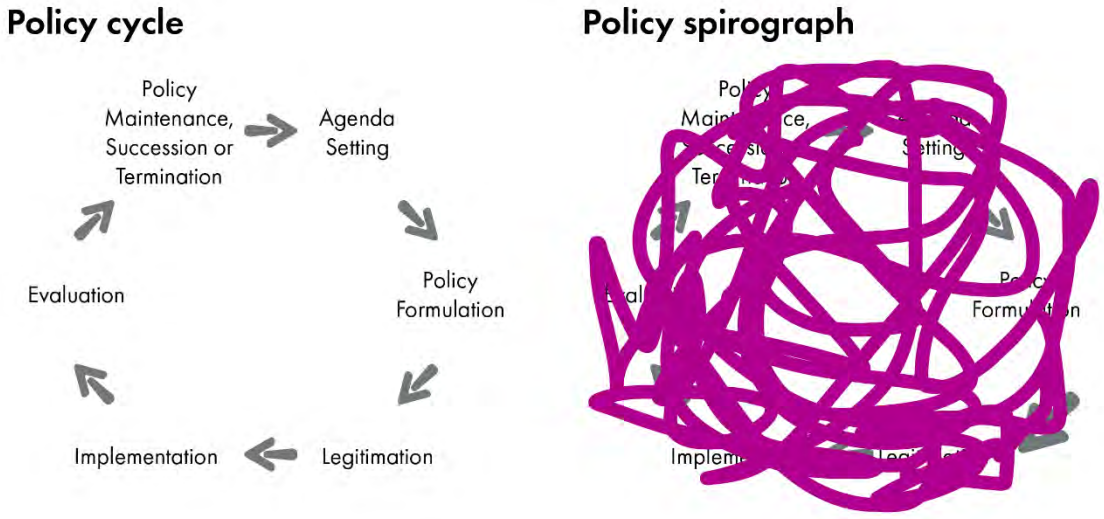
Take home message: 'public value' models identify promising ways to encourage and measure effective government. They are built largely on criticisms of NPM as inappropriate and/or ineffective. However, they have not simply become their replacement. Rather, new ideas are applied patchily to established practices.

Academic accounts: questioning the ability of governments to control and reform policymaking

These grand narratives of how government should – or does – work are essential. However, we should not treat them as coherent ideas or fully implemented measures whose impact we can measure easily to help us determine what is effective government. *NPM reforms were patchy,* and *many PV reforms remain aspirational*, producing high uncertainty about the relationship between: (1) what governments would like to say they do; (2) what they try to do, and (3) what they actually do.

The reason for this uncertainty is that governments are not as amenable to reform as NPM rhetoric would suggest. Academic accounts highlight a contrast between simple models of policymaking and complex policymaking reality (see Cairney, 2023). The policy cycle portrays policymaking as a linear process that can be broken down into an orderly series of steps, while spirograph images project a far messier reality.

Chart 2: The policy cycle and the policy spirograph



Source: Cairney (2017b)

The cycle provides governments with (1) a *useful image to portray* (here is how we make policy) and (2) a useful *list of required functions* - define problems, generate feasible solutions, legitimise each selection, oversee implementation, measure policy success, and decide to keep or replace policies – but not (3) an accurate story.

Policymaking theories describe policymaking more accurately, with reference to:

1. *Bounded rationality*. Policymakers can only pay meaningful attention to a small proportion of their responsibilities, and process a small proportion of policy relevant information. They must use cognitive (and organisational) shortcuts to process enough information to make 'good enough' choices

(Simon, 1976; Baumgartner and Jones, 2009; Cairney and Kwiatkowski, 2017).

2. *Policymaking complexity*. Policymakers have limited understanding – and less control – of their policymaking environment. There is no single 'centre' overseeing policy choices and their delivery. Most policy is processed in many 'centres', with their own ways of working (the rules and norms they follow, the networks they form, their dominant ways to understand problems, and their response to social and economic conditions) (Cairney et al, 2019).

These accounts of policymaking feed into measures of effective government:

- *Accountability*. Are ministers responsible for all decisions made in their name?
- *Preventive policymaking*. Can governments produce long-term strategies in relation to future uncertainty?
- *Power sharing, co-production, and delivering public value*. Governments must share responsibilities across (and beyond) the public sector.
- *Policy coherence and policymaking integration*. If most policy is made in many different centres, is the overall system impervious to coordination?
- *Evidence-informed policymaking*. What do 'sufficient' information gathering and 'good enough' choices look like?
- *Equity, fairness, or justice*. What equitable outcomes are in the gift of ministers?

Take home message: there is a difference between what governments (1) say they will do and (2) can actually do. It prompts us to compare (1) how they *describe* or *perform* their pursuit of 'effective government', and (2) more realistic ways to think about effective government principles and measures of success.

How does the Scottish Government describe effective government?

The Scottish Government's grand narrative began with a focus on accountability, then developed to emphasise policy coherence and policymaking integration to foster long-term thinking and equity (the 'Scottish model'), and evidence-informed, preventive, and co-produced policy (the 'Scottish approach to policymaking') (Elliott, 2020).

The first grand narrative of effective government related strongly to the well shared story of 'new Scottish politics' that underpinned the pursuit and design of a devolved political system in the 1990s (Cairney and McGarvey, 2013). The new politics story reflected a strong focus on improving on Westminster practices, describing:

1. *Accountability via elections*. A more proportional electoral system, fostering accountability via a clearer connection between party share of the vote and the composition of the Scottish Parliament.

2. *Accountability via scrutiny*. A more powerful Scottish Parliament (and committees), more able to share power with government (or at least monitor government departments and hold ministers to account more effectively).

3. *Participation, deliberation, and consensus seeking*, via

- a political culture that is 'more participative, more creative, less needlessly confrontational' (Scottish Constitutional Convention, 1995)

- initiatives such as the Scottish Civic Forum and the petitions process

- more participation with a wider range of stakeholders.

Yet, early commentary on Scottish devolution suggested that:

1. The Scottish government inherited and maintained a Scottish version of NPM.

2. Civil servants were not well equipped to design or deliver the changes associated with 'new politics' or respond to the weight of parliamentary and ministerial demands (Ford and Casebow, 2002; Parry and Jones, 2000).

3. The language of prevention was largely absent, in favour of maintaining high profile public services (Cairney and St.Denny, 2020: 122).

The Scottish Model of government

Former Permanent Secretary Sir John Elvidge (2011: 31-5) described the development of a 'Scottish model of government' (from around the mid-2000s), conducive to policy coherence and policymaking integration, aided by:

- The proposed removal of traditional departmental boundaries and 'Ministerial portfolios', in favour of an 'aggregate budget' and 'corporate Board'.

- Assigning more ‘organisation-wide responsibilities’.

- Fostering initiatives such as the Scottish Leaders Forum to encourage coordination across government and public services.

This model was designed to depart from NPM government (maintained by the UK government) and produce a level of coherence and integration necessary to address:

> ‘‘problems with major social and economic impacts: educational outcomes for the least successful 20 per cent of young people; health inequalities related to socio-economic background; geographical concentrations of economically unsuccessful households; and Scotland’s rate of GDP growth relative to the UK average and to that of comparable countries’ (2011: 31).

Elvidge (2011: 32) describes the coming together of this model with the SNP’s (2007) manifesto commitments to produce a smaller Cabinet (with each minister having cross-cutting responsibilities) and ‘an outcome based approach to the framing of the
objectives of government and to enabling the electorate to hold the Government to account for performance’. The latter included the *National Performance Framework* which - in its first version, established in 2007 - (1) combined an overall ambition (‘sustainable economic growth’) with 16 preferred ‘National Outcomes’ and 50 indicators of long term progress, and (2) informed ‘single outcome agreements’ between the government and local authorities.

The Scottish Approach to Policymaking

From 2010, work by the Scottish Parliament Finance Committee, and the report by the Scottish Government-commissioned ‘Christie Commission’ (Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, 2011), prompted a new reform agenda. The Christie Commission identified unsustainable government, in which high levels of social and economic inequalities endured in Scotland despite high levels of public service spending. A spending squeeze would exacerbate inequalities in the absence of major reforms. It identified key reform principles, focused on reducing inequalities:

- ‘Reforms must aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.

- Public service providers must … work much more closely in partnership, to integrate service provision and thus improve the outcomes they achieve.

- We must prioritise expenditure on public services which prevent negative outcomes from arising.

- And our whole system of public services - public, third and private sectors - must become more efficient by reducing duplication’ (2011: vi).

The Scottish Government (2011) responded by declaring a 'decisive shift to prevention' and identifying how it was already acting in accordance with Christie. By 2013, the 'Scottish approach' summed up three broad policymaking priorities:

- 'Service performance and improvement underpinned by data, evidence and the application of improvement methodologies
- Building on the strengths and assets of individuals and communities, rather than only focusing on perceived deficits
- Services which are shaped and co-produced by both service providers and the citizens and communities who receive and engage with those services.' (Scottish Government and ESRC, 2013: 4)

Elvidge's successor, Sir Peter Housden (2014: 67-70), described these moves as a further departure from the UK government's NPM (and centralisation) in favour of public value approaches, such as to 'put a real premium on the idea of co-production, with services designed and delivered with service users and organisations' and reject the old 'consumer focused' approach (bolstering the 'assets' of citizens would also boost self-reliance, which would reduce the need for public services). In addition, Housden described 'improvement' methods as a way to combine PV-style aims:

1. Agree on long-term outcomes without 'micromanaging' local authorities.
2. Foster innovation and learning among the bodies responsible for delivery.
3. Gather evidence pragmatically, via practitioners learning from trial and error.

Subsequent Permanent Secretaries have accentuated these aims, with Leslie Evans overseeing changes to the NPF to clarify its connection to UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and John-Paul Marks signalling high commitment to its delivery (see the Scottish Government blog on NPF development).

Learning from (and comparing) success and failure

This report emphasises that:

1. There is a contrast between this coherent story of effective Scottish Government, and actual experiences of policymaking in Scotland. In practice, there have been continuous tensions between key principles, such as when short-term accountability measures undermine other aims (most notably preventive policymaking).
2. To a large extent, this contrast is inevitable.
3. Therefore, a key part of effective government is to reflect as much on failures as successes.

In that context, the following sections compare Scottish Government experiences with those of other comparable governments – the UK, Welsh, and New Zealand governments – while Annex A provides a list of other ways to compare experiences relating to the pursuit of effective government.

Government accounts of effectiveness: UK government

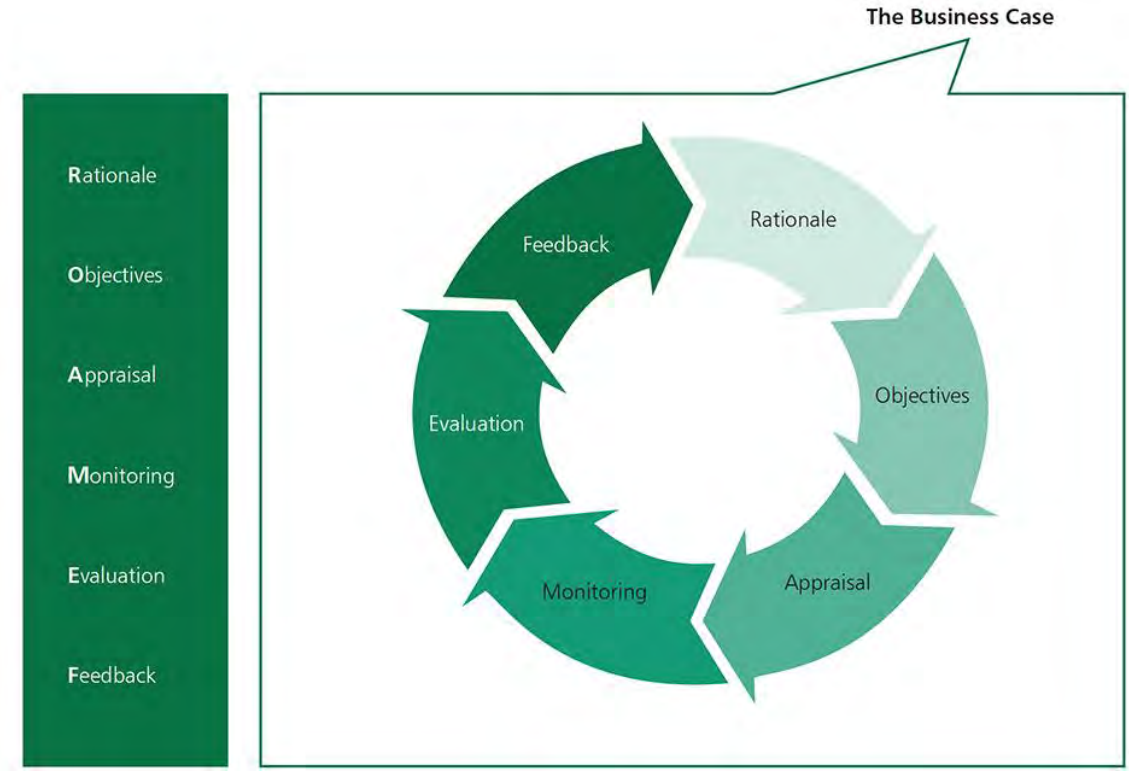
UK government experiences exemplify these multiple tensions between different ways to define and demonstrate efficient government, including in relation to prevention (Cairney and St.Denny, 2020), non-integrated policymaking (Flinders, 2008; Richards et al, 2022), and patchy civil service reforms (Diamond, 2021). These tensions inform *two different accounts* of effective government *within the same political system*.

First, the HM Treasury 'Green Book' tells an official story of how policy is and should be made, including civil service objectivity, systematic policymaking, and policymaking integration, to ensure the delivery of public value:

> 'This guidance concerns the provision of objective advice by public servants to decision makers, … The key specialisms involved in public policy creation and delivery, from policy at a strategic level to analysis, commercial strategy, procurement, finance, and implementation must work together from the outset to deliver best public value. The Treasury's five case model is the means of developing proposals in a holistic way that optimises the social / public value produced by the use of public resources. Similarly, there is a requirement for all organisations across government to work together, to ensure delivery of joined up public services'.

It uses the policy cycle to signal that this process is orderly and linear:

Chart 3: HM Treasury policy cycle (ROAMEF Policy development cycle)



Source: HM Treasury (2022)

Second, this story is an inaccurate representation of how UK policy is made, which makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of UK government. It is routine for *academic accounts* to contrast this story with what actually happens, and research within the UK government reinforces this conclusion:

> 'There are many theoretical models for making policy, like ROAMEF. But policymakers say they do not use them … policymaking is not sequential and the nature of each problem or opportunity is different' (Civil Service, 2020: 44)

As with academic accounts, this report suggests that effective government relates to *essential functions*, including: identify a problem or opportunity, gather information to understand who it affects, work collaboratively to generate solutions, consult with citizens and stakeholders to test solutions, deliver, and evaluate (2020: 44-5). To perform these functions effectively requires changes to UK policymaking that include:

- Greater engagement with, and understanding of, citizens.
- Policymaking integration, to address problems that transcend the boundaries of government departments.
- 'Robust evidence-based advice' that combines scientific evidence with policy relevant knowledge from stakeholders and citizens.
- Multi-disciplinary policy design teams consisting of policy specialists (given the time and space to develop expertise in specific fields) (2020: 26; Knight, 2021).

Key think tanks, such as the Institute for Government, highlight similar flaws with UK government, including that it is too short-termist, parochial (not focused enough on citizens), fragmented, and siloed, and that it struggles to gather enough information and ensure the delivery of policy (Sasse and Thomas, 2022: 5). They recommend measures consistent with the seven principles of effective government, including:

- 'Stronger accountability for policy advice, decisions and outcomes', including holding ministers to account after they leave office, and holding Permanent Secretaries responsible for the quality of policymaking in their departments.
- 'Deeper expertise and the right skills in civil service policy teams', to challenge the UK tradition of 'generalist' civil servants who move around posts too often.
- 'Wider reforms to institutions and processes', to foster dedicated units and processes to engage in longer-term and cross-cutting work, and give proper resources to policy evaluation (2022: 6-8).

Take home messages: (1) Contemporary reviews of UK government reform (such as by units in government, or external think tanks) highlight aspirations for change associated with PV accounts of effective government, but also the endurance of traditional models and approaches. (2) The continuous recommendations of the

same kinds of reforms (to boost accountability, co-production, and integration) suggests that these reforms generally struggle to gain traction in government. Recommendations for reform are incomplete without considering how such reforms tend to fare.

Government accounts of effectiveness: Welsh government

There is a more positive story of effective government in Wales (subject to the need to compare narratives with policymaking reality). Three key aspects relate strongly to principles of effective government and resonate with the 'Scottish Approach'[i].

1. The systematic use of evidence

The Welsh Government is supported by organisations dedicated to gathering, synthesising, and sharing policy relevant information, including the Welsh Centre for Public Policy (WCPP). The WCPP exhibits:

- A sustainable funding model, shared by the UKRI and Welsh Government. It helps to focus on evidence supply to the government and maintain the autonomy associated with UK Universities. The Scottish Government part-funded a similar but temporary initiative (What Works Scotland).

- A means to connect academic research capacity to policymaker demand as part of a coherent process, from identifying research needs in government, and relevant sources of evidence, and providing knowledge brokerage to ensure a common understanding between people supplying and demanding information.

- Continuous self-evaluation, to maintain policymaker and academic legitimacy.

Take home message: WCPP success should not be underestimated. Wider comparative research on evidence use in policymaking identifies a tendency for initiatives to emerge without proper design or evaluation, and to struggle to endure long enough to produce tangible results (Oliver et al, 2022). Q: What is the equivalent process in Scotland to the use of the WCPP?

2. Legislation to foster anticipatory policymaking

On the one hand, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 symbolises 'unique and pioneering' legislation to connect Welsh policy systematically to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Nesom and MacKillop, 2021: 432). On the other, 'the Act is vague, open-ended and aspirational, expecting prompt local implementation without much national guidance or support' (2021: 432).

This contrast reflects a dilemma of effective government: a government may (1) set a clear ambition, to focus national accountability and performance management on well defined long-term goals, but also (2) foster decentralisation, flexibility, collaborative working, and the co-production of policy to make sense of those goals in local contexts.

Take home message: The WFG Act should prompt mutual learning between the Welsh and Scottish governments, especially since the latter has adapted its National Performance Framework to perform a similar function, and has proposed a

Wellbeing and Sustainable development Bill and Future Generations Commissioner. Q: how do such approaches work in practice? What contributes to their success?

3. The institutionalisation of partnership working

Scotland and Wales share the sense that devolved governments can pursue more consensus-seeking 'policy styles' than the UK government, to reflect factors such as:

- *Policymaking capacity.* Smaller governments have greater incentives to form partnerships with the organisations that can help them make and implement policy (Cairney, 2008; 2009).

- *The scale of policymaking*. A smaller political system, and fewer participants, may allow closer relationships between policymakers and stakeholders ('everyone round the table' - Keating et al, 2009).

- *Trust in professions*. Closer relationships with public sector organisations and professions may allow them to build more trust and rely less on NPM-style audit and performance management (Greer and Jarman, 2008).

- *Policymaking legacies*. Devolved governments were able to resist some NPM reforms before devolution, making it easier to reform them after 1999.

The Welsh Government developed a reputation for partnership working between central government, local government, and stakeholders (the 'Welsh way' or 'made in Wales', comparable to the 'Scottish approach'). Early initiatives include (1) formalised 'partnership councils' to encourage close relationships between central and local government, and central government and the private and third sectors, as well as to encourage joint working (tri-partism) between business groups and unions, and (2) reforms to local government to produce unitary authorities with the same boundaries as health authorities (Entwhistle, 2006). The Welsh government has also pursued a single public sector profession in Wales ('One Welsh Public Service' - Farrell and Law, 2021). The *potential* impacts on effective government include:

- *To combine the merits of multiple effective government principles*. If governments enjoy open and meaningful relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, they can boost co-production, policymaking transparency, deliberation, and consensus-seeking (essential to long-term planning).

- *To coordinate coherent policy and policymaking integration*. Effective partnership working allows a central government to influence the large number of organisations essential to policy delivery, and establish high ownership of policy (see Connell et al, 2019; 2021 on Welsh Government 'metagoverance').

Take home message: Experiences of managing complex policy delivery systems should prompt mutual learning between the Welsh and Scottish governments, since both seek to foster collaborative working across (and outside) government. In both cases, we should relate a convincing story of distinctive and successful ways to

govern with their mixed experiences of success. Q: how have these approaches worked in practice? What contributed to their success or failure?

Government accounts of effectiveness: the New Zealand Policy Project

The New Zealand Policy Project states that:

> 'Great policy advice is the foundation of effective government decision making. It underpins the performance of the economy and the wellbeing of all people in New Zealand. The Policy Project is about building a high performing policy system that supports and enables good government decision making'.

To that end, it seeks to:

Foster an 'active policy community' to share 'best practice'

- 'Policy system' leadership, overseen by the head of the Policy Profession and chief executive of Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet,
- supported by the Policy Project team, a 'policy leaders' network, and a network of 'policy capability leads' to focus on improving the quality of policy advice.

Collaborate to 'produce change at the system level'

Three frameworks foster improvement across all relevant organisations:

- The Policy Quality Framework established common standards on 'what good quality policy advice looks like', to be used by (1) practitioners to improve their practices, and (2) agencies to report on their performance.
- The Policy Skills Framework identifies essential skills and knowledge, used by individuals to gauge their skills or managers to evaluate their team's capacity.
- The Policy Capability Framework defines high performance with reference to 'people capability, stewardship (investing in future capability), systems and processes for delivering quality advice, and being customer-centric'.

Promote 'common standards'

It promotes 'accountability and transparency' by ensuring that (public sector) policy agencies administer the Policy Quality Framework. Agencies use it to set a numerical target for the 'quality of their policy advice' then reflect on performance. Their 'quality of advice assessment panels' produce the scores, including their 'ministerial policy satisfaction score' determined from a survey of ministers. Their annual reports describe 'the quality of their policy advice and the satisfaction of their

minister/s with the policy support provided by the agency'. Agencies use the process to learn and improve performance.

Chart 4: The Policy Project 'Policy Quality Framework'

Source: The Policy Project, 2020

Foster continuous learning

The Policy Methods Toolbox describes how to:

- Start projects
- Use behavioural insights

- Use design thinking ('human-centred', 'co-design and participatory design')
- Foster participation or community engagement
- Engage in 'futures thinking'
- Incorporate the 'Te Tiriti of Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi' into policy work.

A collection of 'policy advice themes' helps projects to progress, while a repository of case studies helps policymakers to learn from each department's experience.

Make an honest assessment of policy reform initiatives (to aid improvement)

A key part of such projects is to focus as much on failures (or obstacles to progress) as much as success to foster continuous improvement and ward off complacency. To that end, Mazey and Richardson's (2021) edited book brings together academics and practitioners (including former ministers and their advisers) to spark debate about what has gone well *and* badly in New Zealand, as part of 'the never-ending search for better public policies' (Key, 2021: 16). The editors list unresolved failures including:

> 'we have a long-standing housing crisis, increasing levels of child poverty and inequality, lower productivity levels and wages than comparable countries, declining educational standards, grossly polluted waterways and failing infrastructure. We could go on' (Mazey and Richardson, 2021: 23).

Their explanations for failures include that governments: (1) face complex problems that are not amenable to simple solutions or even agreement on what to do, (2) tend to react superficially to problems rather than anticipating them, (3) do not learn and reform in the scale proposed by the Policy Project, (4) produce policy legacies that undermine change (such as a road infrastructure that is unhelpful to climate responses), and (5) produce inevitable unintended consequences during implementation. Individual chapters raise unresolved issues including:

1. New Zealand's reputation for consensus politics is either (a) misleading and superficial (in relation to Māori and Pacific communities), or (b) an impediment to rapid policy changes.
2. A series of policy disasters exposed the limits to government action in the short term *and* the lack of a long-term approach in government.
3. There remain problems in relation to silo working, poor central coordination, and the patchy use of evidence.

Similarly, Berman and Karacaoglu's (2020) edited book compares high aspirations with mixed success. The former head of the Policy Profession describes (1) a 'small, relatively well country' and a 'fleetness of foot' that required high quality advice and policy, but also (2) 'short-termism' and a lack of trust (to share ideas and reflect on failure in public) associated with partisan elections every three years (Kiblewhite,

2020: xi-xii). Kiblewhite (2018: 7-11) identifies challenges including: to ‘upskill’ the profession, diversify the profession, improve public participation, enable ‘frank advice’ to ministers, and build long term capacity.

Take home message: Do not focus only on success stories. Compare *what governments would like to do* with *what they actually do*. Identify good practice and reflect on barriers to effective government.

Conclusion: implications for the scrutiny of effective Scottish Government

Governments cannot simply list their ‘effective government’ ambitions, since there is always high potential to pursue some at the expense of others. They need a grand narrative to show how their aims cohere and complement each other.

Many governments have adopted a narrative that emphasises a shift from new public management to public value, but with clear gaps between aspiration and reality. These gaps have prompted them to restate their commitment to reforms without showing how they cohere or will work next time.

Key implications regarding learning from other governments

1. Several governments provide lessons from experience that are relevant to Scottish Government aims, including Welsh Government initiatives on evidence use, co-production, and long-term thinking, and New Zealand government experiences on continuous improvement to improve the quality of policy advice.

2. However, it is essential to establish clear examples of successful reforms from which to learn, and to reflect on partial success or examples of failed reforms.

3. These comparative lessons should also prompt greater reflection on the successes and failures of Scottish government reforms.

4. Each reflection should relate to the overall question of effective government, not individual elements in a vacuum.

Implications for the skills necessary for effective government

Each effective government principle provides different requirements of policymakers, including:

- Managing single departments or organisations to ensure a continuously clear line between ministerial aims and government services, or contributing to multiple forms of accountability.

- Anticipating policy problems through foresight analysis, and managing for the long-term in relation to broader performance measures.

- Fostering collaboration across levels of government, and building trust and high stakeholder and citizen ownership. Some collaboration may be geared towards the delivery of clear ministerial aims. Some may be based on a ‘no agenda’ approach to foster policy development from the bottom up.

- Monitoring the individual and overall effects of each policy instrument, and making sure that each organisation contributes to a coherent policy mix.

- Managing multiple ways to gather and analyse evidence, including approaches that prioritise scientific methods, respect service user knowledge, or experiential learning among public service professions.

- Managing instant *and* long-term crises, to ensure that issues such as inequalities and fairness always remain high on the policy agenda.

- Managing reform programmes, and a coherent transition from NPM to PV.

Does the Scottish Government have sufficient policy capacity?
Therefore, it is essential to establish the extent to which one profession could foster all of the skills required. Current examples of uncertainty include:

- Would 'generalist' civil servants be able to perform all tasks associated with the seven effective government principles?

- Could leadership training encompass all seven elements?

- Would it be more realistic to expect government to foster more specialist skills in individuals contributing to policymaking teams?

- Does the Scottish Government know how much policy capacity it (A) has, and (B) should have, in relation to these seven elements?

- Does the Scottish Government know how much policy capacity exists outside the civil service?

- What is the risk of ineffective government when policy capacity and training does not live up to the Scottish Government's high expectations?

Annex A. Wider international narratives of effectiveness: fostering public service value and crisis management

There are many ways to examine 'effective government' (or 'policy success') in relation to the principles outlined in this report. Examples worthy of investigation include:

Indicators of effectiveness

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) has produced multiple ways to define and measure effective government, such as with reference to:

- Effective communication. Government websites should be authoritative, comprehensive, fit-for-purpose, and easy to navigate.
- Accountable and effective institutions are essential to citizen trust and economic growth. A 'holistic approach' includes 'strengthening core state functions', protecting human rights, and transparent procurement and financial management.
- Strong central capacity, including a well-resourced Prime (or First) Minister's office, able to set a clear (and evidence-informed) strategic direction, and coordinate policymaking to ensure policy coherence (and respond well to crises such as COVID-19).
- A systematic approach to public investment.
- Multiple indicators of effective government, including resilient public finances, central coordination, maintaining public trust, transparency and engagement with citizens, diversifying public employment, and promoting 'environmental and social goals'.

A World Bank funded index - The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project - uses the category 'Government Effectiveness' to capture 'perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies'. Its indicators include 'quality of bureaucracy' and specific services (including public transport, roads, education, health services, water).

'Guardians of public value'

Boin et al (2021: 5) explore a wide range of international examples of 'institutions' that have maintained 'unique identity and competence' and a 'strong reputation and legitimacy' (based on an established track record of success and processes that sustain their legitimacy). These organisations have developed a clear identity, a

‘workforce that can deliver (and loves to do that)’, and has a ‘strong relation with the authorizing environment’. Their examples include the BBC, ECJ, and the IPCC.

The ‘co-production of public services and outcomes’

Loeffler and Bovaird (2021) explore perspectives on co-production, raising issues that include how to: capture the lives of citizens in a holistic manner, avoid ‘one size fits all’ approaches to citizens, address barriers to engagement (if citizens have little in common with policymakers and researchers), make multiple connections with citizens and stakeholders (in a changing and complex environment), and maintain a balance between ‘emergent’ and planned outcomes from interaction (694-6).

Identifying and supporting ‘the public servant’

Sullivan et al (2021: 1713-19) focus on ‘what future public servants need to know’ in relation to historic trends and current crises. Themes include:

1. *How to describe a public servant* ‘identity’ in light of multiple reforms, the spread of public servants across (and outside of) government, and the blurry boundaries between roles (associated with collaboration and co-production).

2. *How to engage with contradictory incentives*, such as when encouraged to meet short-term NPM performance measures within an organisation *and* engage for the long term with other organisations.

3. *The skills required of public servants in relation to their purpose*, which can range from self-contained processes of policy analysis (or managing discrete areas of work) to leading cross-cutting networks or engaging as one of many actors in a wider process of co-production. Sullivan et al (2021: 1719-20) describe an overwhelming list of essential skills or capabilities, such as to:

- Manage the interface between elected politics and unelected administration.

- Design policy, develop and maintain regulatory frameworks, or deliver policy.

- Foster collaboration between policymakers, stakeholders, and citizens in multiple local communities (requiring diplomacy and organisational skills)

- Manage knowledge from many sources, and engage in routine policy learning.

- Foster problem-solving teams engaging with problems that transcend traditional policy sectors or departments.

- Maintain high proficiency in digital skills to inform many tasks, including gathering information, fostering collaboration, and making sure that technological innovations do not exacerbate inequalities.

- Anticipate and respond to crises.

Responding effectively to crisis

Boin et al (2017: 15) relate effective government to 'tasks of strategic crisis leadership':

1. Gather and process information to detect and make sense of crises.
2. Coordinate a coherent cross-government response.
3. Provide a 'narrative' of the crisis, and crisis response, that is 'convincing, helpful, and inspiring to citizens and responders'.
4. Foster accountability by providing a clear explanation of action.
5. Learn from what decisions succeeded and failed, and take 'remedial action'.

Communicating risk and scientific uncertainty

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced longstanding concerns in government about understanding and communicating risk and uncertainty (e.g. when gauging levels of infection in a population and estimating the rate of transmission). Resources include:

- European Commission (Group of Chief Scientific Advisers) work on 'communicating uncertainty in a complex world'
- Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication 'Resources for civil servants and government officials'

Effective policy design

Peters et al (2018: 14) identify trends in the study and practice of policy design, including to widen a working definition of 'effectiveness' to include not only 'the achievement of specific policy targets' but also (1) to achieve the coherence of an overall policy mix, and (2) to foster procedural justice during the design process.

Annex B: Systematic policymaking.

The eighth principle in this report could have been:

Systematic policymaking.
There should be clearly defined steps or stages to making decisions, and governments should make routine use of well-established, rigorous, decision-making tools. Examples include:

- Systematic policy analysis: define a problem for your client, generate feasible solutions, use values (such as equity and efficiency) and goals to compare trade-offs between solutions, predict their impact (including the likely distribution of costs and benefits), and make recommendations.
- The policy cycle, consisting of a series of decision-making stages: agenda setting (defining a problem), policy formulation (options appraisal and selection), legitimisation, implementation, evaluation, followed by the decision to continue or replace policy.
- Use models based on private sector methods, such as to establish a 'business case' for policy change and follow a series of steps to make the case.
- Identify distinctive priorities such as high consultation and collaboration during key stages, joining up multiple 'policy cycles' across government departments, or improving financial scrutiny or risk analysis.
- Use impact assessment tools to deliver overarching aims, such as to improve gender equality or public health, or address human rights or climate change commitments. This approach requires cultural change. Considering (say) equality in everything that decision-makers requires a shift in individual and organisational mindsets.

Further, several submissions to this committee combine this principle with other principles such as equity and efficiency or evidence-informed policymaking.

However, this report relates *systematic policymaking* to the section entitled "*Academic accounts: questioning the ability of governments to control and reform policymaking*". It shows that many descriptions of systematic processes are often treated as ideal-types in academic discourse. This section helps to interpret evaluations of policymaking (including in many of the written submissions to this committee), which:

1. Identify their requirements regarding systematic policymaking, then
2. Identify their generally disappointing experiences of unfulfilled reforms and implementation gaps.

In that context, do practitioners identify technically and politically feasible ways for the Scottish Government to respond? Or, are they describing the ever-present gaps between their ideal-type models and policymaking reality? A focus on the latter may help to describe how the Scottish Government could change in relation to what is feasible rather restate the value of simplified models that do not exist.

References

Baumgartner, F. and Jones, B. (2009) *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* 2nd edn (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press)

Berman, E. and Karacaoglu, G. (eds) (2020) Public Policy and Governance Frontiers in New Zealand (Bingley, UK: Emerald)

Boin, A., 't Hart, P., Stern, E. and Sundelius, B. (2017) *The politics of crisis management* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Boin, A., Fahy, L. and 't Hart (2021) *Guardians of Public Value* (London: Palgrave)

Cairney, P. (2008) 'Has Devolution Changed the British Policy Style? *British Politics*, 3, 3, 350–72

Cairney, P. (2009a) 'Implementation and the Governance Problem: A Pressure Participant Perspective', *Public Policy and Administration*, 24, 4, 355–77

Cairney, P. (2015b) 'Scotland's Future Political System', *Political Quarterly*, 86, 2, 217-25

Cairney, P. (2017a) "Evidence-based best practice is more political than it looks: a case study of the 'Scottish Approach'", *Evidence and Policy*, 13, 3, 499-515

Cairney, P. (2017b) '5 images of the policy process', *Paul Cairney: Politics & Public Policy* https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2017/07/10/5-images-of-the-policy-process/

Cairney, P. (2023) 'What does policymaking look like?' https://publicpolicydesign.blog.gov.uk/

Cairney, P. and Kwiatkowski, R. (2017) 'How to communicate effectively with policymakers: combine insights from psychology and policy studies', *Palgrave Communications*, 3, 37 https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-017-0046-8

Cairney, P. and McGarvey, N. (2013) *Scottish Politics* 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave)

Cairney, P. and St Denny, E. (2020) *Why isn't government policy more preventive?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Cairney, P., Heikkila, T. and Wood, M. (2019a) *Making Policy in a Complex World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Cairney, P., St Denny, E. and Kippin, S. (2021a) 'Policy learning to reduce inequalities: the search for a coherent Scottish gender mainstreaming policy in a multi-level UK', *Territory, Politics and Governance*, 9, 3, 412-33 https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1837661

Cairney, P., Keating, M., Kippin, S. and St Denny, E. (2022a) *Public Policy to Reduce Inequalities Across Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Civil Service (2020) *Policymaker perspectives on reform* https://publicpolicydesign.blog.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/255/2021/05/Policymaking-Reform-Full-Report-1.pdf

Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011) *Report* (Edinburgh: Scottish Government) http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/352649/0118638.pdf

Connell, A., Martin, S., and St.Denny, E. (2019) 'Can meso-governments use metagovernance tools to tackle complex policy problems?' Policy & Politics, 47, 3, 437–454 https://doi.org/10.1332/030557319X15579230420072

Connell, A., St.Denny, E. an Martin, S. (2021) 'How can subnational governments develop and deliver distinctive policy agendas?' *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 88, 4, 1159-75 https://doi.org/10.1177/00208523219964

Diamond, P. (2021) 'Core Executive Politics in the Cameron Era, 2010–16: The Dynamics of Whitehall Reform', *Government and Opposition*, 1-19, https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2021.47
Elliott, I. (2020) "The implementation of a strategic state in a small country setting—the case of the 'Scottish approach'", *Public Money & Management*, 40, 4, 285-293.
Elvidge, J. (2011) *Northern Exposure: Lessons from the first twelve years of devolved government in Scotland* (London: Institute for Government) http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Northern%20Exposure.pdf
Entwistle, T. (2006) 'The distinctiveness of the Welsh partnership agenda', *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 19, 3, 228-237.
Farrell, C. and Law, J. (2021) 'Values for Public Servants in Wales: Putting Them into Practice?' in Sullivan, H., Dickinson, H., and Henderson, H. (eds) (2021) *The Palgrave Handbook of the Public Servant* (London: Palgrave), 329-49
Flinders, M. (2008) *Delegated Governance and the British State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
Ford, M. and P. Casebow (2002) 'The Civil Service' in G. Hassan and C. Warhurst (eds), *Anatomy of the New Scotland* (Mainstream: Edinburgh).
Greer, S. and Jarman, H. (2008) 'Policy Styles and Devolution', in A. Trench (ed.) *The State of the Nations* (London: Imprint Academic)
HM Treasury (2022) The Green Book (London: HMSO) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-governent/the-green-book-2020
Hood, C. (1991) 'A Public Management For All Seasons', *Public Administration*, 69, 1, 3-19
Hood, C. and Dixon, R. (2015) *A government that worked better and cost less* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
Housden, P. (2014) 'This is us: A perspective on public services in Scotland', *Public Policy and Administration,* 29, 1, 64–74
Keating, M., Cairney, P. and Hepburn, E. (2009) 'Territorial Policy Communities and Devolution in the United Kingdom', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society,* 2, 1, 51–66)
Kelly, G., Mulgan, G. and Muers, S. (2002) Creating Public Value (London: Strategy Unit, Cabinet Office)
Key, J. (2021) 'Foreward' in Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (2021) *Policymaking Under Pressure: Rethinking the policy process in Aotearoa New Zealand* (New Zealand: Canterbury University Press)
Kiblewhite (2018) 'The Future of the Policy Profession', https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/future-policy-profession (A: 24.2.23)
Kiblewhite, A. (2020) 'Preface' in Berman, E. and Karacaoglu, G. (eds) (2020) Public Policy and Governance Frontiers in New Zealand (Bingley: Emerald)
Kippin, S. and Cairney, P. (2022) 'COVID-19 and the second exams fiasco across the UK: four nations trying to avoid immediate policy failure', *British Politics*, 1-22, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41293-022-00202-1
Knight, A. (2021) '11 things policymakers need to improve outcomes for citizens', Public Policy Design Blog, 1 July, https://publicpolicydesign.blog.gov.uk/2021/07/01/11-things-policymakers-need-to-improve-outcomes-for-citizens/ (A: 24.2.23)

Loeffler, E. and Bovaird, T. (Eds) (2021) *The Palgrave Handbook of Co-Production of Public Services and Outcomes* (London: Palgrave)
Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (2021) *Policymaking Under Pressure: Rethinking the policy process in Aotearoa New Zealand* (New Zealand: Canterbury University Press)
Moore, M. (1995) *Creating public value* (Harvard University Press)
Nesom, S. and MacKillop, E. (2021) 'What matters in the implementation of sustainable development policies?' Findings from the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015', *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 23, 4, 432-445, https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2020.1858768
O'Flynn, J. (2007) 'From new public management to public value: Paradigmatic change and managerial implications', *Australian journal of public administration*, 66, 3, 353-366.
O'Flynn, J. (2021) 'Where to for Public Value? Taking Stock and Moving On', *International Journal of Public Administration*, 1-11 https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1884696
Oliver, K., Hopkins, A., Boaz, A., Guillot-Wright, S., & Cairney, P. (2022) 'What works to promote research-policy engagement?' *Evidence & Policy*, 18, 4, 691-713.
Osborne, S., Radnor, Z., Kinder, T., & Vidal, I. (2014) 'Sustainable public service organisations: A Public Service-Dominant approach', *Society and Economy*, 36, 3, 313-338
Osborne, S. (2006) 'The New Public Governance?', *Public Management Review*, 8, 3, 377-387, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14719030600853022
Parry, R and Jones, A. (2000) 'The Transition from the Scottish Office to the Scottish Government', *Public Policy and Administration*, 15, 2, 53–66
Richards, D., Warner, S., Smith, M. J., and Coyle, D. (2022) 'Crisis and state transformation: Covid-19, levelling up and the UK's incoherent state', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 1-18 https://doi.org/10.1093/cjres/rsac038
Sasse, T. and Thomas, A. (2022) Better policy making (London: IfG)
Scottish Constitutional Convention (1995) *Scotland's Parliament: Scotland's Right* (Edinburgh: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).
Scottish Government (2011a) *Renewing Scotland's Public Services* (Edinburgh: Scottish Government) http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/21104740/0
Scottish Government and ESRC (2013) 'What Works Scotland (WWS): improving public service delivery and reform Call for proposals' (unpublished)
Simon, H. (1976) *Administrative Behavior*, 3rd edn (London: Macmillan).
Stoker, G. (2006)' Public value management: A new narrative for networked governance? *The American Review of Public Administration*, 36, 1, 41–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074005282583
Sullivan, H., Dickinson, H., and Henderson, H. (eds) (2021) *The Palgrave Handbook of the Public Servant* (London: Palgrave)

[i] These notes are informed by background information provided by Professor Steve Martin, Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP), https://www.wcpp.org.uk/about/person/professor-steve-martin/